Faculty Spotlight:
Dr. Kenneth Maffitt
Assistant Professor of History & American Studies

Like other similar cases of authoritarian repression in Latin America and elsewhere during the mid-to-late Cold War era, Mexico's "Dirty War" pitted state security and paramilitary forces against the armed left and anyone else the government deemed to be a threat. Trained and/or encouraged by the United States, whose "national security doctrine" supported aggressive attacks on dissident movements under the pretext of stopping communism, the Mexican government tortured detainees, carried out extrajudicial killings, and committed many other human rights violations in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. However, it has only been in the last decade that Mexicans and international observers have acknowledged that Mexico experienced this period of intense repression. Thus, Mexico's "Dirty War" is a relatively new and "hot" research area. As such, Dr. Maffitt is just one of many scholars who have pored over historical documents as they have been released, interviewed those involved, and participated in conference sessions on the topic.

Dr. Maffitt's work deals with the ongoing construction of historical memory about the Dirty War and the possibilities for bringing justice to the victims. Thus, his research is very "American Studies" in that he is equally interested in the social, legal, political, and cultural aspects of Mexico's recent history. Mexico's "Dirty War" is just one of many cases that will be discussed in the "AMST 7510: American Foreign Policy and Popular Culture from the Cold War to the War on Terror" class held on Thursdays this spring.

Important Dates

November 4 - December 2: Early Registration Period
December 1: Final Deadline for Spring 2014 MAST Applications
December 11: Wine & Cheese Party for Current & Newly Accepted MAST Students
December 13: Kennesaw State University Fall 2013 Graduation
December 23 - January 3: University Closed - Happy Holidays!
January 6-7: Final Registration Period
January 8: First Day of Spring 2014 Classes
January 17: Deadline for Proposals for Unconventional Wisdom Conference
January 30: Deadline for Paper Proposals for AADS Student Research Conference
March 1: Clendenin Graduate Fellows Scholarship Deadline
March 13-14: Unconventional Wisdom - American Studies Student Conference
March 20: Race, Representation and Leadership: From Africa to the Diaspora - AADS Student Research and Community Engagement Conference
March 23-29: Gender & Women’s Studies Focus Week
April 1: Final Deadline for Summer 2014 MAST Applications

KSU Announces a New Graduate Certificate in American Studies

The American Studies program at Kennesaw State University is happy to announce that we are now offering a fifteen hour graduate certificate. Our program's courses offer an interdisciplinary approach to the study of American cultures as they exist locally, regionally, nationally, and transnationally. We also incorporate elements of ethnic studies and women's studies to produce a more holistic way of studying American culture.

Students interested in cultural diversity, intercultural communication, social justice, education, interdisciplinary studies of history, literature, and cultural interpretation as well as critical analysis of media are strongly encouraged to apply. The certificate program does not include the capstone project or practicum.

The certificate program can be taken by itself or as a complement to another graduate program. Students interested in the certificate should apply through Graduate Admissions. Please visit our website (http://amst.hss.kennesaw.edu) for more details.
AMST 7100: American Studies Methods - Dr. Rebecca Hill
Wednesdays, 6:15 - 9:30 PM
The AMST 7100 methods course 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. In this class, 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 works emphasizing methods of historical research, visual culture analysis, ethnography, literary criticism, as well as wholly interdisciplinary projects. While critiquing notable examples from the field, and working on their own research projects, students will also consider various professional contexts for “doing” American Studies, such as professional organizations and journals, classrooms, the workplace, public settings, and other diverse communities outside the university. Students will choose a general topic or subject for their research project at the beginning of the semester and research it using a variety of methodologies throughout the semester, producing a final project using at least two disciplinary methodologies.

