

University of Alabama in Huntsville

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Newsletters

Humanities Center

8-1-2016

UAH Humanities Center, 2016

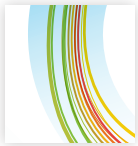
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Recommended Citation

University of Alabama in Huntsville, "UAH Humanities Center, 2016" (2016). *Newsletters*. 12.
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Humanities Center

College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences



Eminent Scholars

- » Istvan Csicsery-Ronay: English scholar
- » Amy Douglass: Psychology scholar
- » Brian Bornstein & Scott Gronlund: Psychology scholars

Eminent Scholars

- » Priscilla Wald: Eminent scholar
- » Wolfram Schmidgen: English scholar

Faculty Research

- » David Johnson travels to Germany
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Spotlight

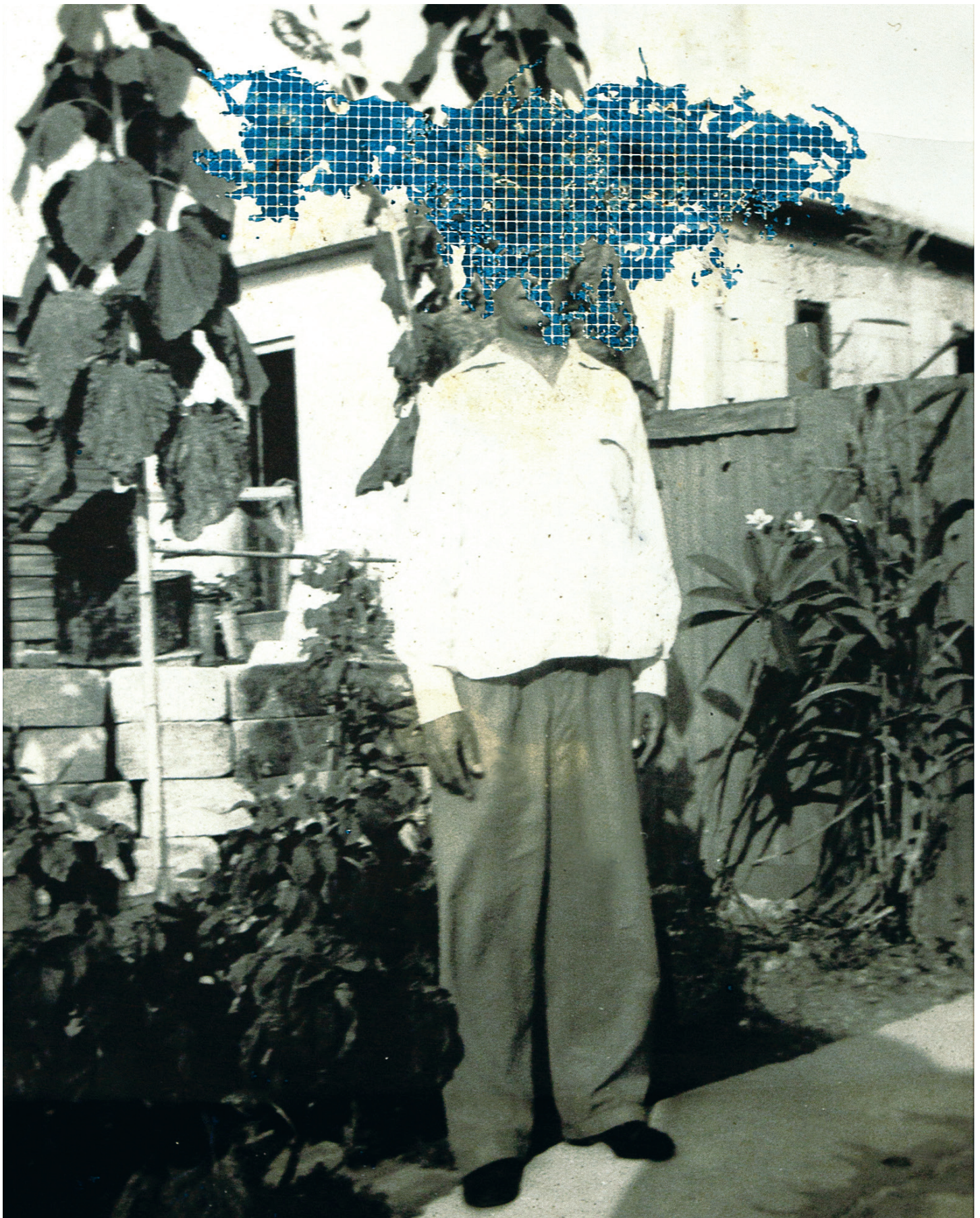
- » Johanna Shields: A Tribute

Contact Us

ERIC SMITH

Director, Humanities Center
Associate Professor of English

uah.edu/humanities



REVISIT

JOSÉ BETANCOURT'S SHOW "CUBA: RECONSTRUCTING MEMORIES"
was on display in UAH's Wilson Hall Gallery from Jan. 24 to Feb. 5, 2016.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome



This has been a banner year for Humanities Center-sponsored activities. In addition to supporting faculty travel to scholarly meetings, numerous faculty research projects, public programs, and library grants, we also hosted a record number of visiting eminent scholars, whose public lectures, symposia, classroom visits, and workshops substantially enhanced humanistic study at UAH this year. The planned November 2015 symposium dedicated to preeminent philosopher Alain Badiou was sadly cancelled following the terrorist attacks in Paris on November 13. We are in the process of rescheduling this event for fall of 2016 and

will announce details as soon as they are confirmed. As always, I am grateful for the input and energy of my colleagues in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, and for the continued support of Dr. Ray Vaughn, Vice President for Research and Economic Development, whose office provides for the Center's operations. Gratitude is also extended to those members of the Huntsville community who have contributed to the Humanities Center's endowments. The following pages showcase only a fraction of the fruits borne of your generosity over the past twenty-five years. With your partnership, we look forward to renewing and extending the ambitions of visionary faculty like Dr. Johanna Shields, founding Humanities Center Director and Professor Emerita of History, whose tenacity and foresight transformed humanistic study at UAH and, in the process, contributed immeasurably to the Huntsville community.



