for example, is both a naturalistic exposé of the brutalized lives of 19th-century miners as well as a window into the politics and debates of its time — debates that are still with us as we consider workers’ rights and the social effects of poverty and a degraded environment. A major in philosophy is concerned both with the history of philosophy and with particular philosophical problems. And the same can be said for all of the humanities disciplines. We offer people a sense of the past and of their place in that long history of human beings trying to understand, represent and interpret their world.

A second argument for the uniqueness of a humanities education is the frames of reference it provides. We know much of what we know through comparisons. A is A because it is not identical to B. Yet without B, we cannot delineate much less understand A. This simple logical principle based on comparisons underlies our ability to juxtapose ethical questions in our own lives with the ethical questions posed by Aristotle or Saint Thomas Aquinas. Comparisons allow us to understand and recast in our own lives the moral dilemmas of Calderón de la Barca’s “Segismundo,” who opts for righteous behavior even when realizing that his perceptions seem more dreamlike than real.

Comparisons of this sort permeate our language through terms like Panglossian, a riff on a character in Voltaire’s “Candide,” whose blind optimism enables him to disregard contradictory evidence. Or names like Pygmalion that draws on a Greek myth to describe the behavior of someone who would view another person as a project rather than an individual. Victorian, Bonapartist, Hobbesian or Hamiltonian — all invoke our ability to make comparisons. If you really want to view and discuss the complexity of our world with intellectual breadth and sophistication, humanistic study is the best place to start. This holds for all of us, including, of course, the future researchers sought by my new friends at Wood Mackenzie.
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Centennial: V2C and Dean’s Priorities/Initiatives
HRC Mellon Graduate Research Seminars

An anthropologist tracking representations of “human zoos” in South Africa and 19th-century Europe. A linguist exploring psychic excess in television crime dramas. A student studying English looking at prosthetics through the lens of aesthetics. And two students of religious studies: one redefining whiteness in a postapartheid South Africa, the other examining narratives of mystical experience as expressions of the ineffable.

This stunning mosaic describes the young scholars who find an unconventional home in just one of this year’s Andrew W. Mellon Graduate Research Seminars.

An unconventional approach to common questions: (L–R): Sarah S. Cain (linguistics), Deborah Harter (faculy leader and associate professor of French studies), Kristen Ray (English), Nathaniel Vlachos (anthropology), Rachel S. Vlachos (religious studies) and Linda Ceriello (religious studies)

Coming from an array of humanities and social science disciplines, Mellon Seminar graduate students join forces under the umbrella of the Humanities Research Center. Here they take up common questions and lay the groundwork for new theoretical approaches. How do aesthetics inform disability studies? Can semantic theory help to unpack notions of madness? In what ways do ethics and religion weave themselves into structures of identity and race? They consider these questions, moreover, in personal conversation with such distinguished visitors as D.A. Miller, the John F. Hotchkiss Professor of English at UC Berkeley; Jonathan Metzl, the Frederick B. Rentschler II Professor of Sociology and Medicine, Health and Society and director of the Center for Medicine, Health and Society at Vanderbilt; and John Ricco, associate professor of contemporary art, media theory and criticism at the University of Toronto.

Deborah Harter, associate professor in French studies, Judith Roof, department chair and the William Shakespeare Chair in English, and Joseph Campana, assistant professor in English, lead this year’s workshops. Harter’s course, Frames of the Beautiful, the Criminal and the Mad: The Art and the Science of Excess, considered the aesthetic with the scientific, the ethical with the historical, as it works not just to capture evolving images of excess over time but also the dynamic tension between science and art in the uncovering of the contours of the human. Roof and Campana head up a seminar titled Before and After Queer: Sexualities in Theory, History and Performance, in which they invited their students to rethink the methods, assumptions and theories deployed to address issues of sexuality since the dominance of the category “queer.”

These faculty leaders, while engaging in theoretical inquiry of their own, do more than simply facilitate new and unique research. They are truly mentors to the academic and professional development of these young scholars. Alongside discussions of Lacan and Foucault, Bataille and Cixous, the graduate students get a true sense for what it means to be part of the academic world: choosing dissertation advisers, presenting effective papers and getting one’s article published. Personal anecdotes and lessons learned are also shared. These are seminars that are more than simply lessons in theory and philosophy and approach. They are also lessons in life and the pursuit of professional happiness.

As part of this all-encompassing and unconventional training, student participants are invited into the educational process themselves. Seminar topics are chosen based on particular student interests, and each student is given the opportunity to lead discussions with their peers. This may involve presentations of articles or of a student’s own research. It may involve field trips — planned and led by students — to research centers, museums or historical sites. In every case, Mellon Seminar participants can experiment with their own approaches to academic discussion and multimodal methods of presentation that in other settings may seem unconventional.

Despite academia’s reputation for being a “publish or perish” vocation, there is often little time to explore writing as a process in graduate seminars. Here, instead, writing is essential. Students are invited to share both their academic and creative work and to hone their individual styles over time. It is an engagement in critical discussion and revision that prepares these future academicians for professional and academic dialogue as their research topics develop.

Above all, the Mellon Seminars offer a supportive and collaborative space in which to read and to write, to present research, to experiment with personal pedagogy and to negotiate cross-disciplinary discussion. It is not about the individual but about the collaborative whole, blurring the lines between disciplines and yet providing room for individual approaches. The seminar’s success is the student’s success, and to this, peers and faculty alike are attuned. It is this unusual style of learning, one that targets both the individual and the group, which continues to attract the most promising graduate scholars to the Mellon Seminars year after year.

We are pleased to announce that these seminars have just been permanently funded through the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and an anonymous private donor. This endowment will allow the faculty and student participants to present their research at major international conferences, conduct research in archives during the summer, interview leading authors and theorists, participate in rigorous workshops, and otherwise take advantage of rich experiences for learning and for disseminating the work conducted in the seminars.

— SARAH SEEWOESTER CAIN, GRADUATE STUDENT (LINGUISTICS)
Rice Gallery Offers Undergraduate Course

Students develop a ‘Curator’s Eye’ with the help of an unconventional Rice Gallery class

During the fall 2012 semester, eight students gathered weekly to explore the Houston art world through Rice Gallery Director Kimberly Davenport’s exciting new class, The Province of Art: A Curator’s Eye. Davenport was assisted by Christine Medina, Rice Gallery manager, and Joshua Fischer, Rice Gallery assistant curator. The experiential course appealed to art enthusiasts of all years and majors, drawing students majoring in art, architecture, mathematics, philosophy and health sciences.

“This study of curating helped bring together both the academic and applied sides of an often inaccessible world,” said Nathan Gabriel, a senior majoring in mathematics.

Unlike a typical Rice course, Davenport’s seminar took students beyond the hedges, making Houston its classroom. “I wanted to give the Rice students the opportunity to sample the extraordinary and renowned museums that Houston has to offer,” said Davenport. The idea was to blend learning with real life experience. Each week, students carpooled to a different location in the city to learn firsthand from prominent members of the Houston art world. After immersing themselves in the space and experiencing what Davenport calls “deep saturation,” students met to share their observations, impressions and insights at informal locations around the city.

Throughout the semester, students visited everything from encyclopedic museums to alternative spaces. Field trip destinations included the Menil Collection; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Contemporary Arts Museum; the Blaffer Art Museum; the Orange Show; the Asia Society Texas; Diverse Works; Inman Gallery; and Art League Houston. Given Davenport’s connections and Rice Gallery’s reputation within the Houston art community, students had the unique privilege of meeting with distinguished curators and learning firsthand what it takes to make an exhibition come to life. For example, at the Menil Collection, students were given a behind-the-scenes look at the museum. While listening to the fascinating history of the de Menil family, students examined an original scale model of the building, peering through a handmade periscope to view miniature models of paintings and sculptures within the museum. Davenport’s class was also offered a private glimpse of the unique upstairs treasure rooms where the museum houses its eclectic collection.

And in addition to making the rounds in the museum district, the class was invited to view the private collection of local philanthropist and arts supporter, Judy Nyquist, and also toured the studio of Houston-based artist Francesca Fuchs.

“The studio visit was one of the most direct and insightful looks into an established artist’s studio that I have had to date, a both practical and encouraging experience,” said Jessie Anderson, a senior majoring in studio art.

Although the majority of the course took place off campus, Davenport highlighted Rice’s connection with the arts by focusing on Rice Gallery and the Rice Public Art program. One afternoon, the class gathered in the James Turrell Skyspace, one of the recent additions to Rice’s public art collection, to speak with Skyspace manager, Emily Stein. Following this discussion, architecture graduate student Jessica Lutz reflected upon the important role that public art plays in the university setting. “Within the university are multiple, simultaneous and conflicting publics, just as there are in the world outside of academia. A group of economists will derive one interpretation from a work, while a group of psychologists gets another. Just as in their research however, these overlaps and readings produce constructive conversations between the groups that might not have happened in the absence of the work.”

It is clear that Rice Gallery’s unconventional course has been an eye-opening experience for students and goes to show that you do not have to be an art major to observe, appreciate or analyze art. And while throughout the semester students brought their individual perspectives to the study of art, they will now undoubtedly bring their curatorial perspective to the study of life.

— GRETA SHWACHMAN ’14

Seeing outside of the hedges: Students tour the Blaffer Art Museum, University of Houston during one of their weekly classes offered by the Rice Gallery.

Photo: Nash Baker © nashbaker.com
The editors of SEL Studies in English Literature 1500–1900 presented the first Robert Lowry Patten Award, the seventh Elizabeth Dietz Memorial Award and the 16th Monroe K. Spears Award during the 2013 convention of the Modern Language Association in Boston, Mass. More than 40 guests, including editors, representatives of various presses, editorial board members, omnibus review authors, article authors, specialist readers and friends of the journal, attended the wine and appetizer reception. Nicolas Shumway, dean of humanities, Judith Roof, the William Shakespeare Endowed Chair in English and chair of the Department of English, and Logan D. Browning, SEL’s publisher and executive editor and Professor in the Practice of English and Humanities, made the presentations to the winning authors and publishers.

The creation of the Patten Award, announced in October 2012, honors recent retiree Robert L. Patten, former Lynette S. Autrey Professor of Humanities in the Department of English, and his more than 40-years of distinguished scholarly and pedagogical work at Rice. For nearly 30 of those years, he served as either editor or publisher/executive editor of SEL. The award recognizes the most outstanding recent contribution to either 18th- or 19th-century British literary studies.

Considering an impressive field of almost 300 volumes, the judges for this first award selected a work by Cambridge University Professor Simon Goldhill, “Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity: Art, Opera, Fiction and the Proclamation of Modernity” (Princeton University Press). The judges noted, “As befits an award that acknowledges Robert L. Patten’s path-breaking contributions to our understanding of Victorian illustration and fiction, “Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity” is as informative about the visual arts and music as about literary works. Its appeal will extend beyond the scholarly world of Victorianists to anyone who has ever been imaginatively captivated by ancient Greece and Rome.”

