

MEET OUR NOBLE/ERISMAN FELLOW

WHAT WOULD YOU do with \$4,000? If you are like graduate student Ben Wiggins, you would dive into research with fewer financial worries.

Ben, a Ph.D. candidate and our first Noble/Erismán Fellow, is researching the history of the categorization and commodification of humans. His work goes beyond the phenomenon of slavery to touch upon actuarial science, discriminatory lending practices, and contemporary identity crises—to name just a few subjects.

You undoubtedly have been inspired by David Noble's teaching legacy. And you know that we take our commitment to our graduate students very seriously. So it should come as no surprise that we would establish the David Noble Graduate Research Fellowship, which provides support to graduate students at any point in their studies. Because this fund is somewhat new, we have temporarily combined it with another new fund, the Erismán Fellowship, established by the generous American studies alumnus Fred Erismán, in order to begin support of graduate students now.

With the cost of graduate school approaching \$25,000 a year, financial support for worthy students such as Ben is more critical than ever. Fellowships not only provide encouragement

and support for students, they also allow the department to recruit the very best students.

Thank you to all the contributors to the David Noble Fellowship and thank you to Fred Erismán for providing Ben and students in years to come with the incredible gift of financial support.

You too can make a difference in the lives of our graduate students. Both the David Noble and Fred Erismán fellowships qualify for the University's 21st Century Graduate Fellowship Match Program. What this means is that every dollar paid out of these fellowship funds is matched dollar for dollar by the University—essentially doubling the impact of every gift.

If you are interested in learning more about fellowships in American studies, or if you are interested in leaving your own legacy by creating a fellowship in your name, please contact me at 612-626-5141 or paulsone@umn.edu.

Warm regards,

EMILY PAULSON
Development officer



PHOTO: EVERETT AYUBZADEH

Save the Dates

DAVID NOBLE RETIREMENT EVENTS

SATURDAY
OCTOBER 18, 2008

American Studies Association
National Conference

Albuquerque Convention Center
Albuquerque, New Mexico

4 pm: Panel, *An American
Studies Worthy of Emulation:
The Legacy of David W. Noble*

8-10 pm: Reception

SATURDAY
APRIL 18, 2009 @ 1 PM

McNamara Alumni Center
University of Minnesota

Panel Discussion and Celebration

Honor David Noble at any time
with a gift to the David Noble
Graduate Research Fellowship
Fund. Make a secure gift online
at <http://americanstudies.umn.edu/giving>.

MYRIAD

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DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN STUDIES

FALL 2008

MYRIAD



DAVID NOBLE
Retires after 56 years

[Professor Carol Miller to Retire](#)

[Rod Ferguson on Teaching After 9/11](#)

[Essays by Alumni Jason Ruiz & Sharon Leon](#)

[Remembering Roland Delattre](#)

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MYRIAD

DEAR AMERICAN STUDIES ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,

THIS ISSUE OF *MYRIAD* marks many noteworthy passages in our department. We mourn the loss of longtime faculty member Roland Delattre in 2007 and note the retirement of our colleague Carol Miller, a faculty member who has for so long bridged our important relationship with American Indian studies. We also celebrate the selection of Professor Elaine Tyler May as a Regents Professor, the first core faculty member in American studies to receive the University's highest honor.

David Noble's retirement in May 2009 is perhaps the most significant of these events not only for our department, but also for the University of Minnesota. David has taught at the University for 56 years and has received nearly every teaching

accolade available, and most of the scholarly ones as well. This magazine is simply the first in a series of ways we will mark his retirement; see the back cover for an announcement of two special events in October and April. We hope that you will join us in honoring David Noble, and also join with



PHOTO: STEVEN FOLDES

other alumni and friends to renew old acquaintances and reflect on our 65-year history as one of the first American studies programs in the nation.

In addition to marking these events, *Myriad* will give you a glimpse of our lively work as a department and the field of American studies. In these pages you will learn about one of our newest, and one of the College of Liberal Arts' most important, courses, *The United States Since September 11th*. Professor Rod Ferguson reflects on teaching the course and includes a list of articles read by students and films that they viewed.

You will have an opportunity to learn about contemporary American studies scholarship in the essays of two of our outstanding Ph.D. students. Jason Ruiz, who recently completed his Ph.D., writes about his dissertation project, which explores travel literature about Mexico at the close of the 19th century. He analyzes the ways in which it provided a cultural foundation for the growth of the United States as an empire. Alumna Sharon Leon, now on the faculty of George Mason University, writes about her pioneering work to democratize the teaching of history through digital media and computer technology.

We express our heartfelt appreciation to our alumni and friends who have contributed generously to fellowships and scholarship for undergraduate and graduate students. Your gifts are crucial. We cannot do our work without them. We hope that you will continue to partner with us as we educate outstanding scholars and citizens for the 21st century.

Sincerely,

RIV-ELLEN PRELL

Professor of American studies and department chair
prell001@umn.edu

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MYRIAD is a fitting title for this magazine. American studies is one of the most vibrant and inclusive of disciplines. Minnesota's American studies program—a national leader—is famous for drawing together open-minded and innovative scholars from a multiplicity of disciplines and for encompassing myriad methods, histories, and cultures.

