SEMINARS FOR TEACHERS: 2010-11

The Graphic Novel: Comics and the Classroom
Pat Grzanka, Associate Director, Honors Humanities
October 13 and 27, 2010

Once thought to corrupt the minds of youth, comic books and their grown-up siblings, graphic novels, are becoming more commonplace in the classrooms and syllabi as critics and educators recognize them as fruitful texts for the exploration of topics throughout the humanities and social sciences. At once image and text, graphic novels defy traditional modes of literary and visual analysis and challenge the norms of storytelling. This two-day seminar will introduce the graphic novel as a historically stigmatized literary genre and examine a variety of strategies for integrating graphic novels into courses across the curriculum.

Participants will be exposed to several classic texts of the genre, including the Holocaust memoir *Maus* and dystopian mystery *V for Vendetta*. The second day of the seminar will focus on emerging classics, such as *Pride of Baghdad*, which represents the war in Iraq from the perspective of a group of lions that escaped from the Baghdad Zoo in 2003, and *A.D.: New Orleans After the Deluge*, which examines life in the Gulf Coast in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Participants will discuss a variety of possible learning outcomes for these texts and strategies for engaging students in the interrogation of such topics as: subjectivity and perspective in historical biography, visual literacy, superheroes in the public imaginary, political messages in art, and the use and production of stereotypes. Finally, participants will examine how the graphic novel medium transforms the experience of reading and writing by creating discipline-specific assignments that direct students to create their own forms of visual storytelling.

**Patrick R. Grzanka** is the associate director of the Honors Humanities Program at the University of Maryland, where he teaches courses on social issues in popular culture, the history of the humanities, social and cultural theory, and an annual course on graphic novels. His research and teaching explore how dimensions of identity and difference, such as race and sexuality, influence emotions, attitudes, and everyday life. He has a forthcoming book chapter on teaching about *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and is working on a book manuscript based on his dissertation, *White Guilt: Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Emergent Racisms in the Contemporary United States*. He was recently named a Lilly teaching fellow by the campus’ Center for Teaching Excellence.

The Blues Tradition
Barry Lee Pearson, Department of English
October 20, 2010

This seminar surveys the African-American blues tradition, looking to its roots and branches in such diverse genres as spirituals, hollers, worksongs, rhythm and blues, soul, and rock. Multimedia and multicultural in its approach, the seminar employs film, sound recordings, readings, lecture, and discussion to explore the cultural contexts in which blues has evolved and diversified, and the various ways it has been commodified as a commercial product. This seminar approaches blues from a historical and regional perspective spanning the twentieth century. Special attention will be paid to such major artists as Bessie Smith and Robert Johnson.

**Barry Lee Pearson** is a professor in the Department of English at the University of Maryland, and has published extensively on aspects of the blues tradition. He has also garnered a Grammy nomination, and co-produced traditional arts festivals including the National Folk Festival.
African-American Theatre and Performance
Scot Reese, Department of Theatre
November 4 and 18, 2010

This seminar offers participants a guided tour through the great plays and playwrights of the African-American theatre canon by presenting images in African-American dramatic literature, poetry and short stories. It aims to acquaint participants with intellectual, cultural, social, and political changes over time by exploring the timeline of African-American theatre and how social, cultural, political, and economic events are directly linked to the type of plays being written at that time. By studying the contributions of Blacks to the American theatre, participants will gain additional perspectives on slavery and abolition, folk, and storytelling, interracial prejudice, women’s rights, sexual and racial discrimination, and the black power movement.

Scot Reese is an associate professor in directing, Black theatre, and musical theatre. Professional theatre credits include productions from Los Angeles to New York. Television credits include daytime dramas, situation comedies, variety specials, commercials, and an Emmy Award for individual achievement in performance.