Additionally, the Council of Editors of Learned Journals also honored Robert L. Patten during a reception at the Boston MLA convention by awarding him the council’s Distinguished Editor Award for 2012, a competitive prize for any editor who has retired within the three previous years. Nominating letters for Patten noted his determination to nurture and maintain all that was excellent about SEL from its beginnings along with an equally strong resolve to innovate and adapt so that the journal would remain a strong presence in the changing world of scholarship.
“Raid the Archive: The de Menil Years at Rice”
Exhibition brings Rice’s art history back to campus

During the fall 2012 semester, the Department of Visual and Dramatic Arts opened, “Raid the Archive: The de Menil Years at Rice,” an exhibit that focused on the important role Houston art patrons John and Dominique de Menil played in the founding of the university’s Media Center and the Rice Museum. The exhibit was on display from late-September through mid-November and was highlighted by a public reception, two panel discussions and a companion film series during Rice’s Centennial Celebration weekend, October 12-14.

The de Menils founded the Media Center and the Rice Museum (known as the “Art Barn”), in 1969, which were an integral part of the arts on campus then and continue to play a significant and inspirational role today, exhibit organizers said.

Curated by John Sparagana, the Christian Grace Vietti Chair in Visual Arts and department chair, and graduate student Katia Zavistovski, the exhibition comprised a selection of films, photography, exhibition posters, correspondence and other ephemera culled from the Menil archive — much of which has never been exhibited publicly. The materials assembled in the exhibition provided a rare look at the pioneering projects and people involved in the early years of the arts at Rice.

“The exhibitions, film screenings and panels offer a window on a creative time that can serve as a model for the future,” Sparagana said. “It is easy to forget that an internationally acclaimed visual arts and media program with an ambitious interdisciplinary objective took place over 15 years on the Rice campus. The ‘Raid the Archive’ exhibition, panels and screenings were a celebration and investigation of that incredible part of Rice’s history, at a current moment of renewed commitment to and investment in the visual arts — academic, programming, permanent installation — on campus. The exhibition also highlighted an early precedent for working in creative collaboration with Houston’s art museums.”

The film series, held in the Rice Media Center, featured screenings of films associated with de Menil patronage and cinematic documents of de Menil activity at Rice. The film program had a dual focus on the art of installation and on the filmmakers. The two buildings, the two missions and the two approaches were laid out in the art exhibitions and films that were part of the everyday creative life at the center.

Two panel discussions featured contributors who all played a central role at the Rice Museum or the Rice Media Center during the de Menil years or have a vital connection to that period. The first discussion focused on the history of the Rice Museum and featured William Camfield, Rice’s Joseph and Joanna Nazro Mullen Professor Emeritus of Art History; Helen Fosdick, founding director of the Dia Art Foundation; arts patron and preservation activist Suzanne Deal Booth; and conceptual artist Mel Chin.

The second discussion examined de Menil era Media Center experimentation, production and presentation. Panelists were Gerald O’Grady, founding director of the Rice Media Center; Tish Stringer, documentary filmmaker and Rice Visual and Dramatic Arts Film Program manager; and Edward Hugetz, documentary filmmaker and University of Houston associate vice president for planning.

For more information about the exhibit and Rice’s Department of Visual and Dramatic Arts, visit http://arts.rice.edu/.

“Raid the Archive: The de Menil Years at Rice”

“The exhibitions, film screenings and panels offer a window on a creative time that can serve as a model for the future.

It is easy to forget that an internationally acclaimed visual arts and media program with an ambitious interdisciplinary objective took place over fifteen years on the Rice campus.”

–John Sparagana
Rice students who want to take their Chinese language skills to the next level now have the unique opportunity to do so while spending a summer in Shanghai, one of the largest port cities in Asia.

As of 2012, the University of Virginia's (UVA) Intensive Chinese Language Program is one of Rice's preferred study abroad partners. The program is run by faculty in the UVA's Department of East Asian Languages, Literatures and Cultures' Chinese language program and hosted by East China Normal University (ECNU). It allows Rice students who are serious about studying Chinese language into a total-immersion environment to cover an academic year's worth of material in eight weeks and to earn eight credits.

The partnership grew out of School of Humanities Dean Nicolas Shumway's focus on making study abroad opportunities more impactful for Rice students. Shumway visited the program in Shanghai and came away impressed after talking with students, who must sign a pledge the day before the classes start to only speak Chinese while there. The UVA in Shanghai program is one of the four Chinese study abroad programs Rice recommends and the only one offered in the summer.

"At UVA in Shanghai, we found that students made progress in their language proficiency," said Wendy Freeman, director of Rice's Center for the Study of Languages. "It is the only program in Shanghai that is endorsed by the Light Fellowship at Yale University. That is an indicator of the quality." ECNU is a Chinese higher education institution that is under the direct auspices of China's Ministry of Education. It has 10 schools with 31 departments offering a wide range of programs. The Department of International Chinese Studies, which hosts the program, is among the top departments in the field of teaching Chinese as a foreign language in China.

Meng Yeh, associate director of the Center for the Study of Languages and coordinator of the Rice Chinese Program, said the strength of the program lies in the special emphasis it places on high-quality instruction that is heavy on interaction, both student-centered and text-based. In addition, the ratio between students and faculty is 1-to-1.5. "This makes lecturers very available to students," Yeh said. "They also do a lot of things outside the classroom, so there's a very close relationship."

Yeh regularly communicates with the program's director to receive and give feedback, before, during and after students' stay in Shanghai. "This is a kind of advantage I can't have with other programs."

Yeh said she has clear a message for Rice students interested in Chinese. "If you are serious about this language, you have to start planning to study abroad," she said. "If you don't, your level will plateau. Once you go abroad, it's easier to go to an advanced level. You need that immersion environment, you need to talk to people and know about the culture." She said Rice students from all fields take an interest in Chinese, from economics to political science to engineering. "They know that in the future, they will have contact with Chinese people, and they want to have the language skill and cultural understanding so they can do their job better," she said.

Melanie Mock and Ja Young Choi spent June and July 2012 as the first Rice students to take part in the program.

Mock, a junior majoring in economics and Asian studies and minoring in business, said the language pledge was key in advancing her skill. "That is a really good thing about the program," she said. "It really encouraged us to speak Chinese. My roommate and I always kept the pledge. Even if we didn't know the vocabulary, we tried to be creative and get by with the vocabulary we knew."

Their dedication made an impact on the Chinese people she met. "It shocked the local people seeing a group of white Americans walking down the street. They were very impressed. It was really fun to strike up conversations with the local shop owners."

Choi, originally from South Korea and a junior majoring in computer science, started learning Chinese "just for fun" in high school. Shanghai worked wonders for her, she said. "It was really worth it," she said. "My Chinese improved a lot. I could actually talk to Chinese people."

After returning to Rice for the fall semester, Choi noticed a difference in her overall study habits. "When I do research for other classes, I can go on to Chinese websites and try to read," she said. "I don't need to find the equivalent data in English. It's convenient."

— JEFF FALK, NEWS AND MEDIA RELATIONS
New Art, New Music
Rice Gallery and the Shepherd School collaborate on student-led program

To many who know Rice well, it’s quite obvious that the university makes a commitment to offering its students unique opportunities to step outside the realm of their respective majors and sample other disciplines in the hopes of fostering a more collaborative environment. However, it’s most refreshing to see students take the initiative in doing so themselves.

In October 2010, Max Pipinich, a former graduate student at The Shepherd School of Music, did just that by spearheading the New Art, New Music (NANM) program at Rice Gallery. NANM is a one-of-a-kind experience at Rice University where Shepherd students perform musical pieces alongside the various installations that are housed within the art space. Pipinich’s initial idea sprang from an appreciation for collaborations between different mediums of expression. Simply by holding a concert in an art gallery, he hoped to attract a more varied crowd to each installation and instigate a kind of cross-pollination between two different disciplines, art and music. The two mediums work off of each other in such a way that art lovers and music lovers alike gain considerable insight into both the installation and the musical piece inspired by it.

“At times, the group performs a compilation of existing works from the 20th and 21st centuries. But, sometimes, as with ‘Liberating Form,’ we’re lucky enough to hear entirely original works from the students,” said Christine Medina, Rice Gallery manager. “Liberating Form” was inspired by Joel Shapiro’s “Untitled,” an installation on view in the the Rice Gallery in February and March 2012. Through their newly written pieces, the Shepherd students craft a unique kind of interpretation of the artwork before them. In “Liberating Form,” Stephen Bachicha, a student working toward his Doctorate of Musical Arts in composition, took this interpretive aspect one step further in his original piece “... until someone loses an eye!” Inspired by the Jenga-like quality of Shapiro’s work, Bachicha noted, “The piece is designed around three games. Each game allows the players to make different choices on the spot where each of their choices influences the others’ in what they play. At the end of the piece, just like any game, no one knows the outcome and who, if anyone, will win.” Here, what would normally be a hushed conversation about the qualities of the artwork becomes an intense volleying of musical notes between four individuals. The audience can understand each chord struck as a voiced opinion and the entire piece becomes a heated discussion about Shapiro’s suspended planes. Bachicha’s work is but one example of the many wonderfully varied musical readings performed by the students at each event.

NANM also acts as a powerful career tool for students at The Shepherd School of Music. Students are granted first-hand experience with the logistics necessary to coordinate such an event. Medina explained, “The event is a great way for students to develop organizational skills. It’s entirely run on their end. It gives them a taste of dealing with an entity outside of Shepherd and helps them start to envision what their future in music might look like.”

The gallery also arranges opportunities for the student composers to meet with the installation artist responsible for the work they will soon reflect on. “But, even before the installation is up and running or the artist is here, they’re usually already composing. They look through the artist’s website and get a feel for the nature of his/her work,” said Medina.

Now heading into its third year, NANM continues to be a unique student-led opportunity for on-campus arts collaboration and concerts continue to be planned as the gallery confirms its exhibition schedule each semester.

For more information about NANM or the schedule of upcoming Rice Gallery exhibitions and programs, please visit www.ricegallery.org.

— NATHAN KEBLER ’14
Excerpts From

“An Unsettled Heart”
By Brittney Xu

is
the sea
mulling over a bit of seaweed
stuck in a crack of the levee wall
like a piece of cabbage
trapped in between bottom molars

no matter how diligently the waves lap at the leaves
the roots are on the other side

“Night of the Living”
By Anna Meriano

If I had to pick my least favorite time of day — the part I’d most like to rip the face off of and devour — I would have to pick dawn. Before, when the rising sun meant that the day was starting, not ending, I used to think I was a morning person. Now it turns out I’m just not a sleep person; I can’t stand the settling down, the quiet. Too much time to think before I actually lose consciousness. When I was little, I would pitch a fit every bedtime, begging my parents not to leave me alone in my room. They bought me a nightlight, not realizing that the one thing I had never been scared of was the dark.