MYRIAD is published once a year by the Department of American Studies, University of Minnesota, for alumni/ae, faculty, staff, and friends of the department. Send correspondence to the editor at the address below.

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Professor Carol Miller to Retire



PHOTO: KELLY O'BRIEN

CAROL MILLER, MORSE ALUMNI Distinguished Professor of Teaching in American Studies and American Indian Studies, will retire from the University of Minnesota in May 2009. Professor Miller has had a distinguished career at the University of Minnesota. She exemplifies the university's ideal of the

citizen/teacher/scholar and her colleagues and generations of students in General College, American Indian studies, and American studies feel enormously fortunate to have had her as a member of our community since 1981.

A distinguished scholar of Native American and women's literature, as well as a writer of stories and poetry, Professor Miller, an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, has written about women's narratives and Native American novels and poetry. In addition, she is the cofounder and former codirector with Toni McNaron, professor emeritus of English, of "Voices from the Gaps" (voices.cla.umn.edu), a Web site of biographies and critical information about North American women writers of color. Millions of readers and writers from across the globe have visited the site.

Without question, Professor Miller is one of the university's great teachers. Her undergraduate courses were true models of teaching and active learning. Her

academic writing into the future. I also found in her a source of good-sense warmth and creative inspiration for the craft of writing unequalled by the other wonderful professors with whom I had the privilege to work."

Joseph Bauerkemper, just completing his dissertation, describes what it is like to work with her: "Carol has enabled me to grasp the intricate nuances of various scholarly debates, and she repeatedly helps me to understand my place within them."

In 2002 Professor Miller received the President's Award for Outstanding Service, the University of Minnesota's highest honor for citizenship. In addition to serving as both chair and director of graduate studies in American studies, she chaired American Indian studies as well. Her colleague Patricia Albers, longtime chair of American Indian studies, says, "We have been privileged to witness her remarkable collegiality and diplomacy at work. Every University department should have a clone of Carol to experience what it means to collaborate and negotiate in an environment of forbearance, trust, and, most of all, fine words and good humor."

Professor Miller served on a wide variety of University and College of Liberal Arts committees and task forces. To every one of these commitments she brought her much-admired good sense, pragmatism, and commitment to the University's highest ideals, particularly those concerning equity and diversity.

We wish Carol and her family well as they begin the next phase of full-time retirement.

— RIV-ELLEN PRELL

colleague Jean O'Brien, who taught courses with her, says, "She routinely drew students into the palm of her hand through her delightfully witty turns of phrase and uncanny ability to pose a question that students found intriguing and accessible."

The graduate students whom she advised shared her interest in literature and culture, and particularly her expertise in Native American literature. Tiya Miles, now associate professor in the Program in American Culture at the University of Michigan, says, "I read Native American literature under her tutelage, gaining a foundation that would influence my

"She routinely drew students into the palm of her hand through her delightfully witty turns of phrase and uncanny ability to pose a question that students found intriguing and accessible."

Reflections on Teaching

The United States Since September 11th

SOMETIMES A CLASS REMINDS YOU why you became a teacher.

Sometimes teaching is about more than the number of students enrolled.

Sometimes students want more than easy answers. Sometimes answers are not the point of critical thinking. Sometimes critical thinking means raising difficult questions and not turning away from where that difficulty leads.

Who knew that a course initially designed to satisfy enrollment demands would take teachers back to their first love and bring students to new horizons? Who knew that some time after September 11, 2001 we in American studies would find a new pedagogical mission?

During the 2005-2006 academic year, Department of American Studies faculty members convened to design a course that would “introduce” students to the field. We wanted a course that would be true to our interests in the United States as a global actor and how it impinges upon life here and in other places. We imagined a course that would be a long and considered answer to the question that seemed to break from so many American mouths after the September 11 attacks: “What led to this?” And so we worked tirelessly to find readings that would respond to that inquiry and give students a sense of how wars in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East account for the pre-history of that event.

While we believed in the innovation of the course, we recognized that capturing an audience is always a gamble. And then we got word that the class filled almost immediately. Encouraged by our new-found providence, we decided to raise the enrollment limit and see how far we could go. That first year we stopped it at 121.

The second time the course was taught, we capped it at 220 students. The question that flew from my lips, of course, was “Why?” And soon it dawned on me that the course emerged at a particular historical convergence: It was five years after September 11; the country was beginning to relax and invite reflection. Ordinary folks, journalists, professors, and politicians began to ask questions about the drive toward war and occupation. The mood seemed to be changing nationally, away from the prohibitive climate that damned as unpatriotic anyone who criticized the war or the Bush administration. More poignantly, though, we introduced the course to the very people who became teenagers at the moment of the attacks. Not only were they introduced to the usual anxieties of pubescent life, they also had to confront national anxieties about terrorism and war, anxieties that permeated everyday existence. It was, also, the first time that many of them would get to talk about that confrontation in a university setting.

Despite the sometimes-intimidating size of the class, there are students who stand out in my mind. There are the Arab and Muslim students who with a nod, a handshake, a chat, or a smile expressed their gratitude for a course that would finally talk about how they had been

constructed as today’s “forever foreigners” and “enemies within.” With historical readings about the Spanish-American War, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, some of them told me that they could see the ways in which they were part of a long line of groups that suffered that dubious distinction. I also remember the always on-time remarks of the veteran who flew helicopters in Vietnam. After I screened David Zieger’s *Sir!, No Sir!*—a movie that chronicles the history of the vast anti-war movement led by American GI’s—that same vet showed me pictures of his own antiwar activities while he was enlisted; he told me those activities had slipped from memory’s grip. The times that I have taught that course have made me bear witness to these truths: A course can speak to people’s need for their complexity to be a matter of record, and a class can remind you of depths that you had forgotten.

