

TO OUR AMERICAN STUDIES GRADUATE STUDENTS,

AUGUST 26, 2009

I want to welcome you back to a new academic year at Cal State Fullerton. Following Pam Steinle's example, I'm sending you this brief newsletter to introduce myself and to emphasize how delighted and honored I am to be your graduate advisor. This newsletter will be succinct; you'll be receiving further information—about the mid October Colloquium, for example—as we move through the semester.

Under Pam's remarkable leadership, the MA program flourished dramatically over the past ten years, and I'm looking forward to building upon her legacy for the next few years. When I worked as our grad advisor from 1989 to 1995, it was one of the most gratifying experiences in my more thirty years at Fullerton. My enthusiasm for this role is as strong as ever, and I'm eager to do all that I can to make your experience in American Studies at Cal State Fullerton a high point of your life.

My office hours this semester are Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1-3 PM in UH-410. Needless to say, I'm looking forward to meeting with graduate students during these hours, but I'm also happy to see you anytime later on during Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, at least until 5 PM. I'm also free for appointments on Wednesdays, during most of the day and early evening if necessary. Email or phone for an appointment, providing a range of available dates and best times for you, and I'll reply with the earliest times and dates that work for both of us. Please feel free to contact me: by email at: msteiner@fullerton.edu; or by phone at 657-278-3640.

Welcome to our new graduate students—the 2009 cohort:

Twenty-one students were admitted to our MA program for Fall 2009. I truly enjoyed meeting most of them at the new student orientation on Saturday, August 22nd. We welcome three students from out-of-state universities: **Elayne Allebest** (BA Speech and Dramatic Arts, Brigham Young University, 1971 with recent course work at Claremont Graduate University); **Rebecca Hogue** (BA American Studies, Columbia University, 2007); and **Rahima Schwenbeck** (our Sekhon Scholar for the year; BS Business and MA Liberal Studies and Jewish Studies, University of Minnesota, 2008).

We have nine students from across California, with clusters of three from Long Beach State and two from Chapman University and others from Concordia College, UCLA, UC Davis, and UC Santa Barbara. These students are: **John Carlos Marquez** (BA History, CSU Long Beach, 2009); **Marley Rosner** (BA American Studies, CSH Long Beach, 2009); **Lisa Yamasaki** (BA American Studies, CSU Long Beach, 2009); **Justine Mitchell** (BA Communications, Chapman University, 2009); **Robyn Nelson** (BA Psychology, Chapman University, 2000); **Teresa Garcia** (BA Art, Concordia College, Irvine, 2008); **Amy Kremer** (BA History, UC Irvine; MA History UCLA, 1991); **Stacy Moultry** (BA Sociology, UC Davis, 2008); and **Jessica Ordaz** (BA Women's Studies/Global Studies/ History, UC Santa Barbara, 2009).

Finally, we have a strong group of nine students from Cal State Fullerton: **Heather Agnew** (BA History, CSUF, 2005); **Lora Clawson** (BA American Studies, CSUF, 2008); **Patrick Covert** (BA American Studies, CSUF 2009); **Amy Herring** (BA American Studies, CSUF, 2009); **Andrew Holmes** (BA American Studies, CSUF 2009); **Norma Ortega** (BA American Studies, CSUF, 2009); **Juan (Manny) Sanchez** (BA American Studies, CSUF 2009); **Adam Vasquez** (BA American Studies, CSUF, 2009); and **Jason Ward** (BA American Studies, CSUF, 2008).

This is a talented and most promising cohort. Along with the rest of my colleagues, welcome to the American Studies community and to your careers as American Scholars, in best Emersonian sense of the term, at Cal State Fullerton.

Congratulations to our Spring and Summer 2009 MA graduates:

A memorable group of fourteen students completed their degrees this Spring and Summer. Twelve students graduated in May, and all of them did comprehensive exams. Congratulations and best of well-earned good luck to our May graduates: **Karen Alonzo**, **Lissa Camacho**, **Katie Filbeck**, **Brendan Gaughen**, **Jamie Hiram**, **Josh Legere**, **Matt Nelson**, **Jennifer Owens**, **Jimmy Stroup**, **Jessica Torres**, **Megan Wagner**, and **Allison Wanger**. Two students graduated in August by completing their MA theses. They are: **Matt Glassman**, “The Ball Don’t Lie: Cultural Tension and the Commodification of Hip-Hop Authenticity in the 1990s NBA” and **Steve Manseau**, “Roll, Truck, Roll: A Cultural Appreciation of Trucker Music, America’s Last Worksong Canon.”

Moving on to PhD and Other Professional Programs:

Seven of these graduates have moved on to doctoral or other professional programs. They are: **Katie Filbeck** (Arizona State University, PhD English); **Brendan Gaughen** (University of Texas, Austin, PhD American Studies); **Matt Nelson** (Carnegie-Mellon University, PhD English); **Jimmy Stroup** (University of California, Riverside, PhD History); **Megan Wagner** (San Jose State University, MS in Library and Information Science); and **Allison Wanger** (University of Iowa, PhD American Studies).