I miss my iPod. It was my lifesaver, the perfect cure for a neurotic insomniac. And I had my phone, my Gameboy, and I could even use the upstairs TV if my parents were asleep and I kept the volume low. With so many distractions, it’d been years since I had identified with little-kid me, cowering under the covers trying to escape the terrifying spirals of her own brain. But now that the distractions are gone, she’s back. Maybe that’s why my best defense against pre-sleep panic now is to recreate the distractions: mentally rerun scenes from Dexter and Desperate Housewives, relive some of my fondest World of Warcraft memories, sing Ke$ha songs in my head. It doesn’t always work, though. On quiet mornings like this one, as I huddle next to a still-burning chunk of U.S. Post Office and watch the sky turn from black to grey, my brain won’t stop throwing up

R2: Rice Review is a student-run literary journal at Rice University committed to publishing the best prose, poetry, creative nonfiction and occasional written by Rice’s undergraduate students, as well as interviews with renowned authors. The journal was founded in 2004 by creative writing professor and author Justin Cronin and is published every spring. The efforts of R2 are supported and advised by the Department of English.

Many thanks go out to the generous donors who support Rice’s undergraduate creative writing efforts: Sandy Price-Epstein ’86, David Epstein and family for their generous support in funding this publication from 2009 through 2014; and Bradley V. ’86 and Gail Clayton Husick ’86 for endowing R2, thus ensuring its longevity and mission to foster creative writing at the undergraduate level at Rice.
memories I have no interest in revisiting. So I imagine I’m inside one of my distractions, a guest on a morning talk show, presenting my past with a smile and a heavy dose of creative editing. It’s so much easier to hold it together when you have an audience, even if it’s just one you’ve created inside your head.

[Upbeat theme music plays, camera pans across live audience seated in ascending rows of folding chairs. Perky Blonde Hostess enters stage left, takes seat on plush green armchair.]

Perky Blonde Hostess: Gooood morning everybody! Welcome to the Perky Blonde Hostess Show! [Cheers and applause.] It’s been a crazy week here in Anytown, USA, and I hope you’ve all stayed safe in these troubled times — although, statistically, most of you haven’t. [Nervous laughter.] Good news for the rest of you though, [she smiles even more brightly] we’ve got a very special guest here today who just might shine some light on the recent apocalyptic plague. She’s been kind enough to visit us all the way from the epicenter in Houston, Texas, so please give a warm-blooded welcome to… Alexandra West. [I enter and sit on the yellow couch across from PBH. Applause. Camera pans over audience as floating letters scroll across the bottom of the screen: Today’s Segment — Confessions of a Teenage Zombie.]

Two other girls and a hulking man have joined me around my makeshift debris campfire. I’m not surprised; they’re my pack, or more sentimentally, my family now. I don’t know anything about them that I haven’t seen with my own eyes — not their feelings, not their histories, not even their names. I know that one of the girls is Hispanic and the other is Asian, but in the dark their silky black hair makes them look like twins. I know the man is missing two fingers on his left hand, and that his hair used to be very short but in the past several months has grown enough to curl around his ears. I know that he’s strong, so strong that he can lift a grown man and throw him to the ground with a smile and a heavy dose of creative editing. It’s so much easier to hold it together when you have an audience, even if it’s just one you’ve created inside your head.

[The commercial break ends, and the theme music plays as Perky and I exchange silent pleasantries under the audience’s applause.]

PBH: So, Alexandra—
Me: Call me Alex.
PBH: Alright, Alex. We’re so glad you could make it—
Me: Glad to be here.
PBH: And I know that I speak for everyone [nods to the audience] when I say…please don’t eat us! [Uneasy laughter. I hold up my hands, totally innocent]. But seriously, Alex, let’s start with the obvious question. How did you become a zombie?

There’s something moving beyond the edges of our camp. Not a stranger; one of us would make obvious shuffling footsteps, probably some friendly groans or growls. This is subtler. A kicked stone here, a stifled cough there. Humans. I sit up, lock eyes with the man across from me who was up a split second sooner. He growls with a tiny grin.

Me: It started with this website. MobUSA.com. They organized groups of people into flash mobs, the kind of thing where a bunch of random people show up at a mall or a park and all start doing the same dance or moving in slow motion or singing. Such a college thing to do, just for laughs, a harmless way of occupying your space with a weird and quirky performance.

PBH: [enthralled] Go on...

Me: About three months ago, one of my Facebook friends linked me to the website because they were advertising a Zombie Walk. They had been building up their reputation for a while, and this was going to be their biggest event ever. Anyone in Houston who was interested was supposed to show up on Saturday morning at one of the six or eight major locations — The Galleria, Herman Park, Discovery Green, I don’t even know where else — in full zombie getup. The Facebook invite said, “We will proceed to terrorize the city in a Zombie-like fashion. Lunch will be provided.”

PBH: And did you suspect…?

Me: That I was less than a week away from becoming a mindless flesh-eating monster? Hardly. MobUSA had pulled plenty of similar stunts over the past year or so. There was no reason to think that this event would be any different from the others...
When Aristotle labeled judicial oratory as “forensic,” he had no idea that one day the term would become identified with a series of hit television shows, or that centuries later forensics competitors would have to explain to friends, relatives and strangers that, no, they do not competitively solve murders.

Instead, they strive to be the most eloquent competitors they can be against the best from other schools around the nation. Rice’s forensics participants and coaches are used to answering the “CSI” question patiently and then returning to their focus on one of the oldest disciplines in humanities, rhetorical excellence. For the George R. Brown Forensics Society, Rice’s speech and debate team, rhetorical excellence is the norm.

Founded in 1984, the present-day team replaced the Rice Forensic Society (1954–1964) and is housed in the School of Humanities. The team is comprised of 15–20 undergraduate students from across all academic disciplines, and teams have won thousands of competitions since the society’s inception. Many of these, including multiple national championship awards, are displayed in the trophy case in the first floor of the Humanities Building. Often competing against students from other universities who are on partial or even full scholarships for forensics, Rice has remained perennially successful through the efforts of committed coaches and generations of students who have worked hard to instill a culture of excellence in the program.

In addition to forensic speaking, Aristotle defined two more branches of rhetoric or oratory. In his book, “On Rhetoric,” he also described deliberative (legislative and political) speaking and epideictic (ceremonial) speaking. Modern forensics programs educate students in all three and competitions are structured as tournaments in which students compete in individual contests with the team accumulating sweepstakes points across all events. Participants compete in a total of 11 speech events, including two forms of limited preparation speaking, four kinds of memorized formal speaking and five kinds of oral interpretation. Rice excels at many of these events, including Extemporaneous Speaking in which a student draws a topic about current political, economic or international events and has 30 minutes to prepare a seven-minute speech that includes citations. Topics come from domestic and international news, and to excel, students must remain deeply familiar with the news of the day and must learn to synthesize material and develop strong arguments quickly.

Rice also has a long tradition of excellence in memorized speech events, particularly Persuasive Speaking, which addresses contemporary policy problems through a 10-minute memorized address, featuring solid research, polished language and flawless delivery. A typical manuscript for this event is revised between 10 and 15 times as coaches work with the student to analyze and research the problem and to posit solutions in the parsimonious yet

“The George R. Brown Forensics Society has been such an enriching experience. It has taught me time management, research and analysis and how to be a good competitor.”

—Nick Thorpe (Lovett) ’15
As a young trial attorney, I am constantly reminded how speech and debate has helped me. I have been told on many occasions how much more prepared and confident I seem compared to other young lawyers. I am comfortable thinking on my feet and presenting arguments in court because I was able to fine-tune these skills while I was on the team at Rice.

—Holly Naylor (Hanszen) ’08

also is a kind of family that allows students to enrich their experience at Rice by forming lasting bonds through traveling and competing together. Just as sports teams grow close through shared victories and defeats, so do forensics competitors. Many of the team’s alumni stay in touch and visit the team when they are able. Alumni of the team are quick to point out the value of their competition experience as well as the contacts they make with other top students around the nation.

Despite the ancient source of its name, the George R. Brown Forensics Society at Rice exemplifies the contemporary nature and continuing importance of the humanities. Combining time-honored rhetorical practices with modern interdisciplinary perspectives in order to contribute to the communal discussion of immediate social and political problems, the team accomplishes multiple goals while winning some prestigious awards along the way. So for Rice’s forensics competitors, answering the “CSI” question is an opportunity to talk about something far more important and meaningful than a television show.

David Worth is the director of the George R. Brown Forensics Society and a senior lecturer in the School of Humanities. Glenn Prince has been assistant director of the Forensics Society and a lecturer in the School of Humanities since 2008. Glenn will no longer be at Rice as of July 2013.

eloquent language and delivery that have made Rice’s memorized speech competitors famous.

Debaters argue about one topic for the entire academic year. The 2012–2013 topic, “Resolved: The U.S. Federal Government should substantially increase assistance for organic and/or sustainable agriculture in the U.S.,” is researched extensively by each student on Rice’s team. Students are encouraged to approach the topic from an interdisciplinary perspective and individual debates cover everything from the science of sustainable agriculture to economics, politics, labor issues, and the social and philosophical issues involved in emphasizing sustainable agriculture. This event requires complex strategy informed by intimate knowledge of the topic area. Debaters become very well versed in the relevant literatures by the end of the season.

The team has an outstanding reputation with high school competitors, helping to attract quality students to Rice. The team


Close competitors: L–R (back row): Kristian Edosomwan, David Worth, Jarvis Sam, Nick Thorpe, Patrick Shipsey, Brittney Xu and Alisha Zou; (front): Helene Dick and Jyra Bickham

“AS A YOUNG TRIAL ATTORNEY, I AM CONSTANTLY REMINDED HOW SPEECH AND DEBATE HAS HELPED ME. I HAVE BEEN TOLD ON MANY OCCASIONS HOW MUCH MORE PREPARED AND CONFIDENT I SEEM COMPARED TO OTHER YOUNG LAWYERS. I AM COMFORTABLE THINKING ON MY FEET AND PRESENTING ARGUMENTS IN COURT BECAUSE I WAS ABLE TO FINE-TUNE THESE SKILLS WHILE I WAS ON THE TEAM AT RICE.”

—HOLLY NAYLOR (HANSZEN) ‘08

Spring 2013 • Humanitas 11
FACULTY SPOTLIGHT:
APRIL DECONICK

BY MICHAEL S. DOMERACKI
April DeConick, the Isla Carroll and Percy E. Turner Professor of Biblical Studies, has authored six books, edited four volumes and produced more than 20 articles on topics ranging from the "Gospel of Thomas," women in the early church and religion in modern America. DeConick’s diversity and ingenuity as a scholar, coupled with her leadership in both the Rice and Houston communities, has helped forge the religious studies department at Rice into one of the most public and renowned departments in the country.