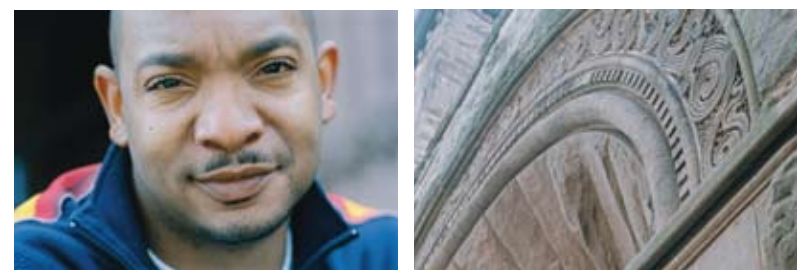
I never told them what to think. But I did insist that they think. In fact, for the first class session, I told the students that we were there to study war. To give them an idea of how we were going to approach September 11 and the wars that followed, I likened the War on Terror to the *matryoshka* dolls—the nesting dolls from Russia. In the big doll called the War on Terror, we might find the 1973 coup in Santiago, Chile; the No Gun Ri incident of 1950, or the Battle of San Juan Hill of 1898. In the last class, I ended with these remarks: “I began this course with the idea of the *matryoshka* dolls, and the War on Terror as our big doll, and all the terrible dolls that are in that doll. I hope you see now why we cannot pass that doll on to anybody else. We, the faculty, offered this course as a way of boosting enrollments in American studies, but in teaching this course we have been reminded that the real reason for teaching is not about increasing enrollments or majors but getting students to seize the intelligence, the wisdom, and the courage that is in you. Work up your nerve and claim it.”

—RODERICK FERGUSON
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR



PHOTOS: RICHARD G. ANDERSON

RODERICK FERGUSON



“The real reason for teaching is... getting students to seize the intelligence, the wisdom, and the courage that is in you. Work up your nerves and claim it.”

THE UNITED STATES SINCE SEPTEMBER 11TH COURSE DESCRIPTION

THE ATTACKS ON THE World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11th are events which suspended the normal workings of the country economically, politically, and culturally. This course explores the historical context of 9/11, situating the attacks in U.S. military, diplomatic, and geopolitical histories. We will explore questions such as how 9/11 is similar to or different from other attacks on the United States or U.S. interests, what the historical relationship of terror to U.S. foreign policy is, and how different countries have viewed the events. The cultural importance of political events since September 11th will be examined through an historical understanding of past conflicts, particularly how wars have shaped the nation’s understanding of itself, its enemies, and its place in the world. The class will also look how 9/11 has been remembered and how the politics of memory shape notions of citizenship and nationhood. We will examine responses to 9/11 and its aftermath in art, literature, and film, which will also serve as a unique introduction to the interdisciplinary methods characteristic of American studies scholarship.

A SELECTION OF COURSE READINGS AND FILMS

Articles & Books

Eqbal Ahmad. “Political Culture and Foreign Policy” in *The Selected Writings of Eqbal Ahmad*

Greg Grandin. *Empire’s Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (2006)

Elaine Tyler May. “Echoes of the Cold War: The Aftermath of September 11th at Home” in Mary Dudziak, *September 11th in History*

Al-Ali Nadje. “Reconstructing Gender: Iraqi Women between Dictatorship, War, Sanctions and Occupation.” *Third World Quarterly*, June 2005

Films

Sir! No Sir! by David Zieger and Displaced Films
The Host by Bong Joon-Ho
Machuca by Andrés Wood



IN CELEBRATION of David Noble's career as a scholar, teacher, and public intellectual, we excerpt a portion of writer Kate Tyler's 2005 interview with him.

David Noble on his career: “I think of teaching as a kind of jazz performance...”

WHAT IS THE LARGER THEME OF YOUR WORK?

It's anti-utopian. The roots of this go back in my childhood. Growing up in the 1930s, I was told that my grandparents—German and Irish immigrants—left an Old World of war and poverty to come to the New World of peace and plenty; my grandfather also left Germany to escape conscription. Yet here was my family in the Great Depression. Our dairy farm outside of Princeton, New Jersey, was foreclosed in 1940. We lived in moderate poverty. And then I was conscripted into the Army in 1943.

HOW DID YOU MAKE SENSE OF THESE CONTRADICTIONS?