Dealing with Cross-Cultural (Mis)Understanding: Communicating in the Classroom
Roberta Lavine, Department of Spanish and Portuguese
November 9, 2010

Have you ever wondered why some of your students from other countries seem to view things differently? Or why their parents react to teachers in unexpected ways? Many times these misunderstandings are due to cultural differences; not recognizing or understanding such disparities can have long lasting negative impact.

In this seminar we will explore how differences and similarities in values impact our lives. We will compare cultural values and behaviors of the United States with other countries, and place particular emphasis on the U.S. and Spanish-speaking environments (both in this country and in Latin America). We will look at a variety of areas, such as verbal and non-verbal communication, conceptions of relationships and family, ideas of power and authority, and views of time and space. We will touch upon different contexts (e.g., business), but will pay particular attention to how cultural differences impact education.

Roberta Z. Lavine is an associate professor of Spanish and Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Maryland. She is also affiliate faculty in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the School of Education and teaches in the graduate program in Second Language Education and Culture. She spent the fall semester in 2005 as a Fulbright scholar in Chile at the University of Concepción.

Lavine’s present areas of research include language pedagogy, educational technology, and learning disabilities. She published a co-edited volume on technology and teacher training, Preparing and Developing Technology-proficient L2 Teachers (2008) and is currently writing a book on learning disabilities in Latin American education. She is co-director, with James Greenberg, of a program dealing with educational reform in Latin America and is currently working with colleagues in Chile, Ecuador, and Peru to implement Teaching Portfolios on the
university level. Lavine has won several teaching awards including the *University of Maryland Award for Innovation in Teaching with Technology* for a project using interactive technology to promote cross-cultural proficiency and understanding.

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**Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Who They Are and What We Can Do**

Andy Egel, Department of Special Education

February 23, 2011

According to the most recent report by The Centers for Disease Control, one in 110 individuals in the United States is diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD.) This represents a substantial increase in the overall prevalence of autism in the last two decades. In fact, autism is one of the fastest growing childhood disorders and is more common than childhood cancer, cystic fibrosis and multiple sclerosis combined. Because of this rapid increase and the implementation of Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, teachers in public schools today (both special and regular education teachers) will almost certainly encounter a student with ASD.

This seminar will provide teachers with an overview of ASD that will help them understand the complexities of teaching students affected by the disorders. Participants will receive information on the history of ASD and what we know currently about differential diagnosis, etiology, and the use of evidence-based practices for teaching students with ASD. This information will help teachers understand how classrooms and interactions can be organized to facilitate the ability of students with ASD to learn classroom material and to prevent problems that interfere with effective classroom instruction.

**Andrew Egel** is a professor in the Department of Special Education at the University of Maryland. His current research interests focus on the development and evaluation of innovative instructional methodologies and the training of teachers for children and youth with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). These projects have been implemented with support through federally-funded grants from the research, model programs, early childhood and personnel preparation divisions of the US Office of Special Education Programs. In addition to his research endeavors, Dr. Egel consults with school systems locally and across the United States as they develop programs for students with ASD.

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**Thoreau's America: Consumption and Anti-consumption in American Life**

Jo Paoletti, Department of American Studies

March 1 and 15, 2011

Some scholars have argued that consumer culture has eclipsed civic culture in its importance in American life. This argument maintains that "we are what we buy" -- that we define ourselves by what we consume. Even the iconic American Dream is often expressed in terms of possessions. Yet America has also been home to a series of anti-consumer movements, beginning with the anti-materialistic aspirations of the Puritans and continuing to advocates of environmentalist simplicity today.

In this two-day seminar, we will examine both strands in this narrative: the studies that have described us as a nation of consumers, the advertising which encourages our buying habits and the economic growth dependant on consumer spending AND the efforts, movements and trends that criticize, resist or oppose excessive consumption. Sometimes these impulses spring from necessity (the Great Depression, wartime) but often they are rooted in convictions about
the moral peril of personal wealth or about environmental sustainability. We will consider historical evidence (Puritan sumptuary laws, utopian communities, 60s communes) as well as recent trends such as frugality and Voluntary Simplicity, from the point of view of historians and cultural critics and that of individuals such as Henry David Thoreau who pursued or advocated "the simple life".