DeConick entered the scholarly world in 1996, with the release of "Seek to See: Ascent and Vision Mysticism in the Gospel of Thomas," a reworking of her dissertation. Her career began with an interest in the mystical elements of the “Gospel of Thomas,” a critical exploration into the popular text that yielded four books, two edited volumes and numerous articles in only 10 short years. As she reframed the questions about the gospel, DeConick quickly emerged as a leading scholar of the text; where most scholars were asking how the text relates to the New Testament and what Gnostic teachings it held, DeConick focused on the gospel’s mystical elements and how that not only related, but was in fact indicative, of a very popular movement in early Christianity and Judaism.

Recognizing the mystical focus of the text revolutionized the reading of the “Gospel of Thomas” and fundamentally changed how scholars view the gospel in history. While there is no question more work could be done on the text, DeConick shifted her focus to another gospel, and again completely reframed the scholarly opinions — this time, publically.

In 2006, National Geographic — with a TV special and two books — shocked the world by introducing an early Christian text that presented Judas as a valiant protagonist and hero. However, DeConick found several mistranslations and consequent misinterpretations in the official National Geographic publication. In her bold and groundbreaking publication, "The Thirteenth Apostle: What the Gospel of Judas Really Says," she offered a completely new translation and understanding of the text. As she explained, "I didn’t find a sublime Judas. I found a Judas more demonic than any Judas I know in any other piece of early Christian literature." Much like she did with her work on the “Gospel of Thomas," DeConick again forced scholars to reevaluate the dominant interpretation of a gospel and early Christian history. Her book was an instant bestseller and she released a revised version of the book with additional chapters in 2009.

DeConick continues to utilize a friendly and accessible writing style that enables readers to see the complex ancient world and understand how early Christianity still effects the world today. In “Holy Misogyny: Why the Sex and Gender Conflicts in the Early Church Still Matter,” she demonstrates how, as the church developed, it systematically erased the positive view of the female. This provocative work was DeConick’s first foray in indentifying the direct influences of early Christianity on modern American religion.

Her forthcoming book, “The Ancient New Age: How Gnostic Spirituality Revolutionized Religion in Antiquity and Modern America,” is an intrepid exploration into the understanding of western religion itself. When Gnosticism emerged with its particular focus on the individual and personal relationship to the divine, it stood in stark contrast to the existing religious model of human service to god. Prior to the Gnostic formulation, religious practice was the human attempt to appease the deity. Gnosticism, as DeConick explained, elevated humans from simple servants to beings who could personally interact with god. For the Gnostics, this relationship between humanity and god was therapeutic as humans served a larger purpose in existence than servitude. This reformulation of religion still influences the modern psyche of religion today, as modern Americans see religious practice as a curative and personally validating exercise.

In addition to her extensive publications, DeConick has extensive and diverse scholarly interests which she presents to both the academic and public communities with precision and ease, is a leader in both the Rice and Houston communities, and does it all with an enthusiasm and energy that has helped create the “crazy gifted” religious studies department at Rice.

Michael “Goat” Domeracki is a graduate student in the Department of Religious Studies.
“When people ask me just what it is I study as an English major, I have a hard time answering with just one response; usually I respond with something obtuse like, ‘Well, literature ... but also everything.’”

Department Spotlight: English

By Jay Becton ‘14

Community, literature, independent cinema, creative writing, poetry, fiction, non-fiction, research, rhetoric, language, critique, persuasion, humanism, art, culture, creation, tradition, psyche, myth, saga, pedagogy, expression, history, trope, narrative, drama ...
The Department of English at Rice University is an anomaly on campus. With more than 30 faculty members, nearly 50 graduate students and countless undergraduates majoring in the discipline, the department is one of the largest in the School of Humanities. And when people ask me just what it is I study as an English major, I have a hard time answering with just one response; usually I respond with something obtuse like, “Well, literature ... but also everything.” Despite its size and the expansive nature of its discipline, the department remains remarkably intimate and welcoming. With small course sizes and ample opportunity for student research at both the graduate and the undergraduate levels, the Department of English feels like it could very well be the smallest on campus.

When I asked Judith Roof, the William Shakespeare Chair in English and chair of the department, to define the experience of living, teaching and working in such a large, but cohesive environment, she immediately credited the “interchange between faculty, graduate students and undergraduates with creating a sense of community between these people that is unique to Rice.”

While the community atmosphere of the department encourages a feeling of closeness among members of the department, Roof’s goals for graduate and undergraduate education in English reflect the sheer breadth of the discipline. “We want to get people to question critically and to think critically,” she said. “We want them to come out of this school with more questions than answers, to learn ways to go about thinking about those questions and to realize that thinking about these questions is a never-ending process.”

To fit these ends, the education of undergraduates in the English department is unconventionally open-ended in that only two courses are specifically required for the major. The rest of the major’s course work is divided by broad ranges of time and subject, allowing students to explore a great number of literary traditions and critical ideas while developing their analytical skills. By requiring relatively few specific courses, but offering an extensive selection of options like Asian-American Literature or American Independent Cinema, the department ensures that its students are exposed to as many components of the discipline as possible, while also allowing for students to pursue their own interests as they wish. Because of this broad curriculum, undergraduates are able to study the entire world’s texts from as many perspectives as they can imagine.

In addition to supporting undergraduates’ analytical development, the department also fosters a thriving creative writing environment that allows students to focus on creating their own works in addition to studying the works of others. The creative writing program features both introductory and advanced courses in poetry, fiction and nonfiction all run by profsors who are actively writing their own projects. In these courses, students write, edit and workshop their pieces in a supportive environment that encourages conversations about literature in the modern world. Select pieces are ultimately published each spring in the department’s own student-run literary journal, R2: The Rice Review. The department encourages students to explore the entirety of their discipline, allowing for creativity and self-expression in addition to more traditional course work.

The department’s emphasis on providing meaningful opportunities for undergraduate research also helps to create a comprehensive, critical education for all of its students. One of these opportunities is the Minter Summer Scholars Program, which provides funding for junior and senior majors to engage in research projects of their own design over the course of a summer. Minter Scholars have traveled everywhere from England to Cuba in pursuit of documents and experiences that inform their research back at Rice.

And while the department encourages students to consider studying abroad through programs like the Minter, English majors do not necessarily have to travel beyond the hedges in order to explore their own research interests. Seniors are encouraged to consider writing a final research thesis as the culminating project of their undergraduate education. Written and researched with the guidance of a sponsoring faculty member, these senior

“We WANT TO GET PEOPLE TO QUESTION CRITICALLY AND TO THINK CRITICALLY. WE WANT THEM TO COME OUT OF THIS SCHOOL WITH MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS, TO LEARN WAYS TO GO ABOUT THINKING ABOUT THOSE QUESTIONS AND TO REALIZE THAT THINKING ABOUT THESE QUESTIONS IS A NEVER-ENDING PROCESS.”

— JUDITH ROOF
theses involve a substantial, yearlong dedication to a topic of the student’s own choosing.

Capstone courses, a recent addition to the requirements for the English major, also afford students the opportunity to produce substantial research projects on specialized topics. These courses, which focus on variable topics like Samuel Richardson’s “Clarissa” or the works of Christopher Marlowe, allow students to experience in-depth research in a supportive class environment. Taking place over a single semester, these small seminars bridge undergraduate education with graduate-level work, easing students into the world of independent research.

Emily Nichol, a senior English major whose capstone research focused on narration styles in “Clarissa,” said that she found it “really important to be able to do a research project that is not as demanding as a thesis, but which is still a comprehensive, original scholarly work.”

Now in its second year, the Literary Studies Masterclass program is yet another example of the department’s commitment to a well-rounded, research-based education for its students. Started by Roof and Joseph Campana, assistant professor of English, and run in conjunction with the Humanities Research Center (HRC), the program is a one-credit course that meets three times a semester for presentations given by lecturers visiting from across the country. Designed to facilitate interaction between working scholars and students, the program includes a mentoring component in which undergraduates are paired with graduate students who support them in their studies. These mentorships can take many forms, but ultimately they help to provide undergraduates with yet another resource for academic support and information about graduate studies.

The English department’s graduate program, from which these mentors are drawn, is just as comprehensive as the undergraduate program, with an additional emphasis on advanced research and pedagogy. The program encourages students to explore interdisciplinary questions and projects through seminars and fellowships with the HRC and the Center for Women, Gender and Sexuality. Graduate students are eligible for research and conference travel grants, and they regularly publish articles in journals like American Literature, Victorian Literature and Culture, and European Romantic Review.

During their time at Rice, graduate students interface with undergraduates both informally as friends and peers, and more formally as teaching assistants, mentors and occasionally professors. This teaching and mentoring experience is invaluable for students; by the time they graduate, they are prepared for the job market with both the pedagogical and research skills to support them in their careers. Recent graduates of the Ph.D. program in English at Rice have moved on to tenure-track positions at schools like Syracuse University, University of Connecticut and University of Vermont. Rice prepares its graduates for exciting scholarly careers in which they will use their critical thinking skills and knowledge of theory and history to shape and rethink literary studies for the 21st century.

Looking toward the future of the discipline and the department, Roof envisions a greater emphasis on “questions of the environment, cross-media work, international study, and the bringing together of cultural and critical materials” in literary studies. But ultimately, she said, the goal of an education in English at Rice University will remain the same: “Ten years after they graduate, we want our students to realize, ‘Ah! So that’s what they were talking about.’”

Jay Becton is an English major at Wiess College and was an HRC undergraduate fellow for the 2012-2013 Mellon-Sawyer Seminar, Before and After Queer: Sexualities in Theory, History and Performance.

It is this comprehensive commitment to the never-ending processes of learning, reading and thinking that makes Rice’s Department of English such a wonderful, unconventional place to study literature, rhetoric and the world.

“TEN YEARS AFTER THEY GRADUATE, WE WANT OUR STUDENTS TO REALIZE, ‘AH! SO THAT’S WHAT THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT!’” — JUDITH ROOF
Studying Abroad Crosses All Disciplines

Study abroad opportunities abound for students in the School of Humanities, from antiquities research in Rome to intensive German classes in Leipzig, and service internships in Third World countries. It is obvious that as Rice has become more international, so has the curriculum at the School of Humanities.

BY JEFF FALK
Duno-Gottberg said. López-Durán agreed and emphasized the living-and-breathing legacy of a revolution that took place more than 50 years ago. “It would be difficult to talk about Latin America without considering the impact that the Cuban Revolution had on the rest of the countries,” she said.

For students, understanding how a system that was not capitalist was able to survive is revelatory. “Students were amazed by how normal Cuba was,” López-Durán said. “They were expecting something completely different. Then they arrived there and saw how dynamic a country it is. [The students] see the contradictions, they see the problems; it’s a very complex landscape,” Duno-Gottberg said. “To go there and live the daily lives of Cubans, it does something to you.”