I went to Princeton in February 1945 interested in studying the idea of “progress.” I didn't think that World War II symbolized progress. And the

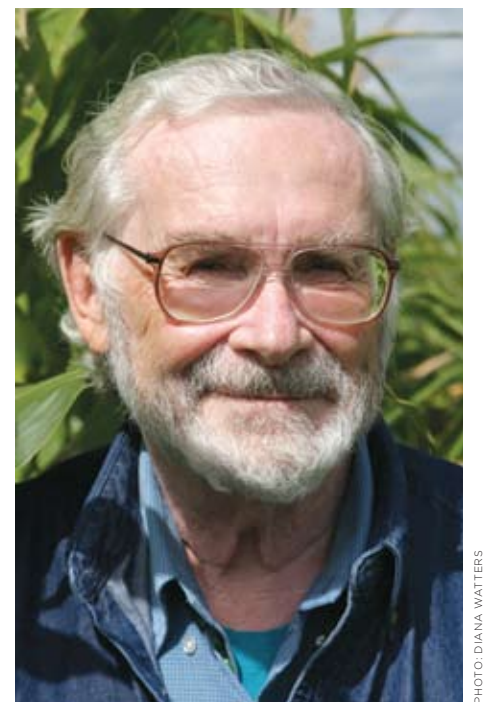


PHOTO: DIANA WATERS

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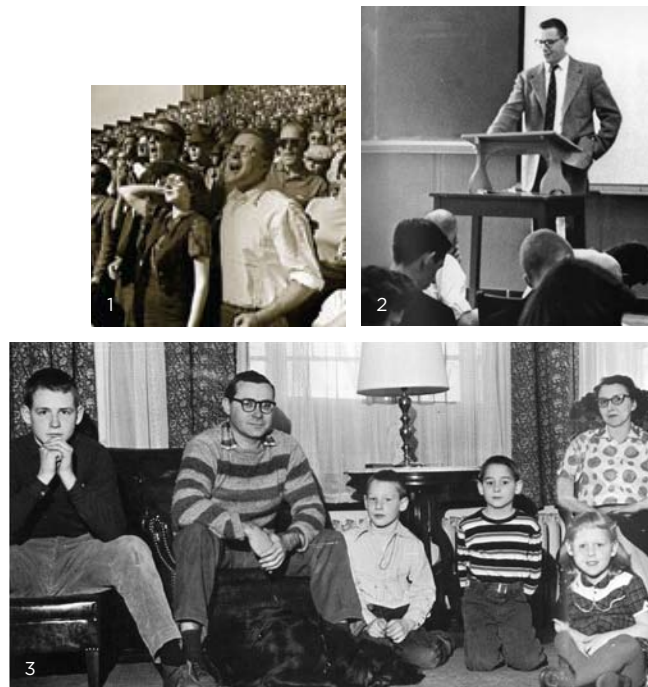


PHOTO: STEVEN FOLDES

DAVID NOBLE

1, 2 and 3. Photos of David's academic and home life from a 1961 *Gopher* yearbook profile. 4. *Life* magazine photo of U of M students and faculty under Army surveillance, 1971. 5. With Peter Carroll, co-author of *The Free and the Unfree: A Progressive History of the U.S.* outside Savran's Bookstore on the west bank, 1977. 6. At commencement, ca. 1995. 7. At the 2008 David Noble Lecture.

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circumstances of my early life certainly echoed what my grandparents had left behind in Europe—running counter to the idea that America was different from Europe, that progress was spatially leaving an “old world” and coming to a “new world.”

You felt compelled to explore this further? What compelled me was that dissonance between the utopian vision of what America was and the dystopian experience that I had lived and observed. I thought I might unravel some of my questions about progress by looking at major intellectuals of the Progressive Era, between 1890 and World War I—John Dewey, Thorstein Veblen, the historians Charles Beard and Carl Becker and others. That became the basis of my first book, *The Paradox of Progressive Thought* (1958).

What conclusions did you draw from this work? Many intellectuals from the 1890s leading into World War I accepted the idea of a dichotomy between time and space, much in keeping with how physicists had understood time and space from Newton till Einstein. They had built up “millennial expectations” that the old, complex, unstable world that had produced World War I—the world of time—would undergo a transition to a simple and orderly new world—the world of space. By 1920, there was this terrible despair that this hadn't occurred.

You continued to explore these themes? I found that the Progressive Era intellectuals were part of a larger, longer pattern in U.S. history. By the 1830s, a “timeless identity” had been established for the

United States; we were “nature's nation,” outside of “timeful complexity”—in a sense, outside history. That was the focus of my next book, *Historians Against History* (1965). I found all the major historians from the 1830s to the 1940s trying to explain time away. By the '40s, they had to acknowledge that things had changed—the Northeast and Midwest had urbanized and industrialized, for example. But they always found a way to prophesy that we would be able to overcome the fall into timeful complexity and restore simplicity. There are echoes of this today. I suppose the closest expression of this at this moment is Protestant fundamentalism.

Did you see yourself as a cultural historian when you were hired in 1952? I was part of the field developed in the 1940s called “intellectual history.” But I liked to call it “cultural history.” My graduate school mentor at the University of Wisconsin had been Merle Curti, a big figure in the field, and I had minored in American literature. Thinking about the stories novelists and historians tell, it occurred to me that inevitably they would be telling the same stories.

Did the American studies milieu influence your work? I don't think I would have written *Historians Against History* or the books that came after it if not for my experience with American studies people from English: Tremaine McDowell, Mary Turpie, and especially Henry Nash Smith, Leo Marx, and Bernard Bowron.

The title of your 1985 book, *The End of American History*, is particularly intriguing. I examined how, starting in the 1930s, American scholars were being asked to give up the isolationism of the '30s, embrace internationalism, and move from the sense of an autonomous national economy to a global economy. In the last 10 years, more and more scholars have been thinking about the transatlantic interrelationships between Americans and Europeans, and between Americans and other nations and cultures.

