Richie Essenburg named Outstanding MAST Student

MAST faculty voted to nominate Richie as the Spring 2012 Outstanding MAST student. Richie has been a GRA for Dr. Emron Esplin, assisting with research on the Edgar Allan Poe book-length project. He has also participated in the International Summer School in the International Summer School on the Americas in Graz, Austria. While a graduate student, Richie was on the staff of KSU’s Talon Magazine. His thesis is entitled: The New Nativism: White Nationalism, McCarthyism and the Latino Threat. Capstone Advisors on this project were: Dr. Emron Esplin and Dr. Kenneth Maffitt. Congrats, Richie!

AMST Faculty Research & Publications


Tony Grooms (2012): Cultural Lesson and Gye Nyame, Colere, Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Forthcoming (poems)


David King (2011) In February, I gave one of the invited Annual Flannery O’Connor Lectures at Andalusia, O’Connor’s home in Milledgeville.

David King (2011) In April, I presented “hitched: The Similar Legacies of Flannery O’Connor and Alfred Hitchcock” at the Flannery O’Connor Conference at Georgia College.


Mark Your Calendars! (RSVP to smillie72@kennesaw.edu)

April 9 - 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. - AMST Open House @ the Legacy Gazebo. Come enjoy the hot dog cart, meet faculty and students to learn about how American Studies can help you achieve your goals.

May 8 - 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. - MAST Graduation

May 16 - 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. - MAST Celebration - for Grads, current students & newly accepted students.

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http://amst.hos.kennesaw.edu

The idea for this collection of essays came about when I was teaching a course called Queering the American South. I found plenty of books about The South, and two excellent scholarly collections—one from American Studies and one by literary scholars. I wanted my students to read narratives by writers who identified in some way as both Southern and queer. I was very careful to ask for essays that moved beyond progress narratives of being queer in the South; instead, I asked them for writing that queers the South by confronting it—how they accomplished this, I left up to them.

Queer South Rising is the first truly interdisciplinary collections of essays on the South and queerness that deliberately aims for multiple approaches to the topics. Contributors represent a range of professions and areas of interest, and include social activists and organizers, such as lesbian feminist social justice activist Mab Segrest, in addition to local AIDS activists, museum curators, educators, and scholars from across several academic fields. Essays explore multiple intersections of Southern place—religion, politics, sexuality, race, education, etc.—that transcend regional boundaries as pointedly relevant topics in academic studies and popular culture. I have sought, in collecting essays for this book, to seek out a diverse group of authors—across disciplines, professions, and interests—in an effort to disrupt notions of “the Southern queer,” and I have invited these voices to shatter perceptions about a nostalgically, romantically Southern culture in general.

Naming the collection Queer South Rising is itself a queer political act, conjointing and juxtaposing the words Queer and South. It challenges us to think about each differently. The collected essays remind “queer” that sometimes queer voices have Southern accents. They remind a South that believes itself a queer political act, conjoining and juxtaposing the words Queer and South. It challenges us to think about each differently. The collected essays remind “queer” that sometimes queer voices have Southern accents. They remind a South that believes it knows its own essence of voices it would rather not know at all. Further, the idea that a queer South might rise undermines the Battle Cry of “The South’s Gonna Rise Again!” embedded in the collective memory of a conservative South. Rising here is a series of ruptures, like furrows in a plowed field where seeds are sown; it is akin to breaking and turning over meanings of Southern place.

When Queer South Rising: Voices of a Contested Place comes out in the fall, I hope you will look for it. You can recognize it easily by its cover. The cover art also came about as a result of my Queering the American South class. The flyer for that course featured the confederate “Stars and Bars” battle flag in bright rainbow colors, and it created quite a stir across campus. Some students called the Dean, others dropped by to see him in person. One day, we heard a crashing boom in the office. When we ran out into the hall, the student assistant told us someone had looked at the flyer on the office suite glass and had hauled it off and slammed into it—and the glass on which it hang—with his fist. I’m happy to say, with the full support of the Dean, the flyers stayed up. A few weeks later, some of my gay students voiced their own objections to the flyer, saying it essentialized and offended them by imposing a confederate icon onto rainbow colors! I had disrupted everybody with one image. And—Southern country woman that I am—I have just enough mischief in me to want to see how that turns out. I hope you enjoy these essays and find disruptions of your own.