A student-centered perspective matters

Such short-term, faculty-led study-abroad opportunities are currently “hot” at American higher-education institutions, said Nicholas Iammarino, professor of health science and chair of the Department of Kinesiology. He is a longtime advocate for the study abroad experience at Rice and has lent his expertise widely outside the university’s hedges. Iammarino is the executive dean of the University of Virginia-sponsored Semester at Sea program, which offers students a multiple country study abroad experience, and has published articles on setting up study abroad programs and related student and travel safety issues.

He said it’s critical for faculty to approach the study abroad curriculum and overall experience from a student-centered perspective. “From a faculty perspective, it sounds glitzy to say, ‘I want to lead a group abroad, and I want to do so because I want to travel,’” Iammarino said. “And so, faculty could try to build a course around where they would want to travel, which is the wrong way to structure such a program. The proper approach is to look at your curriculum and identify opportunities that will benefit your students. You build the study abroad program around a particular body of knowledge that you wish to convey and give them a hands-on experience.”

Every other year in May and early June, Iammarino takes students on a three-week trip to England and Scotland for his course, Comparative Health Care Policy: U.S. vs. U.K. The trip attracts premed, health science and health policy majors and others interested in health care policy and delivery systems. He has been leading the trip since 1990 with a colleague from the University of Illinois who founded the course in 1976.

Unique benefits and challenges

When it comes to identifying and endorsing particular programs, faculty members emphasize a range of unique benefits and advantages.

For Rice classics students who spend a semester studying ancient history and archeology, Greek and Latin literature and ancient art at the Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies (ICCS) in the heart of Rome, it means the rare opportunity of connecting with a large group of American peers, said Harvey Yunis, the Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Humanities and Classics. “The great virtues of this Rome
program is that it puts students into a bigger group,” he said. “They benefit from the companionship, from the other participants’ interests and the other backgrounds of the those studying the same topic. That’s something we can’t offer at Rice. In fact very few places, if any, can offer that large a cohort.”

Michael Maas, professor of history and classical studies, is chair of the ICCS. He said majors in Rice’s Ancient Mediterranean Civilizations program learn best when getting their hands dirty in Mediterranean countries such as Italy or Greece. “If the students are doing archaelogy, they’re literally in the trenches,” he said. “These excavations are often in remote places, so they’re in daily contact with the local culture. Just that alone for students, whose horizons may previously not have gone beyond suburban Dallas, is just terrific. They also learn that what they’re studying involves cultures that very well may be over now, but nonetheless prove enormously informative for us. They realize that everything didn’t start just yesterday.”

When it comes to learning and studying languages, location matters. Uwe Steiner, chair of the German studies department, said Rice’s selection of Leipzig University as its preferred study abroad option had a lot to do with its location within former East Germany. Each summer, German studies sends up to 11 students on the intermediate proficiency level program to improve their German in intensive courses offered at Leipzig University’s renowned Herder Institute. “There is a particular reason why we send our students to Leipzig and not Berlin or another place in Germany. The former East was not so much dominated by learning English in school. The language the students use amongst each other is German, not English. If you send a student to Berlin, there are so many Germans around who like to take the opportunity to practice their English.”

Going abroad also requires managing and embracing diversity. Diana Strassmann, director of Rice’s Program in Poverty, Justice and Human Capabilities (PJHC) based in the Center for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality, said students in her program deepen their understanding of poverty and inequality through U.S.-based and international service-learning experiences in disadvantaged communities, including such places as Argentina, Belize, Chile, Ecuador, Nepal, South Africa and Tanzania. “Students are inspired and influenced by experiences that they may not have expected,” she said. “We don’t want them to go over and already have an idea of what they’re looking for. PJHC interns serve people who are deprived in some way, whether it’s poor health, lack of education or limited income. They are trained to interact with people in a respectful way and not view them as research subjects.”

Financing a study abroad experience can be an expensive proposition for students and, as such, fundraising for study abroad scholarships is a priority for the School of Humanities. “If a student goes abroad for a semester — during the fall or spring — Rice pays their way,” said Jeanette Zey, the school’s senior director of development. “But Rice doesn’t pay the way for a student wanting a study abroad experience in the summer unless we have a scholarship that’s designated for that purpose.” Currently, summer scholarships are available to students studying German, Hebrew, Mandarin and Spanish. PJHC also provides financial support for international summer service work.

Providing humanities students with opportunities to take their education abroad not only increases their understanding and appreciation for cultures beyond those found on campus, it offers new platforms for applying their classroom education to real-world experiences. It also creates a competitive edge for the School of Humanities by broadening and reimagining ways to study humanistic disciplines and conduct interdisciplinary research. Ultimately, the school’s reinvigorated focus on study abroad programs and a more global education brings benefits to the curricula, the faculty and most importantly, the students.

Jeff Falk is the associate director of national media relations in the News and Media Relations Department in Public Affairs.
In 2012–13, the School of Humanities launched the Rice Seminars, a year-long, faculty-led program designed to bring together a select group of scholars from across the disciplines and the globe. Studying a common theme, this program seeks to create an international colloquium from which to foster multidisciplinary approaches and innovative new forms of humanistic research.

The 2012–13 seminar, Human Trafficking — Past and Present: Crossing Disciplines, Crossing Borders, pioneered new research concerning the historical and contemporary trajectories of human trafficking, while building bridges between humanities scholarship and a humanitarian crisis. Given the wide spread interest in human trafficking, particularly within the local community, the seminar hosted a Houston Connections lecture series to showcase local organizations, activists and interventions. Speakers addressed human trafficking issues within Houston and offered an opportunity to discuss how these local concerns are linked to more endemic national and global problems. Also included in this series was Ambassador Luis CdeBaca, who is senior adviser to the U.S. Secretary of State and directs the State Department’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. CdeBaca launched the seminar’s speaker series by addressing an audience from the Houston and Rice communities, answering questions about local, national and international interventions and trends that fight against contemporary forms of slavery. The seminar culminated with a conference in April, featuring the year’s work from each of the seminar participants. The group will periodically meet over the next year to connect their seminar work into an edited publication.
Materialism and New Materialism Across the Disciplines has been chosen as the topic for the 2013–14 Rice Seminar. Led by Sarah Ellenzweig, associate professor of English, and Jack Zammito, the John Antony Weir Professor of History, the upcoming seminar will tackle big questions concerning how to make sense of the stuff of the universe. Studies of materialism have recently re-emerged in a range of diverse scholarly fields, such as philosophy, political science, literature, feminist studies and science studies. Long-rooted in economic and specifically Marxist approaches, these more recent studies of materialism seek to rethink conventional assumptions surrounding the properties of matter. Whereas traditional conceptions of materialism considered matter to be predictable, quantifiable and passive, the new materialism sees matter as vital, animate and active. This new conception of matter’s inherent capacities for change, agency and creativity has the potential to link philosophy and the life sciences, organic and inorganic sciences. The coming year’s participants come from the fields of English, intellectual history, philosophy, anthropology and sociology.

The 2013–14 seminar will trace the historical development surrounding conceptions of materialism and matter from classical antiquity to today. Aristotle, Epicurus and Lucretius provided powerful legacies that revived in the early modern ideas of Spinoza, Hobbes and the 18th century. Since then, science and society have been thoroughly embroiled in the various senses of materialism. At the conclusion of the seminar, participants will share their work through a published collection of essays. Equally important, the seminar will produce an intellectual and international community that will outlive the seminar itself, forging new ground in interdisciplinary scholarship between the humanities and the social and natural sciences.

Professional and scholarly communities have again responded enthusiastically to the Rice Seminars program. The 2013–14 seminar has received more than 100 applications from across the humanities and the sciences. With applicants ranging from Ireland to South Korea to here in the U.S., the seminar promises to enrich the Houston and Rice communities with a multidisciplinary, international group of innovative scholars.

The Rice Seminars program is an initiative of the Office of the Dean of Humanities and is funded by the School of Humanities and the Humanities Research Center.

For more information about the Rice Seminars, visit http://hrc.rice.edu/riceseminars.

— ANAMARIA SEGELIE, GRADUATE STUDENT (ENGLISH)
Cargo Space
Rice introduces its first mobile art project

Tucked in a corner of the Rice campus, between the Rice Media Center and Reckling Park, a former Rice transit bus has recently made a remarkable transformation into a mobile arts residence and work space that will host artists from Houston and around the world. Called Cargo Space, the transformation is the brainchild of Christopher Sperandio, an assistant professor in the Department of Visual and Dramatic Arts.

Sperandio and a team of dedicated student and community volunteers have used green materials to transform an 11-year-old Rice shuttle bus into a bunk room designed to sleep six that includes a toilet and shower, a kitchenette with a refrigerator and sink, a dinette and an outside deck that sits on top. “We’re taking something that has served Rice for so many years and are repurposing it,” Sperandio said. “We’re stripping it down to the bare metal and building it back up.”

For Sperandio, Cargo Space is an idea born out of a need. “There simply aren’t enough artists visiting this part of the country,” he said. The goal is to design a comfortable and collaborative way that encourages visiting artists to share a creative working environment and take advantage of the various art communities and opportunities in Houston. After being awarded a highly competitive 2012 Humanities Research Innovation Fund grant from the Humanities Research Center, Sperandio used the grant money to purchase and reconstruct the 25-foot-long bus.

Initial bus trips will be mostly local, and while trips may be planned in the future, this initial plan reinforces the project’s fundamental goal — to bring artists and innovative minds to Houston and create an interdisciplinary environment that gives back to Rice and local arts communities.

Sperandio hopes to secure a corporate sponsor to fund art road trips and plans to have the bus ready for travel by the fall 2013 semester. At that point, Sperandio and an advisory committee will begin the work of selecting and inviting artists to make use of the bus.

For more information about the Cargo Space project, visit www.thecargospace.com or contact Sperandio at sperandio@rice.edu.

3CT: Center for Critical and Cultural Theory

During the fall 2012 semester, the School of Humanities announced the founding of a new center for interdisciplinary research, the Center for Critical and Cultural Theory (3CT). Created to promote intellectual synergy and community among Rice faculty and graduate students, the center will sponsor visiting scholars for campus lectures, seminars and roundtables that address pressing questions of social and cultural significance through a broad array of conceptual resources and intellectual backgrounds. It also will host annual conferences and symposia, such as the annual conference of the Society for Literature, Science and the Arts, which 3CT will host for its 2015 meeting.

Cary Wolfe, founding director of the 3CT

Housed in the School of Humanities and drawing primarily on faculty and students from the humanities, social sciences and architecture, the center welcomes and encourages faculty and students in any field whose work is framed by an intensive engagement with critical and cultural theory and its methodological innovations. As founding director Cary Wolfe, the Bruce and Elizabeth Dunlevie Professor of English, noted, “3CT hopes to change the intellectual ecology of the humanities at Rice by connecting faculty and students in different departments and schools who share a common, problem-driven, theoretical orientation toward their research.”

