This past spring semester I was enrolled in AMST 7310 Regional Studies: Environmental Writing in the South with Dr. Beth Giddens. I was eager to try a new medium outside of the traditional research paper. In deciding to film a documentary, I knew little about what I was getting myself into, but I already had a subject in mind, the environmental history of Cave Spring, Georgia.

I grew up only 30 minutes outside of Cave Spring, but before beginning field research for this project, I could count on one hand how many times I had been there in my life. As I began researching historical and environmental information about the town, I quickly discovered the town’s current community project “The Green Hotel.” The simple fact that the building to which they were all referring was neither green, nor seemed to be any kind of business, much less a hotel piqued my interest enough to make it one of the focal points of the documentary. “The Green Hotel” turned out to be a dilapidated building that is now believed to have been the home of members of the Vann family. The Vann family is an important part of Georgia history. They were once a wealthy Cherokee family who possessed plantation homes and many enslaved people.

It was obvious “The Green Hotel” was more than a historical landmark, but the latest in a long line of community-wide projects. Over the years, the Cave Spring community has strived to protect their natural landscape of mountains, springs, and creeks, as well as many important historical landmarks. Cave Spring, with its single traffic signal, is the epitome of a small town, and the citizens plan to keep it that way.

In conducting research in the local library archives, conducting interviews with multiple local historians, and adventuring my way around town, I collected more than enough information to compile a half hour film about the history, environment, and community involvement of the town. I was fortunate to know a local musician who not only allowed me to use his music throughout the film, but he also was able to narrate, completing the film’s southern small town feel.

While the documentary turned out to be much more work than the traditional research paper, I cannot wait to do it again. Also, if anyone is interested in participating in fascinating historical preservation projects, or wants a nice quiet getaway in Northwest Georgia, Cave Spring is the place for you.

Crystal is a GRA for the Siegel Institute for Leadership, Ethics & Character under the direction of Dr. Linda Johnston.
Spring 2013 MAST Courses
Spring Early Registration: Nov.5-Dec.3, 2012 - Final Registration: Jan. 7-8, 2013

AMST 7100: American Studies Methods - Rebecca Hill, Tuesdays, 6:30 – 9:15 p.m. - Introduces students to current methods in American Studies research and public practice. The course focuses on core concepts, objects of analysis, and evolving research practices used for working in American Studies. Students will grapple with the concept of interdisciplinarity, examine the values of a variety of disciplinary methods and think consciously about which methods make the most sense for their own particular areas of interest in American Studies. Students will read both disciplinary and interdisciplinary works in American studies that emphasize particular methods: literary criticism, history, sociology, art history, as well as more thematic studies. While critiquing notable examples from the field, and working on their own research projects, students will also consider various dynamic professional contexts for “doing” American Studies, such as professional organizations and journals, classrooms, the workplace, public settings, and other diverse communities outside the university.

AMST 7200: American Cultural Movements: The Immigrant Worker – Ken Maffitt, Wednesdays, 6:30-9:15 p.m. – This course examines the history of and relationship between selected cultural movements through an interdisciplinary lens. The course analyzes the evolution and conduct of movements, as well as the evolution of academic inquiry and understanding of these movements. The course emphasizes the connections between American cultural movements and those in other parts of the world. Topics discussed may include, but are not limited to, the abolitionist, labor, civil rights, American Indian, environmentalist, women’s, anti-war, reproductive rights, gay and lesbian, and anti-globalization movements, among others. Course may be repeated for credit provided the content differs entirely from the previous offering.

AMST 7320: America in Transnational Context: (Transnational Course) - Nina Morgan, Mondays, 6:30-9:15 p.m. – This course examines interactions between Americans and other international groups. The course may address several time periods and locations or focus on a single case study (e.g., the impact of cross-cultural contact in a specific region or era). Besides secondary research from diverse disciplines, students use primary texts from popular culture to interpret the influence of American culture in other parts of the world (e.g., American television viewed in other lands) and the ways that immigration of new groups has shaped the social landscape in the U.S. Course may be repeated for credit provided the content differs entirely from the previous offering.

AMST 7440: Enterprise & Labor in American Culture: Trains and Transportation – Linda Niemann, Thursdays, 6:30 – 9:15 p.m. – Abraham Lincoln was a railroad lawyer, arguing the manifest destiny rights of an east-west current of travel across the Mississippi. The real John Henry was short and from New Jersey. William S. Burroughs stole literary characters from the railroad hobo writer, Jack Black. The North American railroad was the embodiment of Manifest Destiny. Its technology created the country we live in today. Along the way, it became many things to many people: employment, mobility, a symbol of ruthless power, opportunity, connection, and genocide. We will look at both what the railroad was and what it became as it was transformed by art, photography, literature, folklore, and music. In particular, we will focus on the transcontinental movement, its effect on the development of the west, on labor, and on American cultures: African American, indigenous, migratory labor, immigrant, and hobos. We will also examine the railroad as it is represented in photography, music, literature, graffiti art, and the sport of “catching out.” The railroad as a distinct subculture will be read through the lens of former workers who wrote about it or photographed it. Course may be repeated for credit provided the content differs entirely from the previous offering.

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, non-academic environments, or to new research questions. The Practicum fosters the ability to: Read and think critically while using diverse methods to study American cultural products and practices, Communicate effective analysis of American culture both orally and in writing; and Analyze and critique relationships between cultural products and social values. The practicum may be offered as an internship; applied research project; teaching practicum; or other applied experience as approved by the MAST Program Director. For more information on AMST 7500 options, see the AMST 7500 Handbook.

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.

Graduate Research Assistantships for Spring 2013

Applications for Graduate Assistantship positions for the Spring 2013 semester will be accepted through the Human Resources website from Oct. 22 to Dec. 1, 2012

The Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA) and Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) Programs at Kennesaw State University are designed to support the research and teaching responsibilities of the university and to provide students with professional skill development opportunities while enrolled in a degree program.

Graduate Research Assistantships and Graduate Teaching Assistantships involve maintaining a satisfactory academic performance while also successfully performing the assigned responsibilities. The duties assigned for Graduate Research Assistantships should be relevant and add value to the student’s major field of study, area of interest or expertise. For Graduate Teaching Assistantships the teaching assignment is arranged within the host department and should, but is not required to be within the student’s discipline of study.

Assistantship appointments are made for a term of one semester or academic year depending upon program needs and are renewable based upon performance in the program, and at the discretion of the Graduate Program Director and the Dean of The Graduate College. To continue the assistantship, the student must maintain a minimum 3.0 gpa, good academic standing, an acceptable job performance and must update their on-line employment application.

GRA stipends are $4,000, plus tuition remission.

Intensive Spanish & Creative Writing with Dr. Linda Niemann

http://www.kennesaw.edu/studyabroad

June 8-July 19, 2013 in Oaxaca, Mexico
Participants will spend four weeks in the historic and artistic colonial city of Oaxaca, located in the south of Mexico. This city is known for its beautiful colonial architecture, bright artwork and a tranquil atmosphere. Students will live with host families and take Spanish courses at the Instituto Cultural. The program includes fieldtrips to woodcarving, pottery, and weaving villages, as well as a three-day excursion to the stunning bays and beaches of Huatulco.