Jessica Killcreas has been the GRA on book project for 2011-2012.
### Fall 2012 Course Highlights

**AMST 7000: American Studies Scholarship - Dr. Rebecca Hill**

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<th>Tuesdays</th>
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<td>This course is designed to introduce you to contemporary American studies scholarship and its historical antecedents, so that you have a broad understanding of not only what contemporary scholars are doing, but where their work fits in the history of the field as a whole. That field has expanded from its own institutional origins to embrace what has come today to be known as “cultural studies,” so some of the classic works that you will read have not traditionally been understood as “American Studies” works, but have become so influential in contemporary American Studies scholarship that they can be said to have formed a new canon. The class will go in nearly chronological order based on these “classics”, creating a history of the field that places it within an international context of cultural studies scholarship.</td>
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**AMST 7310: Regional Studies: The Engaged Classroom (Maya) - Dr. Alan LeBaron**

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<th>Mondays</th>
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<td>This course examines the question of ethnic and cultural identity among the Maya of Mesoamerica and the United States, and secondarily ethnic cultural identity among Native Americans in the Americas. Students will consider the various theories behind ethnic/cultural identity, including the concepts of emotional ethnicity, political ethnicity and imagined ethnicity. The Maya people have lived in the Americas for thousands of years, thus have gone through many cultural and identity transformations, however, Maya continue speaking their indigenous languages and maintaining parts of their historic culture. As a class project, students will examine the recent immigration of approximately 800,000 Maya into the US and the quest of some Maya to establish a Native American Movement. Community engagement will focus on the decade long work called the Maya Heritage Community Project located in Canton, Georgia. Students will have an engaged classroom experience working. Course may be repeated for credit provided the content differs.</td>
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**AMST 7740: Popular Culture: Sexual Representation in the U.S. - Dr. Joe Thomas**

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<td>This course examines the cultural production, public images, and reception of sexuality in the US since World War II. A survey of the history of sexuality as a cultural and social phenomenon during this period will provide a backdrop for case studies that demonstrate changing attitudes in the population at large as well as the evolution of new sexual and erotic expressive forms. New scientific discoveries will be placed in a social context. Films, comics, art and advertising are some of the media to be examined. Students should be those who are not offended by frank discussions of sexuality, including sexual orientation.</td>
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**AMST 7310: America in Transnational Context: Greater Mexico - Dr. Emron Esplin**

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<td>Mexican culture: food, language, religion, literature, politics, music, etc. -- manifests itself not only throughout Mexico and the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, but throughout the U.S. America Paredes and several other scholars refer to this region of Mexican cultural influence as “Greater Mexico.” This course will introduce students to the concept while offering an in-depth study of literature from Mexican, Chicano/a, and U.S. literary traditions. Our readings will lead to discussions about national conflict between the US and Mexico and to questions of racial and ethnic identity. What are the differences between terms like Chicano/a, Mexican-American, Latino, and Hispanic? In short, the course brings diverse texts into conversation with each other and emphasizes the problem of dividing literature by nation and/or language.</td>
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Also available: AMST 7500 & AMST 7900.

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**What does a Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) do?**

by Shelley McGinnis

This spring I am working under Dr. Catherine Lewis, professor of history, Director of the Museum of History and Holocaust Education, and Executive Director of Museums, Archives and Rare Books. My project is to create an online exhibit for the museum, “Hollywood Goes to War,” focusing on the contributions of the American film industry during World War II.

I’ve gotten a lot of good research experience developing the exhibit, including using national archives to find primary source materials. Coming across things like fellow soldiers’ testimonies concerning Audie Murphy’s heroism in battle, letters written by GI’s to Donna Reed, and patent documents related to Hedy Lamarr’s invention for improving radio control of torpedoes has been pretty fascinating.

There’s a wealth of material. Deciding what needs to be included has been one of the most challenging aspects of the project. Did you ever hear that Eddie Albert, the star of Green Acres, went undercover as a circus performer in Mexico to report on Nazi activities there? It’s true. There’s just so many stories. I’ve put a lot of thought into trying to organize the individual stories around significant points. One of the most interesting facets to me, and one that I knew little about, is how the movie industry viewed Nazi Germany in the years before American involvement in the war: movies at the time tended to stay away from controversial political issues, and yet some studio executives and stars passionately and publicly opposed the Nazis and Nazi sympathizers in the United States.

Currently I’m in the middle of writing, trying to distill all these ideas into accessible blocks of text, and looking forward to working with Julia Brock on building the site. I’m feeling pretty excited right now about the flexibility and accessibility of web-based projects, so I expect to gain a lot of valuable experience from this project, which I think also has a lot of potential to further grow and expand.

**Several GRA Projects will be Available for Fall 2012 and Spring 2013**

Watch the MAST website (http://amst.kennesaw.edu) and the MAST Listserv for the 2012/2013 GRA opportunities which should be published sometime in June 2012. The KSU campus offers over 200 GRA projects to graduate students. Assistantships provide tuition remission and a monthly stipend. GRAs work for 13 hours per week with one or more faculty members on projects related to the faculty member’s research, public scholarship, university or professional service or teaching.