Dr. Elizabeth Giddens named AMST Coordinator

Dr. Giddens has been affiliated with American Studies programs than I've been able to in the past. An interdisciplinary, transnational understanding of American culture and identity is key to helping our society understand itself and its role in the world,” she said.


“I invite all folks interested in American Studies, and particularly AS students, to come meet and talk to me about their interests and plans,” she said.

Contact Dr. Giddens:
Office: Room 265 of the English Building Email: egiddens@kennesaw.edu Phone: 770/423-6766.

The MA in American Studies Program

The American Studies Program is pleased to announce the visit of 2011 MacArthur fellow Dr. Tiya Miles as the Spring 2012 MAST Program guest speaker. Dr. Miles will speak about her book, *The House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation Story*, and her work at the Chief Vann House in North Georgia.

Dr. Miles will be chronicling the intersection of lives between the White, Cherokee, and African-American inhabitants of the Chief Vann plantation, one of the richest plantations owned by a Cherokee in the early 19th Century.

“Working together—as students of history; lovers of old, magnificent buildings; southerners, northerners, westerners, foreigners, Cherokees, blacks and whites—we can unwrap this grand old home's glittering façade, open wide its multistoried windows and doors, and allow the memories and meanings of all who dwelled there to flow through our understanding like a cleansing breeze. In the resonant words of Southern writer Alice Walker, the way forward is with a broken heart.” (197)

Dr. Miles received her A.B. in Afro-American Studies from Harvard University, an MA. in Women's Studies from Emory University, and her Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Minnesota.

Event Information: Mon., February 6, 2012 from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Social Sciences Building, Room 1021.
Dr. Mohamed Benzidan is a Visiting Professor of English from Hassan II University, Bensmnsik, Casablanca. He has a Third-Cycle Doctorate (1989) and a State Doctorate (2002) from Mohammed V University, Rabat. Besides his teaching responsibilities, he chaired the department of English and is currently Coordinator of the Moroccan American Studies MA program, and Director of the Moroccan American Research Lab. His areas of interest cover literature, art, religion, and philosophy, as forms of written discourse that differ in their intended impact on the reader.

Welcome Mohamed!

Year of Peru by Dr. Ernesto Silva & Juan Trejo, MAST

In order to teach students about ancient Peru two professors came to Kennesaw State University. The first was Dr. Alexi Branic from UCLa who is currently conducting an archaeological dig in Tiwanaku, Bolivia. He discussed how the ancient inhabitants of Peru were influenced in their constructions by the ancient inhabitants of Bolivia. He examined Machu Picchu, Lake Tititaca, and ancient burial sites at which monuments were built. The second professor that spoke of ancient Peru was Dr. John W. Verano of Tulane University. In his lecture he discussed the mummies of Peru and how they have helped increase tourism to Peru. Dr. Verano is currently involved in preserving mummies that have been found in Peru; the mummies are usually of the elite class. One of the most interesting mummies that have been found is that of a Moche woman who is believed to have wielded enormous political power. She was found so well preserved, that the archaeologists can still decipher her tattoos.

KSU’s Dr. Ernesto Silva along with Miriam Bley discussed the life and literature of Mario Vargas Llosa. Llosa has become one of the most important authors in Peru and in Latin America of the contemporary era, and was the recipient of the 2010 Nobel Prize in literature. Dr. Silva discussed the themes that Llosa has written about in the context of history and politics in Peru; he also shared segments of Llosa’s remarkable works with his audience in attendance. This lecture served as a complement to an upper-division course on the works of Llosa Dr. Silva was teaching at the time.

AMST Welcomes First Visiting Scholar

Dr. Mohamed Benzidan

Welcome to Spring 2012 Newly Accepted MAST Students

Dudgrick Bevins graduated from KSU in May with a degree in English Education. He plans to teach American Literature in an educational setting. He is looking forward to the interdisciplinary aspects of the MAST program and is working as a GRA for the Maya Community Project with Dr. Alan LeBaron.

