

Center for the Humanities News

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Supporting Humanities at Boston University Since 1981

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Letter From the Director

Dear Colleagues,

It is hard for me to believe that I am nearing the end of my fourth year as Director of BUCH. There will be a change in leadership next year, with my colleague Bonnie Costello taking over as Acting Director; I am confident that the humanities community will welcome and support her. I'll be in London most of next year, trying to finish a long book, and I've agreed to return for a second term as Director beginning with the 2013–14 academic year.

Next year BUCH will welcome its first class of year-long Junior Fellows, and will again sponsor a wide array of stimulating programs. I am sure Bonnie joins me in hoping that you will participate in our activities and share with us your best suggestions and ideas.

—James Winn



2011/2012 Highlights

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Jeffrey Henderson Senior Research Fellows 2011/2012



Top Row: Brown, Carroll, Menegon, Frederick

Bottom Row: Rzepka, Yeh, Johnson

Julia Brown: Professor, Director of Undergraduate Studies, English. *The English Bildungsroman and its Afterlife in Film*

William Carroll: Professor, *Networks and the Europeans in Imperial Beijing, 1601-1820*

Charles Rzepka: Professor, English. *Being Cool: Elmore Leonard and the Work of Writing*

Catherine Yeh: Associate Professor, Modern Languages and Comparative Literature. *The Stuff Stars are Made of: International Politics, Mass Media and the Rise of dan*

James H. Johnson: Associate Professor, History. *Disguised Intentions. Masks in the City of Light*

Sarah Frederick: Associate Professor and Acting Chair, Modern Languages and Comparative Literature. *Yoshiya Nobuko: Women Readers, Popular Writers, and Modern Japanese Literature*

Eugenio Menegon: Associate Professor, History. *Amicitia Palatina: Court*

Teena Purohit: Assistant Professor, Religion. *Cosmopolitan Islam in an Identitarian Age*

Dylon Robbins: Assistant Professor, Romance Studies. *Popular Music, Political Subjectivity*

Junior Faculty Fellows 2011/2012



Top Row:
Alrenga,
Liebesman,
Mears.

Bottom Row:
Michael, Purohit,
Robbins

Peter Alrenga: Assistant Professor, Romance Studies. *Negotiations in the Expression of Comparison: A Case Study in Semantic Uniformity*

Ashley Mears: Assistant Professor, Sociology. *Searching for Gisele: Gatekeepers of the Global Cultural Economy.*

David Liebesman: Assistant Professor, Philosophy. *The Meaning of Mass Nouns.*

Thomas Michael: Assistant Professor, Religion. *Early Chinese Sages and Shamans.*

KeCIA Ali, Religion

Humanities Foundation Executive Committee 2010/2011

Irit Kleinman, Romance Studies

Jodi Cranston, Art History

Erin Murphy, English

Nina Silber, History

Stephen Scully, Classics

Jeremy Yudkin, Music

Sunil Sharma, MLCL

Walter Hopp, Philosophy

Faculty Project Highlights 2011/2012

Your Boston University Center for Humanities supports a number of projects throughout the year. Here are some of this year's highlights:



Anthony Phelan speaking at the Rilke Society Conference.

Modern Languages and Comparative Literature: The Rilke Society held its 35th Annual Meeting in September at Boston University, with Harvard cohosting some events. International scholars of Rilke's poetry convened for three days to discuss this year's theme: *Rilkes, Verstreute Gedichte 1906–1911 (Rilke's Uncollected Poems 1906–1911)*.

This year the Center for Philosophy and the History of Science hosted a series of colloquia about science and thought, lasting throughout the year. Topics discussed included: *Secrecy and Transparency in Science, Representation in Science and Art and Critical Perspectives on Sex-Difference Research*.

History: In November, Professor Bruce Schulman, Chair of History, convened a conference on *The Global 1970s: The Radical Decade in Global Perspective* at Boston University. This was the first of three planned conferences

involving scholars from BU, the University of Utrecht, and the University of Münster. Speakers explored the social, political, and cultural experimentation of the tumultuous decade.

MLCL/Religion: The topic of the annual Sedgwick Memorial Lecture in October was *The Age of Frankenstein: Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and the Temporality of Homophobia*. Over one hundred students came to hear Andre Parker speak about connections between the story of Frankenstein and modern attitudes towards sexuality and gender.



Andre Parker preparing for the Sedgwick lecture at Hillel.

American and New England Studies Program: AMNESP held a series of events under the general rubric of *Revisiting the Contact Zone: Postcolonial Responses to American Exceptionalism*. In the Fall, there were presentations on: *Vernacular Studies, Diasporas, Womanoag Culture, and Chinese Exclusion*. In the Spring, there were two panel discussions on: *Transnationalism and the Question of Empire; and Imperialism, and Sports Culture, and Tourism*.

Junior and Senior Research Fellows, 2012/2013

Jeffery Henderson Senior Research Fellows:

Patricia Hills, History of Art and Architecture

Deanna Klepper, Religion and History

Laura Korbokin, English

John Paul Riquelme, English

Junior Faculty Fellows:

Amy Appleford, English

Anna Henchman, English

Emily Hudson, Religion

Paul Katsafanas, Philosophy

Robert Murowchick, Archeology

Wine, Cheese and Bach: An Evening with Joshua Rifkin

As a "Gift to Our Colleagues," part of a new initiative launched by the BUCH Executive Committee, the Center hosted an evening of music on February 21 in the School of Management Trustees Ballroom. This event featured a lecture-demonstration by Joshua Rifkin, Professor of Musicology in the College of Fine Arts, speaking about Bach. His talk was illustrated by The Bach Ensemble, playing Professor Rifkin's reconstructions of two compositions by J. S. Bach. Almost 200 of our faculty and friends were present. The music was followed by a reception featuring a special selection of international wines and cheeses.



Faculty Project Highlights 2011/2012 contd.

MLCL/ Women, Gender and Sexuality: In September, we sponsored the symposium, *Exploring Gender Representation and Identity in the Middle-East*, a two-panel event on gender roles and representations in the Middle-East.

Religion: After a year-long speaker series on the topic, an international conference on *Muslim Women and the Challenge of Authority* in March drew nearly a hundred participants (students, scholars, and activists) for exploration of Muslim women's interpretive, ritual, and social authority from the seventh century to the present.

Women, Gender and Sexuality: As part of the project on *Comedy in the New Gender Regime*, Zahra Noorbakhsh performed her one-woman show, "All Atheists Are Muslim."



Classics Studies: The College of Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum presented *The Theater of War*. The

evening included a dramatic reading from Sophocles' *Ajax*, followed by a town-hall style discussion about the psychological and physical wounds of war.

International Relations: In March, an international workshop on *Resilient Neoliberalism: The Eurozone Crisis: Is There a Way Out?* brought Europeanists together to discuss the current crisis in Europe.

Musicology: In April, the Musicology Department, in collaboration with the Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center, hosted a conference on *Jazz, Criticism & American Politics*, which looked at the social statements early jazz musicians made through their music.

African American Studies: In April, the symposium *Africans, African Americans, and the Abrahamic Religions* focused on how African people and their descendants have encountered, converted to and helped to shape the three religious traditions that claim Abraham as their ultimate founder—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.