MAST Alumni Updates

**Tanya Brinkley**, ’17, was elected Vice-President of the American Society for Public Administration - Georgia Chapter, in July 2017, and intends to keep active in social justice public policy and administrative issues. She was also accepted to the Georgia State Institute of Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies Graduate Certificate Program and plans to continue her work in Feminist Social Work, Disability and At Risk for Homelessness Advocacy.

**Noah Echols**, ’12, recently left his VP, Director of Strategy position at the IQ Agency to become Senior Director of Marketing and Communications at the Carroll Organization.

AMSTO Call For Papers for Symposium

*Identity in America*, hosted by the American Studies Student Organization (AMSTO), is a campus wide, interdisciplinary event designed to bring into a conversation the many perspectives facing contemporary issues of identity. The goal for the event is to have both students and faculty showcased in the presentation of their original thoughts and research on topics which may include gender, sexuality, race, age, religion, class, ability, ethnicity, nationality and the cultural products and phenomena intrinsic to life in the Americas.


Please briefly outline your research presentation: 1. Title and Abstract (limit:300 words) 2. Desired Method of Presentation (Poster presentation, Roundtable/ Panel, Digital/ Multimedia)

Please consider and submit to us as soon as possible, but no later than January 12, 2018 via AMSTOofKSU@gmail.com.

Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Miriam Brown Spiers joins ISD as Assistant Professor of American Studies

Dr. Miriam Brown Spiers comes to KSU from the University of California Merced, but her family roots are in Marietta, GA. Her father grew up there, too, and she later received her B.A. in English from Oglethorpe University. Dr. Brown Spiers went on to earn her M.A. and Ph.D in English, as well as a graduate certificate in Native American Studies, from the University of Georgia. Before coming to KSU, she taught at Miami University Middletown and the University of California Merced, where she led courses in Women’s and Gender Studies, Writing Studies, English, and Native American Studies. Dr. Brown Spiers’s current book project examines the ways that Native novelists have adapted the generic tropes of science fiction as a means of resisting cultural assimilation and reasserting the value of indigenous knowledge in the twenty-first century. In her spare time, she enjoys baking (especially bread) and playing strategy-based board games; she and her husband have a toddler, three cats, and a dog.
When Mandy McGrew graduated from the M.A. in American Studies program at KSU in 2011, she discovered that her new degree could take her in many exciting directions. While in the program, she had worked with Dr. Alan LeBaron on medical issues facing Maya people in the U.S., and she wondered if she wanted to pursue that field further, return to her home discipline of History, or uproot her family to an area offering an American Studies Ph.D. program. As has been the case for Mandy’s research interests before, the answer found her.

In 2013, she began teaching American Studies part-time at KSU, and in 2014, she joined the Part-Time Faculty Council, representing the Interdisciplinary Studies Department. It was then that Mandy describes an awakening. She became aware of the plight of part-time faculty, and immediately, she began researching and writing about the adjunct and part-time faculty experience in academia. It wasn’t long before Mandy began to get some recognition for her work. Creative Loafing commissioned an article on the subject from her, and she did two NPR interviews to discuss her research and concerns. Now, as the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) Faculty Fellow for Part-Time Faculty Support, Mandy finds herself in a position to have an even greater impact on students than she would if she were strictly an educator. Quite literally, she’s been able to turn her passion into a career. Her primary job is to provide teaching support to KSU’s 1,300 part-time faculty members: she creates workshops and webinars; hosts one-on-one consultations; performs syllabus reviews; coordinates the Symposium for Part-Time, Adjunct, and Contingent Educators (SPACE, a national conference held in Dunwoody); writes blog posts advising on teaching and learning; presents to different departments; and serves as a liaison to the Part-Time Faculty Council as a non-voting member. Generally, she says, her focus is on integrating part-time faculty more fully into the KSU community and removing the stigma over part-time workers. Above all, she strives to provide faculty with the resources they need to be excellent teachers.

With all of that on her plate, Mandy insists on taking on more. She teaches part-time for American Studies and says that she loves it and wants to keep one foot in the door in the department. She also returned to grad school this semester. She’s enrolled in Valdosta State University’s Educational Leadership Ed.D. program and is excited to be back in school. In August, she was honored at the Opening of the University ceremony with an Outstanding Part-Time Faculty Teaching Award, and at Homecoming, she received the 2017 Outstanding Alumna award from the Interdisciplinary Studies Department. For Mandy, it all comes back to American Studies: “The rigor of the (MAST) program and the mentorship provided . . . are a big part of why I have been successful in my career.”

In addition to her professional success, Mandy is also a busy mother of two. Her son, Den, 13, plays music and enjoys having in-depth political conversations, and her daughter, Annika, 11, is on her school’s news team and runs track.

**Spring 2018 Courses**

**AMST 6401:** Literature and Culture of the Americas, Wednesdays, 6:30 - 9:15 PM, Dr. Na-Rae Kim

**AMST 7000:** American Studies Scholarship, Tuesdays, 6:30 - 9:15 PM, Dr. Rebecca Hill

**AMST 7460:** Movements in American Culture: Food, Thursdays, 6:30 - 9:15 PM, Dr. Thomas Okie

**AMST 7520:** America in a Transnational Context: Feminism, Online, Dr. Stacy Keltner

**AMST 7700:** Practicum -- Internship or Applied Research Project

**AMST 7900:** Capstone Experience