What is the topic of your current book project? I'm intrigued with how the post-modern discussion about ecology and environmentalism is gradually bringing the humanities and the social sciences

together with biology and physics. Science gives you a physical nature that is complex and always in a process of timeful change. It's telling that the dominant culture that's angry at the humanists is also angry at the ecologists. Part of my book is on the academic economists who, in the 1940s to the 1960s, using Newtonian physics, became absolute millennialists in terms of their vision of their escaping from the world of national economies (complex and timeful) to the global marketplace (simple and timeless). Those ideas still have great currency. Talking about limits—“no-growth politics”—won't get you elected president of the United States, or leader of China, India, or anyplace else. I see the most serious challenges to the narrative of progress coming not from postmodernists, but from the ecologists—their understanding of the earth as a living body that cannot sustain continual expansion.

Why do you love teaching? The world is no less mysterious for me than it was when I went to college in 1945. I love learning, and I love being involved in the process of learning. I love the artistic

creativity of teaching—figuring out how to interrelate lectures with book lists. My syllabus changes every year, incorporating new books reflecting the move from monoculturalism to multiculturalism and from isolationism to postnationalism. I think of teaching as a kind of jazz performance: I improvise each time. I come out with more energy than when I go in. For me, it's tremendously playful.

You've had good students over the years? Oh yes, and I have particularly enjoyed directing graduate students. I don't know whether I have the Minnesota record or not, but since the 1950s, I've directed about 104 dissertations, in both history and American studies.

— KATE TYLER

“The world is no less mysterious for me than it was when I went to college in 1945. I love learning, and I love being involved in the process of learning.”

Travel Writing and American Ideas of Mexico

THIS PAST SUMMER I PACKED up my grad school life and headed to South Bend, Indiana, to assume the position of assistant professor of American studies at the University of Notre Dame. As I loaded up boxes full of books and files, I found myself scratching my head and wondering how I came to

write a dissertation examining perceptions of Mexico in the U.S. popular imagination during and immediately after the long reign of the dictator Porfirio Díaz (1876–1910). Like a lot of my friends and colleagues, I entered graduate school with only a vague notion of what I wanted to study, and I'm still surprised that travelogues and other travel paraphernalia were among the things I needed to pack. My dissertation, "Americans in the Treasure House: Travel to Mexico in the U.S. Popular Imagination, 1876–1920," argues that American travelers helped to produce ways of knowing Mexico as a desirable but dangerous Other that reverberate even today. It surveys a wide array of popular sources, from stereoscopic slides and travelogues to picture postcards, to argue that travelers performed the cultural work of helping U.S. Americans to imagine Mexico within their nation's growing empire, a project with its roots in the mid-19th century that accelerated after 1898.

I came to this topic by accident, while I was helping a friend introduce her class to primary research at the Minnesota Historical Society. Between students, I absentmindedly searched for the terms "Mexico" and "travel" in the library's search aid and came across a title that was too tantalizing to ignore. The book was called *The Devil in Mexico* and it seemed that the MHS had a copy because its author, Gulian Lansing Morrill, had been a prominent citizen of Minneapolis in the early 1900s. (The archives also hold a photograph of Morrill helping to dedicate the city's first municipal Christmas tree.) Morrill fashioned himself a globetrotter, calling himself Golightly and dressing

himself in Victorian travel garb. But unlike the countless polite Progressive Era travelers who couched their distaste for the places they visited in euphemisms, Morrill quite explicitly saw it as his mission to expose what he saw as degeneracy in the non-Western world. Such titles as *Hawaiian Heathens* and *Rotten Republics* reflect his disgust with the far-flung places that he visited, though the reader senses that Morrill was both interested in and repulsed by the "vice" and sexual excess that he observed.

The Devil in Mexico (1917) was so outrageous in its claims of Mexican backwardness and lasciviousness that I wondered if Morrill was even a real person or some character concocted to appeal to readers interested in Livingstone-like adventures. Even the name Golightly Morrill suggested that the author presented his travels with an ironic smirk. "This Tropic of Cancer country is a tropical cancer," he wrote in the preface to *The Devil in Mexico*, "and it may be that the only cure is Uncle Sam's sword." It was not until a couple of years later, after I presented on Morrill's work at the annual meeting of the American Studies Association, that one of the author's descendants contacted me and affirmed that his great-grandfather was a real person—one as flamboyant as his

books suggested. I subsequently visited the home of the widow of Morrill's grandson, who showed me Mrs. Morrill's travel diary, as well as a number of snapshots taken by their son Lowell.

In the end, Morrill and his polemical writings made only a brief appearance in my dissertation, but the author does deserve the credit for sparking my interest in the discourses of travel to Mexico that circulated in U.S. popular culture during the Progressive Era. This research has taken me to archives at the National Museum of American History, the Getty Research Library in Los Angeles, and the Autry National Center's Institute for the Study of the American West, among other places. My training at the University prepared me to engage with the archive, but—more importantly—encouraged me to look for and think critically about the narratives of race, class, gender, sexuality, and modernity that were woven into depictions of travel to Mexico. As I move on from my graduate school days and the intellectual, critical environment fostered by our department, I hope to challenge my future students to look for the deeper meanings in everyday texts—and to let themselves find those texts in surprising places.