American Quarterly Internships at USC and the Earl James Weaver Graduate Paper Prize:

Following our tradition of placing interns every semester with the ***American Quarterly*** at USC, **Mary Anderson** and **Jamie Hiram** have just finished their editorial work there for the Summer. **Adriana Ruvalcaba** and **Richard Morales** will begin their internships at the ***AQ*** this Fall, and internships for Spring 2010 have already been determined. This year’s competition for the Earl James Weaver Graduate Paper Prize was intense with a large number of impressive submissions. In late April, the Weaver Prize Committee (Professors Ball, Lewinnek, and Ibson) announced the winner: **Jennifer Moore**, whose paper, “The Mythopoetic Men’s Movement on television: A Gathering Place for the 1990s Male,” provided, in the words of the committee, “a thoughtful and provocative analysis of the ways that television can illuminate cultural anxieties and amplify social movements in the United States.” In addition to earning a cash prize, Jennifer’s paper will be published in the 2010 edition of our academic journal, ***The American Papers***. I’ll keep you informed about criteria and deadlines for the Weaver Prize; I’ll also pass along details about opportunities for publication and editorial experience with ***The American Papers***.

Upcoming Graduate/Faculty Colloquium:

Continuing an even longer-standing tradition, the Graduate Faculty Colloquium is ***tentatively scheduled for Saturday, October 17th***. Professor Pam Steinle has generously offered to host the event at her house in Fullerton, and **Professor Allison Varzally** of the CSUF History Department has generously agreed to give the colloquium talk based upon either her recently published book, ***Making a Non-White America: Californians Coloring outside Ethnic Lines, 1925-1955***, or upon fresh research. The colloquium usually begins at 7 PM, allowing time for socializing with snacks and beverages (provided by the department) before the 45-minute research presentation begins at 7:30. After a brief break for coffee and dessert, we regroup for informal discussion and question fielding until around 10 PM or a bit later. This event is for you—a chance to enjoy and embrace a part of the CSUF American Studies community beyond the classroom. I will send out final details—including the title of Professor Varzally’s talk, confirmed date, and directions to Pam’s house—within the next few weeks. Along with the rest of my colleagues, I look forward to seeing you all at this important event.

OTHER EVENTS, CONFERENCES, POSSIBILITIES:

Close to home, CSUF American Studies MA Alumna **Sharon Sekhon**, continues to direct the highly successful **Studio for Southern California History**, located at 525 Alpine Street, Los Angeles 90012 in New Chinatown between Yale & Hill. The Studio sponsors an impressive range of events, including poetry readings, local history workshops, exhibits, and walking tours. Upcoming events include: a 90 minute **walking tour of Chinatown** on September 5th, a 90 minute **walking tour of historic Evergreen Cemetery** on October 3rd, and the opening of **an exhibit, "Law and Disorder,"** on October 3rd. Full details are available at the Studio's website: www.socalstudio.org. Or by calling at: 213-229-8890.

There are many professional conference possibilities, ranging from local to regional and national meetings. These include: The national **American Studies Association** meeting in Washington, DC, November 5-8; the **Western Literature Association**, meeting in Spearfish, South Dakota, September 30-October 3; the **Western History Association**, meeting in Denver, October 7-10; and the **American Studies Association of Texas**, meeting in San Marcos, November 13-15. These are simply a few of the many national, local, and regional meetings and conferences. The nearby **Autry National Center of the American West** and the **Huntington Library** frequently sponsor American Studies related conferences. Looking toward next semester, keep your eyes open for, among other meetings: the national **Popular Culture Association** meeting in St. Louis, March 31-April 3; the **Claremont Graduate Student Conference** meeting in late April and the **California American Studies Association** meeting at CSU Long Beach in early May. Feel free to see me about these and other professional possibilities. The CSUF student activities group, the ICC, has funded some travel to conferences in the past. I will put you in touch with the AMST ICC representatives who can help you with the funding process.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES AND REMINDERS:

AMST 596 TEACHING TUTORIAL:

If you are available for and interested in future enrollment (Spring, 2010) in AMST 596 (teaching assistant and training for graduate credit which fulfills your 3 unit "alternative skill" requirement), please contact me as soon as the Spring '09 class schedule comes out—*well ahead of your actual early registration window*—so I can help you find the most appropriate match. Because of the current budget crisis, we are unlikely to have any paid graduate assistantships, but if they somehow survive, I'll let you all know immediately.

GET CLASSIFIED:

You are not a Classified Graduate Student until you have filed a study plan with the university through your graduate adviser. **If you have completed or are close to completing your first fifteen units of coursework as a graduate student and you have not already filed a tentative study plan for your required 30 units of coursework, you need to make an appointment to see me in late October or early November to fill out a study plan.** The study plan is not an irreversible contract but it is a required agreement that will help determine your course of study as well as identify the three faculty who will work with you as committee members in preparation for your comprehensive examination or thesis.