AMST 7230: Public History & Culture - Dr. Catherine Lewis and Dr. Jennifer Dickey
Mondays, 5:00 - 7:45 PM
Public History and Culture examines the popular uses and presentations of the American past. Exploring historical memory’s role in American culture, the course draws on a range of methods (e.g. site visits, research in popular publications, study of historical documentaries) to critique the ways that the past is recorded and transmitted. Course content may include a rationale and debate defining the parameters of historical division, as well as an emphasis upon the significance of artifacts, lore, written and oral commentary of the period, and the language that both constructs and vivifies the meanings of the past. As a class, we will investigate the ways in which perceptions of the past are formed and communicated from generation to generation, across cultures and centuries. This inquiry will address change over time and focus on public events and public history sites, with particular emphasis on museums and historic sites, both private and those sanctioned by the state.

AMST 7300: Crime and Punishment in Cities, Suburbs, and Countryside - Dr. Hill
Tuesdays, 6:30-9:15 PM
This course provides an interdisciplinary approach to studying how prisons and policing shape American life, creating a carceral state crucial to the organization of cities, suburbs, and countryside. Readings emphasize the economics and geography of prisons and policing as well as how discourses of criminality and punishment frame how Americans understand the spaces where they live. We will look at how prisons and crime appear in literary and televised representations and discuss how these representations connect to actual prisons and police. Finally, the course will explore policies around immigration, terrorism, wars on drugs and sex trafficking as they connect national and local politics to patterns of exchange in the global economy. The final project for the class will be to research a local event or organization related to prisons or policing and the format of the final project is open (traditional paper, creative project, or applied research). Readings include Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Gold Gulag; Robert Perkison, Texas Tough; Regina Kunzel, Criminal Intimacies... and more.

AMST 7510: American Foreign Policy and Popular Culture from the Cold War to the War on Terror - Dr. Kenneth Maffitt
Thursdays, 6:30 - 9:15 PM
This course will examine interactions between America and other nations through the study of US foreign policy and its intersections with popular culture. The course will examine both the Cold War and the post-9/11 time periods, examining their commonalities and differences. In addition to reading secondary research in diverse disciplines, students will use primary texts from popular culture to interpret the influence of American culture in other parts of the world, the ways that the immigration of new groups has shaped the social landscape of the US, and the interconnections of popular culture texts and foreign policy practices.

AMST 7700: Practicum (Internship or Applied Research Project)
Prerequisites - AMST 7000 and AMST 7100 - Permission of the Director Required

AMST 7900: Capstone Experience (1-6 Credit Hours)
Prerequisites: AMST 7000 and AMST 7100 - Permission of the Director Required

MAST Students at Recent Conferences

Congratulations to our graduate students in the MA Program in American Studies who have recently presented at conferences held both in Georgia and throughout the United States!

Dudgrick Bevins, Nykia Hannah, and Blaine McCarty all presented at the Popular/American Culture Association (P/ACA) in the South Conference in October 2013. Their papers were titled “Domestic Disturbance: Troubling Domestic Space and Gender in Alfred Hitchcock’s ‘Psycho’, Its Sequels, and Its Reincarnations,” “Disease, Divorce, and Drama: Ideological Disruption in Reality Television,” and “Bigfoot and the Masculine Crisis” respectively.

Dudgrick Bevins also presented “Trans’-National Cartooning: Transgender Narratives in Sequential Art from Home and Abroad Part 2” at Brown University’s Non-State(s) of Queer Theory Conference in April and “Disrupting Genderism in Schools: A Critical Analysis of Transgender Trade Books” with Dr. Scott Ritchie at NCTE’s Whole Language Umbrella at Hofstra University in July.

This past April, Crystal Money presented “The Missed Opportunities of Ethics” at the Georgia State University GTA Pedagogy Conference.

Here at Kennesaw State University, Yen Rodriguez hosted a panel titled “Black and Brown II - How Can I Be Down: Social Overcompensation” at the African and African Diaspora Studies Conference. Additionally, Christi Williams recently organized an interdisciplinary panel titled “BATS: Saving the “Dark Knight” and presented her own research at an ISD Research in Progress event.

“I thought this conference was great because I was surrounded by folks doing similar research as me in popular culture. It was inspiring to be around like minded people.”
-- Blaine McCarty

“Presenting at conferences has been amazing! It makes me feel like the work I have put into my research and writing is more meaningful... It is like it comes to life!”
-- Dudgrick Bevins