Jo B. Paoletti is Associate Professor of American Studies at the University of Maryland in College Park, where she teaches courses related to everyday American life, include popular culture, fashion and consumerism, and ethnic diversity. She earned a BS in clothing design from Syracuse University, an MS in textiles from the University of Rhode Island, and a PhD in textiles from the University of Maryland. Paoletti's training is in the history of clothing and fashion, and she has published many articles on gender differences in American children's clothing. In addition, she blogs on conscious consumption at http://nicewhitelady.blogspot.com/ and manages Thoreau's America, an online network for academic exploration of "the simple life" in America.

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**Men, Women, and Monsters: The Drama of the Odyssey**
Lillian Doherty, Department of Classics
March 17 and 31, 2011

Homer's Odyssey confronts us with a world that is both bizarre and recognizable: a world of cannibal giants and lonely goddesses, of implausible fidelity and fierce vengeance, of double standards and reciprocated love. How do we sort out the conflicting elements in the portrayals of Odysseus, his allies and enemies, and his like-minded wife? This seminar will focus on two complementary ways of reading the epic. The first is to situate it in the context of archaic Greek culture in order to clarify the motives we find so baffling. The second is to identify patterns in the way the story is told: by whom and to whom? We will consider what the poet and his hero tell us, what they leave unsaid, and how their culturally appropriate silences shape the story as a whole.

Lillian Doherty is a professor of Classics at the University of Maryland and the Associate Editor for Greek of the American Journal of Philology. She has written extensively on the Odyssey, which she teaches often in English translation and sometimes in the original Greek. Another of her favorite courses is “Women in Classical Antiquity.”

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**Teaching the Literature of the Holocaust**
Sheila E. Jelen, Department of English and Program in Jewish Studies
April 6 and 13, 2011

How much exposure is too much exposure to the details of traumatic historical events, and at what ages is it appropriate to introduce children to different layers of understanding? What role does literature play in teaching about history, and how can we maintain consciousness of the difference between fact and fiction? Is the literature of the Holocaust to be held to particular standards of truth in representation that other literatures may not? Does the literature of the Holocaust, or the literature of trauma in general, constitute its own genre? In this workshop on teaching the literature of the Holocaust, we will discuss three texts: When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit by Judith Karr, Night by Elie Wiesel, and Maus by Art Spiegelman. The first text will be appropriate for younger students, while the last two texts are more appropriate for high-school-age students.
In discussing *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit*, we will focus on the point of view of the novel – that of a child’s with a limited understanding of the war. What do we learn about the war and its impact on children by hearing the voice of a child of privilege in the face of poverty and displacement, trying to make sense of three new cultures and three new languages in the course of several years? Our focus in *Night* by Elie Wiesel will be the controversy over the work’s autobiographical integrity, particularly in light of its new translation and Wiesel’s denunciation of some of the details of the earlier translation. We will consider what it means for a work of testimony to be available in so many different languages. *Maus*, a graphic novel about the Holocaust, will enable us to discuss questions of transmission. How does Art Spiegelman’s testimony mingle with his father’s testimony through his choice of a comic medium, and who story, ultimately, is being told in the book?

Methodologically, we will discuss the use of close readings in the classroom, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of historical supplementary readings, oral testimonials through guest speakers, and movies as contextualizations of literary works about the Holocaust.

**Sheila Jelen** is assistant professor of English and Jewish Studies at the University of Maryland. She is the author of *Intimations of Difference: Dvora Baron in the Modern Hebrew Renaissance* (Syracuse 2006) as well as the editor of several volumes of essays on modern Jewish literature. She is an associate editor of *Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History*. She teaches modern Hebrew literature, the literature of the Holocaust, gender and Jewish literature, and American Jewish literature.