— JASON RUIZ, PH.D. '08



JASON RUIZ

PHOTO: KELLY MacWILLIAMS

My training at the University ... encouraged me to look for and think critically about the narratives of race, class, gender, sexuality, and modernity that were woven into depictions of travel to Mexico.

Transforming Teaching in a Digital Age

LIKE MANY SCHOLARS at the beginning of the 21st century, I begin my day with e-mail triage. If a stranger were to wander through my inbox, she'd find a fairly even mix of messages from students alerting me to their new blog postings, from Web designers and programmers about new media projects, from other

academics about 20th-century cultural history, and still others from museum curators and educators about a variety of public projects. Though this may seem like a strange array of communications, it is evidence of the convergence of my commitment to my work as a teacher, as a participant in the emerging field of digital humanities, and as an American studies scholar.

Since 2004 I have had the good fortune to be situated at the intersection of the academic and the digital, at George Mason University's Center for History and New Media (CHNM). As director of public projects at CHNM, I have an opportunity to participate in the many technical aspects of building different kinds of digital history projects for educators and cultural institutions. At the same time, I teach both graduate and undergraduate students in the fields of American studies and American religious history. Necessarily, my work at the center profoundly influences the work that goes on in the classroom.



SHARON LEON

PHOTO: COURTESY OF SHARON LEON

At CHNM, we are working on a host of projects that aim to use digital technologies to improve the teaching and learning of history. For example, *Historical Thinking Matters*, a site for high school students and their teachers that I codirect with the History Education Group at Stanford University, asks students to pursue authentic historical questions using small collections of primary sources. The site uses the best of the elements of Internet design and technology to reveal the process of historical analysis and to teach students how historians engage with new sources. Often the "moves" historians make are a mystery to students until they can watch professional historians encounter new material, make guesses, stumble, and reevaluate their assumptions as they work toward new conclusions.

The process of building a Web site that helps students to think concretely about how they approach critical analysis and then to construct historical narrative has had a tremendous impact on the way that I introduce material and construct activities

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Remembering Roland A. Delattre

I have come to understand teaching as part of a larger project of digital humanities, one that involves using technology to create environments that foster critical dialogue—for students, for teachers, and for the public.



TO LEARN MORE:

ABOVE Center for History and New Media at George Mason University: chnm.gmu.edu

BELOW *Historical Thinking Matters*, a site for high school students and their teachers: historicalthinkingmatters.org



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for the undergraduates whom I teach. I am constantly looking for ways to use digital technology to facilitate critical engagement with course material. Rather than using the Web simply as a place to retrieve the course syllabus, my students use the online environment to begin our conversations about our reading and to extend our interactions beyond the classroom. Each week they write a blog posting providing close readings of our primary sources and critical analysis of our secondary readings, and then they respond to one another. This makes my job of guiding and fostering critical conversation in the classroom infinitely easier, because everyone is prepared to engage with the material and one another. Though this digital intervention resembles journaling, it opens students up to new possibilities by asking them to write to a wide audience and to enter into a public dialogue with their classmates.

When I arrived at the University of Minnesota in the fall of 1997, I did not think of myself primarily as a teacher. Like many graduate students, I was focused on my own work. But at the same time, I knew that my thinking had been profoundly influenced by master teachers—individuals who were capable of asking just the right questions to bring students to some new understanding of

our past, our culture, and our world. To this, I brought an interest in the ways that technology might help to facilitate deep engagement with the materials of the past—an interest that brought me to CHNM. CHNM's mission, as articulated by our late founder, Roy Rosenzweig, is to use "digital media and computer technology to democratize history—to incorporate multiple voices, reach diverse audiences, and encourage popular participation in presenting and preserving the past." Through this work I have come to understand teaching as part of a larger project of digital humanities, one that involves using technology to create environments that foster critical dialogue—for students, for teachers, and for the public.

— SHARON M. LEON, PH.D. '04

ROLAND A. DELATTRE, PROFESSOR EMERITUS of American studies, died April 17, 2007. He was a colleague, teacher, and friend to many of us at the University of Minnesota for 35 years. Roland chaired the department from 1977 to 1980, served as director of graduate studies, and was an active religious studies faculty member. He taught at every level of the program and advised many graduate students. He was the author of, among many publications, *Beauty and Sensibility in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards: An Essay in Aesthetics and Theological Ethics*, a major work reissued in 2006.

We invited his dear friend and colleague David D. Hall, Bartlett Professor of American Church History at the Harvard Divinity School, to offer a personal memory of his life.

Roland Delattre was not your customary American studies academic, and he was cut from a different cloth in other ways as well. Before he was appointed at the University of Minnesota in 1972 in the (then) Program in American Studies, he had taught in religious studies departments at Miami University and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. His training in religious studies at Yale, where he earned his Ph.D., was principally in theological ethics. Because he wrote his dissertation on Jonathan Edwards (the great 18th-century theologian and scholar) and was interested in American culture, he also passed as an Americanist. One of the founders of the *Journal of Religious Ethics* in 1973, he felt professionally at home and was widely recognized in a number of professional societies: the Society for Christian Ethics, the American Academy of Religion, and the American Studies Association.

