

History & Philosophy Department

Montana State University-Bozeman

Letter from the Chair:

Seasons Greetings from the Department of History and Philosophy. On behalf of my colleagues, our students, and Diane, Jennifer, and Brianne in the front office, I want to wish all of you the very best for the holiday season and for the upcoming new year.

This has been a wonderful year for the Department. We are pleased to welcome Prof. Kristen Intemann to the Philosophy faculty. I hope that all of you have received the Confluence Magazine from the College of Letters and Science,



Dean Sara Jayne Steen presents Prof. Michael Reidy with the L & S Teaching Award

which notes the many accomplishments of our faculty. Here are some highlights: Prof. Michael Reidy received the College award for Outstanding Teaching; Prof. Gordon Brittan received the University

award for outstanding service to the people of Montana; and Prof. Mary Murphy has been named to a three-year term as the Michael P. Malone Professor of History. Prof. Brett Walker received the Leopold-Hidy Award from the American Society for Environmental History and Bob Rydell received word that the book he co-authored with Rob Kroes of the University of Amsterdam has been nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.

Our students have also been very successful and I am pleased to report that Phi Alpha Theta, the History Honorary Society, received an honorable mention award for being one of the best chapters in the nation.

In addition to these accomplishments, I'd like to call to your attention some of our new courses. In Religious

Studies, Prof. Susan Cohen has developed a course, "Isms: The Religious Background of Categories." In History, Prof. Brett Walker has taught two new courses, "Animal Histories" and "Japan's

Long 19th Century;" Prof. Billy Smith developed a new seminar, "Research Slavery;" and Prof. Sara Pritchard has developed two new courses, "Science, Technology, and Risk" and "World Environmental History." In Philosophy, Prof. Jim Allard taught a new seminar "Philosophy of Logic" and Prof. Gordon Brittan developed a seminar on "God: The Answered Question." Beyond the Department, Prof. David Cherry teamed up with Prof. Jeff

Adams and taught a new course in Liberal Studies entitled "Ways of Knowing;" and Prof. Mary Murphy taught a course that is a contender for the prize for best course

title of the year: "Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, Sunbonnet Saints (and Anxious Patriarchs): Gender and Regionalism in America."

Robert W. Rydell
Professor and Chair



Bob and Kiki Rydell at our annual Holiday Party



Post-doc emeritus Bob Wilson with current post-doc Arn Keeling

Spaces of Struggle Conference

The Department of History & Philosophy hosted yet another successful national conference this semester, bringing together scholars, graduate students, and teachers for three days of intellectual creativity and Montana hospitality.



Billy Smith and grad students at the Malone Conference in Big Sky

Convening in the beautiful setting of the 320 Guest Ranch south of Big Sky, scholars from across the country joined with MSU professors and students to discuss the ways in which spatial views and concepts enable the exercise of power over both humans and nature. “Spaces of Struggle: Power and the Transformation of Nature,” was the second in three planned conferences made possible by the Department’s National Science

Foundation grant for training and research.

The conference brought together historians and geographers and provoked many fresh insights. The Department was especially proud of the central role its graduate students played throughout, both by raising stimulating questions and engaging in the many informal discussions outside of the panels.

A highlight of the conference was the Thursday night keynote address of Professor Don Mitchell from Syracuse University. Prof. Mitchell’s talk, “Spaces No Longer of Struggle: Dead Labor and the Transformation of Labor in the Imperial Value,” provided a moving and provocative example of many of the intellectual themes addressed during the conference. Conference participants also raved about the Saturday trip to Butte, Montana, where they had the chance to visit both the aboveground and underground environments of that much-storied city. Butte stood as a powerful concrete example of the ways power and spatial concepts have transformed our natural environment.

Next year, the Department will host the final NSF-funded conference, this time focusing on themes that will tie the two previous conferences together and perhaps suggest the basis for a new “spatial science” that will integrate science, technology, and the environment in new and insightful ways.

Yellowstone Summer Internships

With the help of generous support from Jack and Susan Davis and the Yellowstone Park Foundation, we were very pleased to offer paid internships to two undergraduates, Rachelle and Laura, and two graduate students, Wendy and Michael, to work in the newly opened Yellowstone Heritage & Research Center (HRC) in Mammoth. Pete Faggen was also there this summer, working on an independent study. Students worked with the curatorial team in the HRC in various aspects of museum-based research, object classification, and data processing. For students interested in exploring careers in museums, in historic preservation, and the study of material culture, this was a terrific experience. As we look toward the summer of 2006, we hope to be able to expand the number of internships and give our students an opportunity to develop their talents at this World Heritage site.



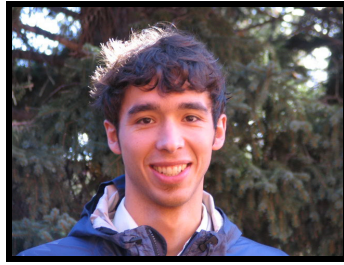
Pete Faggen, Rachelle Schrader, Wendy Zimgibl, & Michael Konsmo
Laura Brady pictured on next page

On behalf of our students, thank you



Laura Brady

"By being a history major and minoring in museum studies, I have not only improved my writing and analytical skills, but I have also been exposed to amazing opportunities. The professors are great resources and helped me arrange an internship in Mexico, where I attended Spanish school and helped a community museum categorize their archives."



Calvin Selvey

"Philosophy's importance may be readily understood at cultural and social levels; however, philosophy is most important to the individual as it provides tools for living, an aspect well developed by the philosophy staff here at MSU."



Scott Hyslop

"The good folks in Religious Studies and Philosophy have gone out of their way for me and for all of the students. I've had a great time over the past few years. I feel that, rather than being trained in a discipline, I've been educated and invited to think. That experience is invaluable. It will be with me as long as I live."

We are very proud of our students. As you know, college is getting more expensive and our students are having a tougher time making ends meet. May we ask you to help our deserving majors with your support? In the next couple of weeks, you will be receiving a letter from the Dean, Sara Jayne Steen, asking you to consider a gift to the College of Letters and Science or to one of its departments. The faculty and students in the History and Philosophy Department are asking you to consider specifying that gift to the History & Philosophy Students' Scholarship Fund.

You may use the pledge card that is coming with Dean Steen's letter, or the coupon in this newsletter. Either way, your gift will lighten the financial burden for deserving students. We will acknowledge your generous support in both future Letters and Science publications and our Department newsletters. If you prefer, we will list your gift as anonymous. Thank you very much.

Please clip and send this form with your tax-deductible contribution to:

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Humanities Institute in the Story Mansion

Do you remember the SAE House? Well, depending on your date of graduation, of course you remember the SAE House. Several years ago, the SAE's sold this property to the City of Bozeman. The city, working with the local historical preservation community and Senators Max Baucus and Conrad Burns, secured funds to begin the restoration of the mansion with the intent of finding a buyer who could put the property to public use and preserve the Story Mansion. The University has expressed an interest in buying the Story Mansion and the City has given MSU six months to raise the necessary cash. We are making significant headway and would welcome any support. What will the University do with the Story Mansion? MSU envisions a Humanities Institute that will bring national and international faculty to this campus to interact with our own faculty and students. The Institute's interdisciplinary nature will allow for work on a variety of projects of interest to the community, the state, and the world.



Story Mansion

We welcome your thoughts and suggestions for programs. Any contributions of time or money to the MSU Humanities Institute in the Story Mansion Project would be most appreciated. Please contact us at (406) 994-4395 for further information.