Sheri Easton-Long currently teaches English at local colleges. She earned an English degree from KSU and has an MAT from Agnes Scott College in Secondary English Education. Her experience teaching 8th graders using the works of Frederick Douglas strengthened a conviction that American Literature studied through a cultural lens that is relevant to the students’ experience is the only way to share literature with students.

Amber Martinez graduated from KSU with a BA in American History. She also achieved the Public History certificate. She is passionate about the Antebellum South and the World War II years. She enjoyed studying the Holocaust and Anne Frank with Dr. Catherine Lewis. She is employed by the City of Marietta.

Crystal Money graduated from KSU with a dual BA in Cultural Geography and Africa & African Diaspora Studies. During her time as a student she was a Museum Archival intern at the Marietta Museum of History. She was a geography intern on the Peoplestown Project with Dr. Lands. She is also a volunteer with Dad’s Garage Theater. Crystal has spent multiple summers abroad in Africa studying the cultures of both North and East Africa. She is a GRA for the Seigel Center for Character, Ethics & Leadership.

Ilham Ramram graduated from the Hassan II University in Casablanca, Morocco with a BA in American Studies. She has worked as an English tutor at the Mohammed V Foundation and speaks Arabic, English, French and Italian. Ilham is the GRA for Dr. Hill’s book project on death penalty cases in the in the 1930s US South.

Mannie Rivers graduated from KSU with a BA in Theater and Performance at KSU. His research interests include critical race theory, performance studies, and spoken word poetry. Mannie is a teaching artist at the Alliance Theatre Institute for Educators and Teaching Artists and is the Director of the Alliance Theatre Teen Poetry. While a KSU student Mannie founded the student organization: Poetica: Kennesaw Spoken Word Society and he regularly performs at open mics and at several Atlanta poetry clubs. He hopes to empower the youth of Atlanta through Alliance Theatre Teen Poetry.

Christi Williams graduated from GSU in 1994 with a B.S. in Communications and worked in Los Angeles as a graphic designer and art director for 12 years. She enrolled at KSU and completed a B.S. in English Education in 2010. She is currently enrolled in dual graduate programs at KSU in both Professional Writing and American Studies and is completing an ESOL teaching endorsement in Education. Christi works as a GRA in the English Department as editor of the department’s newsletter. She also volunteers at the KSU ESL Study Center in its Conversation Partners Program, which mentors the university’s internationa students with proficiency in English. Among her interests are American southwestern literature, environmental issues, and U.S. social and immigration policies.

The Year of Peru (YOP) project has been one of KSU’s most popular and successful programs as it celebrates and disseminates information to students and the surrounding community about the history, architecture, art, food, folklore, archeology, film, and literature of Peru. During the fall 2011 semester, a powerful exhibit was put on display at the KSU Commons and in Willingham Hall that portrayed Hiram Bingham’s 1911 photos of his unexpected uncovering of the ancient Peruvian citadel built by the Inca Pachacuti. The exhibit attracted many students and individuals who were interested in learning Machu Picchu’s history. The Consulate General of Peru in Atlanta, along with Drs. Ernesto Silva and Dan Paracka, organized an evening of Peruvian hors d’oeuvres at the Machu Picchu exhibit at which many prominent individuals attended. The event was expertly catered by Gary Coltes, Director of KSU Culinary Services.

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Upcoming YOP Events:

Jan: Child street labor in the age of urban renewal. Feb: the IGI gallery will display contemporary artwork by Peruvian artist Pedro Fuentes. The Bailey Performance Center will host a concert by Edgar Valcárcel featuring cellist Jesús Castro-Balbi and pianist Gloria Lin. The Stillwell Theatre will host renowned theatre company Cuatrotablaz which will perform selections from José María Arguedas Los ríos profundos under the direction of Alejandro Delgado. Feb. 24-25: KSU will host a conference entitled “Understanding Peru through Visual, Culinary & Literary Culture.” March: the contemporary-Peruvian cinema will be presented by Sebastian Pimentel, editor of the film magazine Godard!

April is about women in Peru. The Year of Peru will also host a number of other discussions and presentations regarding literature and culture of Peru as well, along with food demonstrations at the KSU Commons.

http://www.kennesaw.edu/yearofperu/