Roland Delattre had an abiding interest in ritual, and at the 1977 national meeting of the American Studies Association he gave a remarkable paper on the ritual dimension of American culture. The distinguished anthropologist Victor W. Turner, a pioneer in ritual studies, served as a respondent to the paper. That encounter launched an important relationship between them, and Roland ultimately brought Victor Turner to the University of Minnesota as

a visiting professor where they co-taught an innovative seminar that explored anthropological, literary, and historical approaches to American culture. Their shared interests facilitated a significant relationship between American studies and anthropology.

An omnivorous reader (and concert- and theater-goer), he would spend several days with a book or an essay to the end of knowing how to put to use its arguments. In this and in many other respects he was given to "thought" far more than most of us. His other great commitment was to social justice, a stance fashioned in his teenage years when he was a delegate from Oklahoma to the Progressive Party convention of 1948 and sustained without a break until his death. He was often angry about the distance between what a democratic society should be and what it was in practice—angry, sad, and given to solitary actions of moral witness, like holding a candle on campus as a sign of hope. He aspired to transformations, political and aesthetic, at one point imagining how different the pedestrian bridge linking the two sides of the campus would look if someone actually cared about turning the ugliness of everyday life into its opposite. A moralist and an activist, he was a bon vivant, a fabulous dancer (with wife Judy Engel as his ideal partner), and a lover of art, good food, and wine.

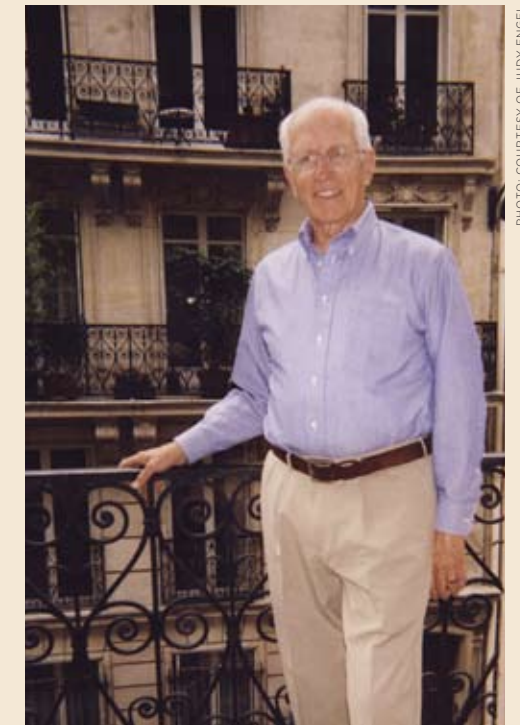


PHOTO: COURTESY OF JUDY ENGEL

He was often angry about the distance between what a democratic society should be and what it was in practice...

We formed a friendship during my earliest months in graduate school (1959) that deepened over the years in ways that led us to trust in each other as though we were brothers. He shared his frustrations (which were many) with me, but also his joys, and in the end the joyous moments are what we should remember of a man who gave greatly of himself as a teacher, friend, and moral witness.

— DAVID D. HALL

In the Forefront

FACULTY

M. BIANET CASTELLANOS was awarded a Woodrow Wilson Career Enhancement Fellowship for Junior Faculty during the 2008–09 academic year and is completing work on an Office of International Programs grant to develop a comparative and hemispheric approach to indigenous studies by bringing together Native American, Chicano, and Latin American scholars to collaborate. She published “Adolescent Migration to Cancún: Reconfiguring Maya Households and Gender Relations in Mexico’s Yucatán Peninsula” in *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* (2007) and was a guest editor with Deborah Boehm of “Engendering Mexican Migration: Articulating Gender, Regions, Circuits” in a special issue of the journal *Latin American Perspectives* (January 2008).

BRENDA CHILD published “Wilma’s Jingle Dress: Ojibwe Women and Healing in the Early Twentieth Century” in *Reflections on American Indian History: Honoring the Past, Building a Future*, edited by Albert L. Hurtado with an introduction by Wilma Mankiller (University of Oklahoma Press, 2008). Child also published “Ojibwe Education at St. John’s and St. Benedict’s Indian Industrial School” in *A Portrait of This Place Called Collegeville, 1856–2006* (Saint John’s University Press, 2006).



BRENDA CHILD

KALE BANTIGUE

FAJARDO received the President’s Faculty Multicultural Research Award for a book/video project titled “Islands, Cities, and Salas: Trans-local Queer Filipino Imaginaries, Cultural Productions, and Activism” and has been awarded an Institute for Advanced Studies Fellowship for spring 2009. Fajardo wrote “Transportation: Translating Filipino/Filipino American Tomboy Masculinities through Seafaring and Migration” in *Gay and Lesbian Quarterly* (April 2008).

RODERICK FERGUSON wrote “Administering Sexuality, or The Will to Institutionalization” in *Radical History Review*



KALE FAJARDO

(winter 2008). He wrote “Sissies at the Picnic: The Subjugated History of a Black Rural Queer” in *Feminist Waves, Feminist Generations: Life Stories of Three Generations in the Academy, 1968–1998* (University of Minnesota

Press, 2007) edited by **HOKULANI AIKAU, KARLA ERICKSON, and JENNIFER PIERCE**.