GRADUATION REMINDER:

When you begin **your final year of study, you must file for a graduation check through the Graduate Studies office, MH-103.** Students who plan to graduate in Spring or Summer 2010 must file by January 2010. **Fall 2009 graduates should have already filed by now, though the Graduate Studies office has just extended the Fall 2009 grad check deadline to September 1, 2009.**

Here are recent instructions from *Dr. Katherine Power, Director of Graduate Studies*: “Grad checks **MUST be submitted online by the September 1 deadline in order to be considered for Fall 2009 graduation. Grad Checks will not be accepted online after September 1.** Students apply online for their grad check through the **Student Portal**. Once a student has logged in to the **Student Portal**, they will enter **Titan Online** and then their **Student Center**. Once they have entered their **Student Center**, they need to locate the **drop down menu on the left that reads “Other Academic.”** Activate the drop-down menu, **select “Apply for Graduation”, click the >> icon and follow the remaining instructions.** **The Grad Check fee is still \$115 and students must pay the University Cashier (UH-180) within five business days.”**

MYSTERIES OF GS 700:

If you have finished the required coursework for your study plan, including enrolling in either AMST 599 (Exam Prep) or AMST 598 (Thesis) and have received an open "RP" grade report for these courses (and if you are not enrolling in any further classes) **you must still register for GS 700 to maintain continuous enrollment with the University each semester** (except Summer) while preparing for the comprehensive exam or writing your thesis. **If you do not maintain continuous enrollment every semester the university will drop you from graduate study.**

SO: if you need to enroll in GS700 for Fall 2009 or future semesters, you can do this through:

1) regular registration (see GS700 listed in class schedule) but you will have to pay full fees. By paying full fees for regular registration in GS700, you retain “active enrollment” status, which allows you to keep library and health center access, and will allow you to accept on campus employment as a grad assistant and to seek ICC funding for conference travel. All regular enrollment procedures and deadlines apply for active enrollment GS700.

or

2) you can do this through GS700 Waiver (continuous enrollment, waiving active enrollment benefits) for a reduced fee around of \$250 total (Caveat: the lower cost means losing health center and student activities benefits as well as on-campus graduate assistant employment possibilities.)

The absolute registration deadline for the GS 700 WAIVER this semester is SEPTEMBER 28th. The GS 700 WAIVER forms are available online ... <http://www.fullerton.edu/graduate/> click on “Graduate Forms”) and in MH 103 (Grad Studies Office). The GS700 WAIVER requires the filing of a graduation check request (or updating/changing graduation date) as well as my signature. If you have finished your coursework, see me as soon as possible to sign your GS700 Waiver Form for Fall 2009.

MEETING FINAL REQUIREMENTS:

If you are completing an **MA Thesis for Fall 2009 graduation (technically January 2010)**, the thesis **must be signed off by your committee and delivered to the Graduate Studies office (MH-103) by Monday, November 16th.** The university thesis reader, Patricia Ducey, will then go over your manuscript for possible revisions, and the final version **must be deposited in the campus bookstore no later than Friday, December 18th.** For those interested in the details and technicalities of thesis writing, an updated 28 page Thesis Manual is available for you at the Graduate Studies Office, McCarthy Hall 103 (657) 278-2618.

If you are taking the **AMST Master’s Comprehensive Exam for Fall 2009 graduation (technically January 2010)**, you must **begin not later than Friday December 4th and complete by Tuesday, December 8th at the latest to allow time for evaluation by your committee, due to me not later than 3 PM on Friday, December 11th** (so that I can file a completion memo on your behalf with Graduate Studies before the 5 PM that day).

***Be sure to talk over and schedule your dates with your committee chair**

REGARDING THE CHOICE BETWEEN THESIS AND COMPREHENSIVE EXAM:

The final requirement for the American Studies Master's Degree at CSUF is the writing of either a thesis or a comprehensive essay examination. In both cases, your work will be supervised and evaluated by the three faculty members you have asked to serve on your Master's committee (one of whom you will ask to serve as chair) and have confirmed on your study plan. The American Studies faculty devoted the past year to revamping and restructuring the comprehensive exam, and it will apply to all students beginning the program Fall 2009. Details of the new exam along with a discussion of the choice between exam and thesis options are available in the Graduate Program section of the American Studies Department website. I urge you to read all of graduate program information on our website, if you haven't done so already. You can go directly to the discussion of the thesis and exam options by clicking on the following link: [The Big Choice- Thesis or#9CC14](#). Once again, please feel free to see me or any other faculty member in person, to weigh this important decision.

Once again, I want you all to know how pleased and even honored I feel to be your graduate advisor and to build upon all that Pam Steinle has done for the MA Program. I am extremely eager to continue conversations with the students I already know and to begin conversations with others. Please feel free to set up an appointment with me or simply stop by during my office hours. Welcome back to the American Studies community at Cal State Fullerton! I wish you all the best of all possible semesters.

Mike

Michael Steiner

Professor and Graduate Adviser, Master's Program in American Studies