The center’s endeavors to enable students to engage in ambitious and synthetic scholastic projects of social and cultural significance in a wide range of areas such as new media studies, biopolitics and biophilosophy, race and ethnicity studies, science and technology studies, environmental and medical humanities, and transnationalism. Beginning in academic year 2013–2014, the center will offer a Graduate Certificate in Critical and Cultural Theory, designed to teach graduate students how to intervene more effectively and strategically in debates in their home disciplines and enhance their preparedness for careers both inside and outside the academy. In addition, certificate students who have completed the center’s requirements may compete for one-time stipends of $5,000, up to 10 of which may be offered each academic year. The center will also have funds available to support graduate student research and travel.

For additional information about the center, contact Wolfe at cewolfe@rice.edu or the center’s coordinator, Thien Le, at tdl2@rice.edu. More information may be found at http://3ct.rice.edu.
Rice University has announced its first dual-degree doctoral program with the Universidade Estadual de Campinas (UNICAMP) in Campinas, Brazil, a public university ranked among the best in Brazil and Latin America. The program will allow history graduate students who study at Rice and Campinas to receive a Ph.D. from both schools if they meet certain criteria.

Both the Rice and UNICAMP history departments are known for their expertise in the history of global and regional slavery.

“If you’re a student from Brazil or from the U.S., you don’t have to make a decision as to whether you want to have your Ph.D. from a leading Brazilian institution or a leading American institution,” Rice Provost George McLendon said. “You can have both at the same time.

“This is a very exciting opportunity for us not only in the context of Brazil but also in the context of other possible international partners. It enables us to expand our offerings in a critical area of historical studies that would be hard to do if we only called on our own faculty,” added McLendon.

The program is intended for a few, highly talented students who are enrolled in the history graduate programs at either school. Students will complete graduate-level courses at both institutions. They will write a dissertation that is co-supervised by a faculty member from both Rice and UNICAMP. There will be a single dissertation defense at the students’ home institution; prior to this the student will present a summary of the dissertation, the equivalent of a journal article, in the other language.

“The idea is to create a student who is completely at home in the academic culture, community and standards in Brazil and the United States, which is a pretty tall order,” said Alida Metcalf, the Harris Masterson Jr. Professor of History and the Rice faculty member who will oversee the program. “Traditionally, students who start off in an American or Brazilian institution really master their home academic culture and may study or do research abroad, but this way they have to actually meet the standards of Brazil or the United States, which means functioning at a really high level in two languages.”

Founded in 1966, UNICAMP can be considered a young institution, even compared with other Brazilian universities, the oldest of which was established 70 years ago. Despite its youth, the university is massive in size and physical and intellectual scope, with three campuses — in Campinas, Piracicaba and Limeira. Its more than 1,700 faculty serve more than 17,000 undergraduate and 26,000 graduate students. UNICAMP offers 66 undergraduate academic programs and 142 graduate academic programs.

The dual-degree doctoral program with UNICAMP joins the list of ongoing Rice and School of Humanities outreach efforts in Brazil, including:

- A memorandum of understanding with the University of São Paulo to facilitate an exchange-student program and research collaborations;
- An agreement with Brazil’s National Council of Scientific and Technological Development that enables postdocs and Ph.D. and undergraduate visiting students from Brazil to study at Rice annually with financial support from the council.

“This is going to be an exceptionally comprehensive degree,” said Dean of Humanities Nicolas Shumway. “The degree will make students competitive in a job market where most of their peers only have one degree. These graduates will immediately rise to the top of many search lists. This is true for both Rice and UNICAMP students.”

— JEFF FALK, NEWS AND MEDIA RELATIONS

A global student: UNICAMP student Ludmila Maia is currently in Houston completing her dual-degree at Rice.
This past November, the Center for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality celebrated its 20th anniversary with a two-day program exploring how gender and sexuality inform our communities and experiences.

Both commemorative and forward-looking, the program featured a symposium of former directors, a graduate student panel and a dinner honoring Dallas council member Angela Hunt ’94 with the center’s inaugural Outstanding Alumni Award.

At 33, Angela Hunt became the youngest woman ever to serve on the Dallas City Council, and she has since led a variety of initiatives in her city, including neighborhood zoning, the Arts District Strategic Planning Council, a free, rail-based streetcar system for downtown and affordable housing. Hunt also founded the M Streets Conservation District and served on the executive board of Preservation Dallas.

Honoring a life of action: Right: Angela Hunt ’94 received the inaugural Outstanding Alumni Award. Above: Guests enjoy the anniversary dinner at Rice’s Cohen House.

The symposium brought together six of the center’s eight former directors to share their current research. Jane Gallop, hired in 1985 as the first Rice faculty member focused on women’s studies, began the symposium. Gallop argued that feminist literary critics fundamentally altered the way we read.

Helen Longino’s (1990–1993) presentation also considered feminist analysis as an intervention in her discipline: philosophy. She argued that feminist analysis should be expanded beyond gender to the benefit of social analysis. Like Gallop, Longino finds in feminist knowledge the potential for a radical reinterpretation of disciplinary tools. Longino is the Clarence Irving Lewis Professor of Philosophy and the chair of the Department of Philosophy at Stanford.

Helena Michie (1993–1997, 2000–2003 and 2005) is the Agnes Cullen Arnold Professor in Humanities and professor of English at Rice. Her current research concerns the archives of the founder of the National Portrait Gallery in London, Sir George Scharf (1820–1895). Documents suggesting Scharf had intimate relations with a younger man caused Michie and her research partner to question what conclusions they could legitimately draw, generating both a historical close reading and a metacommentary about both scholars’ experiences in the archive.

Paula Sanders (1997–2000) turned to the medieval period with a re-examination of misogyny in Maimonidean and classical rabbinic traditions. She argued these traditions afforded women surprisingly greater autonomy than scholars typically portray. Sanders is the vice provost for Academic Affairs, dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and professor of history at Rice.

Lynne Huffer (2003–2005) is the Samuel Chandler Dobbs Professor and past chair of Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies at Emory. Her paper argued that the concept of “eros” offers a powerful, specifically feminist tool for rethinking biopolitics (the relationships among peoples and states) as more than preserving and sustaining the lives of citizens in service of the state.
The Gray/Wawro Lectures in Gender, Health and Well-Being

Through the generous support of Melanie Gray and Mark Wawro, each year the center hosts four distinguished speakers who inspire deeper understanding of the gender features underlying urgent health concerns and whose work fosters public conversation that can prompt informed action toward a more just world.

The 2012–2013 Gray/Wawro Lectures began in September with Arlie Hochschild’s “The Outsourced Self: Intimate Life in Market Times.” Hochschild focused on the outsourcing of labor traditionally performed in the home. From professional baby proofing to gravesite maintenance, the market now intrudes more than ever into the private sphere; this growing dependency on the market substitutes an impersonal economy for personal care.

In October, Laura Carlsen presented “The Human Costs of Mexico’s Drug War: Health Effects on Women, Migrants and Youth.” Carlsen’s lecture highlighted the human face of the drug war, noting that this side is often overlooked or underreported due to its nature as a “security issue.” She advocated an understanding of the war through the lens of health issues, proposing long-term solutions of education and rehab, legalization, and, most importantly, a focus on human rights.

The lecture series continued through the spring with Byllye Avery’s February lecture, “The State of Women’s Health Today: An Unfinished Agenda,” which focused on the crisis of black women’s reproductive health and childbirth. Katrina Karkazis came to campus in April and delivered, “‘Gender Verification’ Policies in Elite Sports: Eligibility, ‘Fair Play,’ and the Question of Medical Need.”

Associate professor of history and chair of the Rice history department Lora Wildenthal (2006), gave the symposium’s final presentation. Her talk focused on human rights in West Germany, specifically how the post-World War II feminist organization Terre des Femmes defined and navigated the categories of woman, human and German.

The anniversary also highlighted four graduate certificate students who participated in an afternoon panel. Philosophy student Joe Adams proposed Ludwig Wittgenstein’s concept of family resemblances as a solution to the problems of sexual identity and sexual classification. Linda Ceriello, from the Department of Religious Studies, argued that the female often acts as a metaphor for the Divine in Gnostic and Tantric imagery. Kimberly Macellaro of the English department considered Theodore Dreiser’s “Sister Carrie” as a novel that replaces “the working girl” of the factory with “the shop girl,” whose presence reifies the culture of consumption in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Laura Resendez de Lozano of the anthropology department presented her work on the gendered representations of concrete—from its traditional masculine associations of the industrial age to its more feminine aesthetic as the material becomes a symbol of sustainability.

Together, these anniversary events highlight how fruitful the last 20 years have been for women’s studies at Rice. They also remind us that although our center is rooted at Rice and in the Houston community, our branches continue to extend much further, across borders and disciplines, provoking the pursuit of knowledge that maintains feminism’s commitment to improving the quality of life today and for the future.

For more information about the center, visit http://cswgs.rice.edu.

— LAURA RICHARDSON, GRADUATE STUDENT (ENGLISH)
2013 Campbell Lecture Series

‘Thinking Music: The Artistic Life of a Conductor as Cultural Leader and Teacher’

The 2013 Campbell Lecture Series featured world-class conductor Patrick Summers of the Houston Grand Opera. The three-night series, titled “Thinking Music: The Artistic Life of a Conductor as Cultural Leader and Teacher,” was held in a very full Rice Memorial Chapel. The audience had the fortune to hear not only an engaging lecture, but also had the chance to hear Summers play pieces on the piano each evening.

The lectures, “Prelude and Fugue: Life in Music,” “Themes and Variations: Life from Music” and “The Sonata of Life,” respectively, centered on music’s role and relevance in modern society. The first lecture, based on the musical form of a fugue, threaded together music as language and philosophy with insight into music’s basic properties of rhythm, melody and harmony. The second lecture on themes and variations, attempted to explain opera, the human voice and the life of an opera company. The third, and final lecture, discussed a brief history of conducting and the conductor’s responsibility toward education and artistic awareness, all while looking forward to the future of listening.

These lectures will become the foundation for a future book, which will be published by the University of Chicago Press.

Summers currently holds the Margaret Alkek Williams Chair at Houston Grand Opera and was named artistic and music director in 2011 after having served as the company’s music director since 1998. He has been responsible for many of Houston Grand Opera’s (HGO) important artistic advances, including the development of the Houston Grand Opera Orchestra, regularly praised by critics as a world-class ensemble. At HGO, he has conducted numerous world premieres and works that span the operatic canon, including Verdi’s “Don Carlos,” Puccini’s “La bohème” and Wagner’s “Lohengrin.” He has enjoyed longstanding relationships with the Metropolitan Opera, where he has conducted regularly since 1998; with San Francisco Opera, where he has been principal guest conductor since 1999; with Opera Australia. Engagements for the 2012–13 season include Jake Heggie’s “Moby-Dick” with San Francisco Opera, the Richard Tucker Gala at Lincoln Center’s Avery Fisher Hall, a U.S. tour with the Russian National Orchestra and solo pianist Daniil Trifonov, a Carnegie Hall performance of André Previn’s “A Streetcar Named Desire” with Renée Fleming, and “The Magic Flute” at the Bregenz Festival. For HGO, he conducts “Show Boat,” “Tristan and Isolde,” and “Il trovatore.”