The Board of Regents conferred tenure on **TRICA KEATON** and promoted her to associate professor. She received an Office of International Programs 2008–09 grant and during May session 2008 taught a course, *Black Paris: The African Diaspora in the City of Lights*, in France.



ELAINE TYLER MAY

ELAINE TYLER MAY was appointed Regents Professor, the University’s highest academic honor, in June 2007. May is an internationally renowned scholar of 20th-century United States history and American studies. In 2008 she published the revised third edition of *Created Equal: A Social and Political History of the United States*, a college-level textbook, with Peter Wood, Jacqueline Jones, Thomas Borstelmann, and Vicki Ruiz.

LARY MAY wrote “Inventing American Cold War Culture: Global Hollywood and Transnational Memory” in *European Cold War Cultures* (Bergham Books, 2008).

JENNIFER PIERCE, M. J. Maynes, and Barbara Laslett wrote *Telling Stories: The Use of Personal Narratives in the Social Sciences and in History* (Cornell University Press, 2008). Pierce and Wendy Leo Moore wrote “Still Killing Mockingbirds: Race and Innocence in Hollywood’s Depiction of the White Messiah Lawyer,” published in *Qualitative Sociology Review* (August 2007).

PHOTO: KELLY MacWILLIAMS

PHOTO: DIANA WATERS



JENNIFER PIERCE

The Graduate School named **RIV-ELLEN PRELL** to the Fesler-Lampert Chair in Public Humanities for 2007–08. Prell received the honor for interdisciplinary work that goes beyond the academy and contributes to the public good, reaching wider audiences for humanities scholarship and strengthening the relationship between the University and multiple publics. Prell also edited and wrote the introduction to *Women Remaking American Judaism* (Wayne State Press, 2007).

PHOTO: PATRICK O’LEARY

GRADUATE STUDENTS

LISA ARRASTIA published “Capitals Daisy Chain: Exposing the Chicago Corporate Coalition” in the *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies* (May 2007).

JOSEPH BAUERKEMPER received the 2008–09 Chancellor’s Post-Doctoral Fellowship at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

RYAN CARTWRIGHT received a four-year Jacob K. Javits Fellowship.

DANIEL LaCHANCE received the Erickson Legal History Summer Fellowship. He

wrote “Last Words, Last Meals, and Last Stands: Agency and Individuality in the Modern Execution Process” in *Law and Social Inquiry* (summer 2007).

ALEX MENDOZA, CATHRYN WATSON, and KARISSA WHITE are Ford Predoctoral Diversity Fellows. These fellowships are three-year awards.

RYAN MURPHY and DANIEL LaCHANCE were named Doctoral Dissertation Fellows for the 2008–2009 academic year.

JULIANA PEGUES received a 2007–08 Theater Mu and Jerome Foundation New Performance Program Grant for playwrights. Her play *Q&A* was produced by Theater Mu and premiered at Mixed Blood Theater in May 2008. She published “Miss Cylon: Romancing the Asian American Female in Battlestar Galactica” in the journal *MELUS: The Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature*.

TRECIA POTTINGER received the Social Science Research Council–Mellon Mays Predoctoral Grant and the Ford Dissertation Fellowship.

SCOTT SHOEMAKER received a two-year Consortium for Faculty Diversity Fellowship at Macalester College in St. Paul.

EMILY SMITH was awarded the University of Minnesota Yudof Fellowship in Science, Policy, and Ethics for 2008–09.

In addition, many American Studies graduate students are active scholars presenting their work at the American Studies Association, Association for Asian American Studies, Society for Disability Studies, Association of American Geographers, Law and Society Association, Mid-American American Studies Association, Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social, Working Class Studies Association, Oral History Association, UCLA Queer Studies, Cultural Studies Association, American Society for Ethnohistory, Organization for American Historians, and Native and Indigenous Studies Conference, among many other organizations.

ALUMNI/AE

JOSHUA BARKAN (Ph.D. 2006) is an assistant professor of geography at the University of Georgia.

WENDY GENIUSZ (Ph.D. 2006) currently teaches at Minnesota State University, Moorhead, in the Department of American and Multi-cultural Studies.

JILL DOERFLER (Ph.D. 2007) and **HEIDI STARK** (Ph.D. 2008) are assistant professors at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, in the Department of American Indian Studies.

JASON RUIZ (Ph.D. 2008) is an assistant professor of American studies at Notre Dame.

Congratulations to our recent Ph.D.’s:

MATTHEW BECKER, “The Edge of Darkness: Youth Culture since the 1960s” (adviser: Lary May)

JILL DOERFLER, “Fictions and Fractions: Reconciling Citizenship Regulations with Cultural Values among the White Earth Anishinaabeg” (adviser: Jean O’Brien-Kehoe)

DAVID GRAY, “Visualizing a Classless America: Motivational Campaigns in the Industrial Workplace, 1920–1955” (adviser: Lary May)

ROBIN HEMENWAY, “The Efforts of Their True Friends: African Americans and Child Welfare in New York, 1836–1930” (adviser: Elaine Tyler May)

JOHN KINDER, “Encountering Injury: Modern War and the Problem of the Wounded Soldier” (adviser: Lary May)

DEIRDRE MURPHY, “The Look of a Citizen: Representations of Immigration in Gilded Age Painting and Popular Press Illustration” (advisers: David Roediger and David Noble).