The Campbell Lecture Series was established by Rice alumnus T.C. Campbell ’34 and the School of Humanities as a 20-year public lecture series to bring distinguished scholars to give public lectures on various topics of broad humanistic interest. Previous lecturers include Robert Pinsky (2005), Ha Jin (2006), Alix Ohlin (2007), Stephen Greenblatt (2008), James Cuno (2009), Zadie Smith (2010) and Stanley Fish (2012). Many lectures are currently available in print.

A special thanks to the Houston Grand Opera, University of Chicago Press and The Shepherd School of Music for their support on this series. For more information, please visit http://campbell.rice.edu.

The Future of Learning

Troy Williams ’94, president of Macmillan New Ventures, delivered a talk at Rice University exploring the technological advancements affecting education now and in the future. At the September 2012 talk, “The Future of Learning: Printed Textbooks to Personalized Learning Environments,” Williams presented trends that foreshadow fundamental changes in how students learn, including the rise of data-driven education platforms, the changing role of traditional content and the tectonic forces he argues are reshaping the educational endeavor of the U.S.

The presentation, which was attended by President David Leebron and numerous School of Humanities faculty and advisory board members, was especially relevant and important given Rice University’s recent exploration into online classes and electronic learning platforms.

Williams has great experience working within this changing academic environment. At Macmillan New Ventures, a division of the global media company MacMillan, Williams is responsible for identifying emerging technologies and trends that will have a major impact on student performance and outcome. Williams has been an adjunct professor at New York University, where he taught the capstone thesis course on starting new businesses in the Master of Science in Publishing program.

He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Rice University and a J.D. from Harvard Law School.
The 2012 Rice-Leipzig Lovett Seminar

Citizenship and the Future of the Humanities

In 1908, when Rice’s founding president Edgar Odell Lovett embarked on a journey to visit some of the world’s leading academic institutions, he could not have known that the legacy of his voyage would still be felt at the beginning of the 21st century. Among the many institutions he visited was the University of Leipzig, his own alma mater and one of Germany’s leading universities with a tradition that dates back to 1409. It is only appropriate that the Department of German Studies and the School of Humanities celebrated Rice’s Centennial with the inaugural Rice-Leipzig Lovett Seminar.

Organized by Uwe Steiner, department chair and professor, and Christian J. Emden, associate professor and director of undergraduate studies, and supported by the Office of the President, the seminar brought together leading humanities faculty from Rice and Leipzig to take stock of their disciplines and of the modern research university’s hotly debated future. Opening with a conversation between President David Leebron and Rektorin Beate Schücking (Leipzig), the seminar immediately focused on the centrality of the humanities within a global and technologically driven culture of knowledge. The keynote address, “Democratizing Scholarship: A Reform Agenda for an Affordable and Accessible Humanities,” was delivered by Russell Berman, the Walter A. Haas Professor in the Humanities at Stanford University. School of Humanities Dean Nicolas Shumway also made remarks, which reflected on preparing students to become responsible and successful citizens in a world that has changed dramatically since Lovett’s days. Both of these speakers, as well as the subsequent seminar discussion topics, introduced a vivid discussion on the current social role of the humanities in the global intellectual culture.

The Rice-Leipzig Lovett Seminar successfully started a long-term collaboration across the humanities with one of Rice’s foremost partner institutions, a relationship that remains strong today. Each summer, funded by the department’s Roy Jones Fellowships and the Houston Sängerbund Fellowship, German studies sends up to 11 undergraduate students to Leipzig’s Herder Institute. The Rice-Leipzig Lovett Seminars will continue this exchange on the faculty level with joint workshops in both Houston and Leipzig.

For more information about the Department of German Studies or study abroad opportunities to Leipzig, please visit http://german.rice.edu.
2012–2013 Conferences

The Past and Present of Race and Place in Houston, Texas

February 2013

The Past and Present of Race and Place in Houston, Texas brought together 22 leading local and national scholars to present new work on the history of race in Houston. The conference’s panels focused on topics and themes such as Houston under Jim Crow laws, migration, culture, labor and poverty. These conversations included current investigations of the city’s racial landscape in order to discover the ways that historical and contemporary scholarship inform one another, and, in places, to highlight how such work offers solutions to current race concerns in the city.

This conference was organized by Alexander Byrd, associate professor of history, and Emily Straus, a postdoctoral fellow at the Kinder Institute for Urban Research.

Millennial Medicine Symposium

April 2013

Millennial Medicine: Knowledge Design for an Age of Digital Disruption was a unique, one-day symposium that focused on creative solutions to the grand challenges facing medical education today. The event’s goal was to launch a new kind of conversation about what the future of medicine should be and how we should get there. What needs to change in medical training so that future doctors will be prepared for the global changes that are impacting medicine and other fields of higher education? How can medical education cultivate innovation and help current students succeed now and in the future? This event, part of the Medical Futures Lab, attempted to answer these questions.

This conference was organized by Kirsten Ostherr, associate professor of English.

Beyond Multiculturalism: Brazil as a Model for Affirmative Action Policies in Contemporary Latin America

March 2013

This conference included historians, anthropologists, sociologists and political scientists from Brazil and the U.S. to reflect on the question: Does a postracial society exist in the Americas? Brazil has implemented trailblazing, yet controversial, affirmative action policies, and this conference examined the historical trajectory of these race-based polices. Topics such as affirmative action as a model for racial justice in Brazil and the U.S. and as a way of reclaiming “a birth right” for Afro-Brazilians provide a platform to think about the historical, political and social power structures.

This conference was organized by Elizabeth Farfán-Santos, an Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in the Humanities Research Center.

Digitization in the Humanities

April 2013

This three-day, interdisciplinary workshop provided hands-on introductions to some of the basic tools in the emerging field of digital humanities. It also offered an opportunity for further instruction in digital methodologies and research platforms for building inventive collaborations between digitalization and humanistic study. Collaborating with Oxford University, Rice University brought to campus six leading experts in the field to teach markup, text-mining, network analysis and megadata management. These scholars led interactive sessions for an audience of Rice students, faculty, and members of other institutions, teaching digital practices that integrate computational- and humanities-oriented research.

This workshop was organized by Anne Chao, adjunct lecturer in the School of Humanities.
New and Retiring Faculty

New Faculty:

Brian Ogren
(Religious Studies)

Anna Smith Fine Assistant Professor of Judaic Studies
Ph.D., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2008
M.A., Jewish Civilization, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2001
B.A. Religious Studies and East Asian Studies, University of California at Santa Barbara, 1997

Ogren joined the Program in Jewish Studies in the Department of Religious Studies in 2012. He specializes in early modern Jewish thought, with a research emphasis on philosophy and kabbalah during the Italian Renaissance. Ogren's concentration has been on the flow and reception of ideas among diverse intellectual communities and has paid attention to intellectual discourse as a means of asserting authority and of forming identity.

His first monograph, “Renaissance and Rebirth” (Brill, 2009), treats notions of reincarnation in Italian Renaissance Jewish and Christian humanist thought. He is currently working on a book project concerning Jewish ideas of cosmic cycles in early modern mystical texts in regard to notions of time, space and self. He also has contributed to a forthcoming compilation of Italian Renaissance kabbalistic texts, which will be published by the I Tatti Renaissance Library of Harvard University Press. Ogren's work continually examines issues of center and periphery, as well as continuity and change, in regard to Jewish philosophical and mystical traditions.

Timothy Morton
(English)

Rita Shea Guffey Chair of English
Ph.D., Magdalen College, Oxford, 1993

Morton teaches graduate courses in the Department of English. He studied English literature at Oxford before doing his postdoctoral work at Princeton. He has worked at New York University, Colorado University at Boulder and University of California at Davis, and he serves on the advisory board for Oxford Literary Review and Collapse.


Retiring Faculty:

Susan Wood
(English)

Gladys Louise Fox Professor of English
M.A., University of Texas at Arlington, 1970
B.A., East Texas University, 1968

Wood has taught at Rice University since 1981 and is the author of four books of poetry, most recently “The Book of Ten” (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011). “Asunder” (Penguin 2001) was a National Poetry Series selection and her “Campo Santo” (LSU Press) won the Lamont Prize of the Academy of American Poets in 1991. She has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Lannan Foundation and has had poems selected for The Pushcart Prize 2000 and Best American Poetry in 2000 and 2006.

Her essays and poems have appeared in numerous anthologies and literary magazines, including The New Yorker, The Kenyon Review, The Virginia Quarterly Review, Gulf Coast, Five Points, The New England Review and TriQuarterly, and she is currently completing a new manuscript of poems, “The Soul Bone”. Her teaching interests are creative writing, contemporary poetry, and medicine and literature.

During her tenure at Rice University, Wood was the chair of the English department from 2001–2005 and has served on numerous university committees. She also has been an associate at Jones College, Baker College and Sid Richardson and was a master at Lovett College.
Publications

Art History

Leo Costello  
Assistant Professor  

Shih-shan Susan Huang  
Assistant Professor and Director of Graduate Studies  
“Picturing the True Form: Daoist Visual Culture in Traditional China” (Harvard University Asia Center, 2012)

Joseph Manca  
Nina J. Cullinan Professor  

Diane Wolfthal  
Caroline and David Minter Professor and Department Chair  
“Princes and Paupers: The Art of Jacques Callot,” co-authored with Dena Woodall (Distributed by Yale University Press, 2013)

Classical Studies

Scott McGill  
Associate Professor  
“Plagiarism in Latin Literature” (Cambridge University Press, 2012)

Leo Costello  
Assistant Professor  

Scott McGill  
Associate Professor  
“Plagiarism in Latin Literature” (Cambridge University Press, 2012)

English

Joseph Campana  
Assistant Professor  

Cary Wolfe  
Bruce and Elizabeth Dunlevie Professor and Director of 3CT  

Julie Fette  
Associate Professor  

Hispanic Studies

Gisela Heffes  
Assistant Professor  
“Glossa urbana” (Alción Editora, 2012)

Lora Wildenthal  
Associate Professor and Department Chair  
“The Language of Human Rights in West Germany” (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012)

French Studies

Julie Fette  
Associate Professor  

Melinda Fagan  
Assistant Professor  
“Philosophy of Stem Cell Biology: Knowledge in Flesh and Blood” (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2013)

Douglas Brinkley  
Professor  
“Cronkite” (Harper, 2012)

Moramay Lopez-Alonso  
Lecturer (deceased)  

Religious Studies

Richard J. Smith  
George and Nancy Rupp Professor of Humanities  

Anthony Pinn  
Agnes Cullen Arnold Professor of Humanities  
“Introducing African American Religion” (Routledge, 2012)

Cary Wolfe  
Bruce and Elizabeth Dunlevie Professor and Director of 3CT  

Philosophy

Patrick K. Thornton  
Lecturer (deceased)  
“Legal Decisions That Shaped Baseball” (McFarland, 2012)

Melinda Fagan  
Assistant Professor  
“Philosophy of Stem Cell Biology: Knowledge in Flesh and Blood” (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2013)

Faculty Appointments, Awards and Prizes

Art History
▶ Graham Bader, Mellon Associate Professor, was appointed a 2012–2013 visiting scholar at Humboldt University in Berlin, Germany.
▶ Gordon Hughes, Mellon Assistant Professor, received a 2012–2013 J. Paul Getty Research Institute Scholar-in-Residence appointment and was awarded a Barr Ferree Foundation Publication Fund Grant.
▶ Diane Wolfthal, the David and Caroline Minter Chair in Humanities, received a J. Paul Getty Research Institute Museum Guest Scholar appointment for summer 2013.

Classical Studies
▶ Jose Aranda, associate professor of English and Hispanic studies, was awarded the 2012 George R. Brown Award for Superior Teaching.

German Studies
▶ Martin Blumenthal-Barby, assistant professor, was a finalist for the 2012 Phi Beta Kappa Teaching Prize at Rice University.
▶ Uwe Steiner, professor and department chair, was awarded a 2012–2013 Humanities Research Center Faculty Fellowship for his work, “Walter Benjamin’s Concept of the Political in its Philosophical Context.”

Hispanic Studies
▶ Luis Duno-Gottberg, associate professor of Caribbean and Film Studies, received the Honorary Mention from the Latin American Studies Association, Venezuelan Studies Section, for 2012.

History
▶ Kathryn de Luna, assistant professor, was awarded a 2012–2013 Humanities Research Center Faculty Fellowship for her work, “Collecting Food, Cultivating People: Wild Resource Use in Central African Farming Communities, 1000 B.C.E.-1900 C.E.”
▶ Ira Gruber, the Harris Masterson Jr. Professor Emeritus of History, won the prestigious 2013 Samuel Eliot Morison Prize from the Society for Military History.
▶ Moramay Lopez Alonso, assistant professor, received a fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies for international and area studies, in conjunction with the Social Science Research Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The six-month fellowship is for spring 2013.
▶ Ussama Makdisi, professor and director of the history graduate program, is a 2012–2013 senior fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg Zu Berlin.

Linguistics
▶ Masayoshi Shibatani, the Deedee McMurtry Professor of Humanities, was awarded a 2012–2013 Humanities Research Center Collaborative Research Fellowship for his work, “Theoretical Explorations of Japanese Dialect Grammars.”
▶ Christina Willis, assistant professor, received the Social Sciences Research Institute Seed Grant Award and the American Philosophical Society Franklin Research Grant in 2012. She also received a 2012 Kinder Institute Summer Research Fellowship for The Voices of Houston: A Linguistic Survey.

Philosophy
▶ Jennifer Blumenthal-Barby, adjunct assistant professor of philosophy and assistant professor at Baylor College of Medicine Center for Medical Ethics and Health Policy, received a Greenwall Faculty Scholar in Bioethics, 2011–2014, and was named the Pfizer Bioethics Fellow for 2011–2013.
▶ Gwen Bradford, assistant professor, was awarded a 2012–2013 Humanities Research Center Faculty Fellowship for her work, “The Nature and Value of Achievement.”
▶ Nicolette Orlandi, assistant professor, was awarded a 2012–2013 Stanford Humanities Center External Faculty Fellowship.

Religious Studies
▶ April DeConick, the Isla Carroll and Percy E. Turner Professor of Biblical Studies, was awarded a 2012–2013 Humanities Research Center Faculty Fellowship for her work, “The Ancient New Age: Gnostic Spirituality and the Birth of Christianity.”

Visual and Dramatic Arts
▶ Matt Schiefel, lecturer and production manager for Rice’s Theatre Program, received the 2012 Houston Press Theatre Award for Best Lighting, “Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson,” at Generations Theatre.
▶ Christopher Sperandio, assistant professor of painting and drawing, commissioned a collaborative film project, titled “TRICE Tableux,” for the 2012 Olympics that was recently screened at the Tate Modern in London, England.
▶ Geoff Winningham, professor of photography, received an Arts Initiative Fund grant to develop an interdisciplinary undergraduate course combining earth science and visual art studying Galveston area ecosystem. The spring 2014 class will be co-taught with Adrian Lenardic, professor of Earth sciences in the Wiess School of Natural Sciences.

Center for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality
▶ Kimberly Kay Hoang, a two-year postdoctoral fellow in the Program in Poverty, Justice and Human Capabilities, received the 2012 American Sociological Association’s Best Dissertation Prize for her work, “New Economics of Sex and Intimacy in Vietnam.”
▶ Diana Strassman, director of the Program in Poverty, Justice and Human Capabilities, was appointed the Carolyn and Fred McMannis Distinguished Professor in the Practice of Humanities.

Humanities Research Center
▶ Melissa Ballar, HRC associate director and professor in the practice of humanities, was elected to a three-year appointment to the South Central Modern Language Association as vice president (2013), president (2014) and past president (2015).
▶ Farès el-Dahdah, professor of architecture, was appointed director of the Humanities Research Center in the School of Humanities in July 2012.
In Memoriam

Edward “Ted” Anderson
Assistant Professor of Humanities

Edward M. “Ted” Anderson passed away this past January. Anderson had been a member of the faculty of the School of Humanities at Rice University since 2006; was appointed assistant professor of humanities in 2009; and taught in the humanities, classical studies, music and art history curricula. He specialized in Renaissance, Baroque and Enlightenment Italian literature and culture (1300–1800), with a particular emphasis on the interrelationship between poetry and music. Anderson was the former director of the Art Song and Vocal Chamber Performance Program of the Aspen Music Festival and School and worked professionally in the representation of singers, conductors and stage directors for Organization Artistique International in Paris and Columbia Artists Management Inc. in New York.

The Department of Art History held a memorial service for Anderson at the Rice Memorial Chapel in February.

Thomas McEvilley
Distinguished Lecturer Emeritus of Art History

Thomas McEvilley, distinguished lecturer emeritus of art history, passed away this past March at the age of 73. McEvilley was being treated at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in N.Y.

McEvilley devoted a large part of his life to teaching art and art history at Rice, arriving at the university in 1969 and retiring in 2005. His areas of teaching and research included ancient, religious and contemporary art history, and art theory. He was a well-known and influential art critic and in 2005 founded the MFA Art Criticism and Writing program at the School of Visual Arts in N.Y. In addition to articles in art journals and catalog descriptions, he published more than a dozen books, including “Pat Steir,” “Sculpture in the Age of Doubt” and “The Shape of Ancient Thought: Comparative Studies in Greek and Indian Philosophies.”

McEvilley was the recipient of many awards, including the Semple Prize at the University of Cincinnati, a National Endowment for the Arts Critics grant, a Fulbright Fellowship and the 1993 Frank Jewett Mather Award for Distinction in Art Criticism from the College Art Association.

John Meixner
Professor Emeritus of English

John Meixner, a longtime humanities faculty member and passionate advocate of the Shepherd School of Music, passed away this past January. Before coming to Rice in 1968, Meixner was on the faculties of Clark University and the University of Kansas, teaching courses in early 20th-century British literature, film studies, modern drama and creative writing. A dedicated and conscientious teacher, he was both demanding of and inspiring to his students. He is the author of “Ford Madox Ford’s Novels: A Critical Study” (University of Minnesota Press and Oxford University Press) and several articles in literary journals. Houston’s Main Street Theater, produced two of his plays, “Leaves” and Women and Men.”

In lieu of customary remembrances, contributions may be made to the Shepherd School of Music’s Shepherd Society.

José Bernardo Pérez
Assistant Professor of Spanish

José Bernardo Pérez, Hispanic studies professor, passed away in January after a battle with lung cancer. Pérez was born in Villagarcía de Arosa of Pontevedra, in Galicia, Spain, and after pursuing his undergraduate education in Spain, traveled to the U.S. and devoted his life to teaching Spanish literature and culture at Rice University for nearly 33 years. Pérez was an exemplary professor in many ways and in 2010 he was awarded the prestigious Nicolas Salgo Outstanding Teacher Award from Rice University. He served as the undergraduate adviser for Hispanics studies majors starting in 1998, was a faculty associate of Sid Richardson College since 1986, and also served for many years on the University Committee on Fellowships and Awards.

His family has requested that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the J. Bernardo Pérez Memorial Travel Abroad Scholarship Fund in his honor.

Gale Stokes
Mary Gibbs Jones Professor Emeritus of History

At the age of 79, Gale Stokes passed away unexpectedly in November. A Rice University professor for 44 years, Gale Stokes was past dean of the School of Humanities, chair of the history department and three-time winner of the George R. Brown Award for Superior Teaching. He specialized in the history of Eastern Europe, Balkan history and nationalism and was past president in his field of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies. His book, “The Walls Came Tumbling Down,” about the fall of the Berlin Wall and its effects in Europe won the national prize for the best book in the field of Eastern European studies. Although Stokes retired in 2005 after 37 years of extraordinary teaching, scholarship and service to Rice, he was still actively pursuing his scholarship and had a continuing presence on campus.

Stokes especially loved the arts on Rice’s campus and in lieu of flowers, his family suggests sending donations to Rice Gallery in his memory.
Recruit faculty who enhance Rice’s international stature
It’s no secret: the best way to strengthen a program’s research, teaching and scholarly mission is to attract faculty who are leaders in their fields. As competition for such game-changing talent continues to intensify, endowed faculty positions will be our most powerful means of recruiting these scholars and bringing the School of Humanities to international pre-eminence.

Produce innovative research through the Rice Seminars
The Rice Seminars are producing cutting-edge research by approaching humanities a different way — by ignoring the “silos” that restrict academic progress and by instead leveraging a community of dynamic, interdisciplinary scholars from Rice and around the globe. Creating a sustainable source of funding for this program will ensure that we continue to produce compelling research with far-reaching impact.

Generate meaningful study abroad opportunities
Some universities talk about exposing students to different people and cultures, and that’s good, but it’s only part of the point. To create more meaningful international experiences, we are engaging our students in semester-, summer- or year-abroad programs in which they develop significant language competence and cultural literacy. Resources raised through philanthropy will allow us to offer these experiences to more students.

Support the Humanities
Contact Jeanette Zey, senior director of development for humanities, at 713-348-4669 or jzey@rice.edu. For more information about giving to Rice University, please visit http://giving.rice.edu.