Eric Smith

Associate Professor of English

Library Grants

Joseph Conway

English: materials on American literary scholarship addressing issues in U.S. literary culture prior to 1900.

Jeremy Fischer

Philosophy: materials investigating the philosophy of emotion.

Andrei Gandila

History: materials covering the study of Roman history with emphasis on social and economic implications of daily life in Ancient Rome.

Rolf Goebel / Joseph Taylor

World Languages & Cultures / English: materials for the research of media studies, musicology, literary criticism, history, cultural critique, anthropology, and psychology.

Molly Johnson

History: materials on the history of Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union during the twentieth century.

Nicole Pacino

Women's Studies: materials on women's and gender studies in Latin America with an emphasis on Central America, the Caribbean, and the Andes.

Christine Sears

History: materials on public history, race, slavery, and Southern public history and memory.

Humanities Center Steering Committee

Laurel Bollinger

Professor, English

Aaron Cain

Assistant Professor, Music

Nicholaos Jones

Associate Professor, Philosophy

Leslie Kaiura

Associate Professor,
World Languages and Cultures

John Pottenger

Professor, Political Science

Christine Sears

Associate Professor, History



EMINENT SCHOLARS



Sound and Beyond: A Symposium



▲ Dr. Sterne is Professor and James McGill Chair in Culture and Technology at McGill. His fields of interest include sound studies; media theory and historiography; science and technology studies; new media; disability studies; music; and cultural studies.

On Thursday, March 2, and Friday, March 3, 2015, the Humanities Center sponsored a symposium titled "Sound and Beyond: Acoustics, Visuality and Culture in the Digital Media Age." The events were organized by Dr. Rolf J. Goebel, Prof. of German and Chair of the Dept. of World Languages and Cultures.

During the last few decades, sound studies have emerged as an interdisciplinary project that seeks to counterbalance the dominant role that visual perception has played in Western modernity since the time of the Renaissance. Among other topics, sound studies investigates the historical and cultural contexts of sound (re-)production through technological media; it analyses the role of music in its relation to other acoustic phenomena; it probes into the soundscapes of our post-industrial metropolis; and it traces the multicultural and global differences in

sound productions across national boundaries, ethnic identities, and political systems.

Appealing to Huntsville's centrality in science and technology, the symposium gathered three internationally renowned scholars from the fields of cultural studies, sociology, and musicology. The first keynote lecture, by Prof. Trevor Pinch, Cornell University, was on "Sound Studies: The Sound of Economic Exchange." The second keynote lecture, by visiting Eminent Scholar Prof. Jonathan Sterne, McGill University, was titled "In Search of Compression: What MP3s Can Teach Us About Sound, Hearing, Culture and Media in the Digital Age." These talks framed a roundtable discussion among the keynote speakers and UAH faculty featuring a lecture by Prof. Joy Calico, Vanderbilt University, on the topic "A Musicologist Attempts to Become a Sound Student."

Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr. English Scholar

Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., Professor of English at Depauw University, visited UAH on September 14-16, 2015, in support of a joint initiative by the Honors College and the Department of English. Professor Csicsery-Ronay is author of the landmark study *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction* (2008) along with more than 40 articles and the co-editor of three volumes devoted to science fiction studies. He is managing editor of *Humanimalia: A Journal of Human/Animal Interface Studies* and co-editor of *Science Fiction Studies*, the premier journal in science fiction scholarship. He received the Science Fiction Research Association's Pioneer Award in 1992 and was honored by the International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts with its Distinguished Scholar Award in 2014. He has been awarded two Fulbright Lectureships to Janus Pannonius University, Pécs, Hungary,



and two National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowships. In addition to his many contributions to science fiction criticism, he has translated into English primary works of literature by Stanislaw Lem and Tatiana Chernyshova.

Dr. Csicsery-Ronay gave a talk to Honors students on Stanislaw Lem's famous novel, selected as a common text for the

Honors English Seminar, titled "The *Solaris* Problem – The Anomaly in Science and Science Fiction" and delivered a public lecture titled "The Alien and the Animal." In addition, he conducted an instructor workshop on strategies for approaching Lem's *Solaris* in the classroom and spoke to Dr. Eric Smith's contemporary British literature class about China Miéville's *Perdido Street Station*.

AMY DOUGLASS is Professor of Psychology and Department Chair at Bates College. Her research on eyewitness memory has been funded by the National Science Foundation and the Australian Research Council. In addition, she has published in the field's top journals, contributed chapters to edited volumes, and written encyclopedia entries. Currently, she is serving as an Associate Editor for the field's top journal, *Law and Human Behavior*. Her public lecture focused on the role of text in helping psychologists communicate information about psychological concepts. For example, employing examples from her Psychology & Law course, Dr. Douglass discussed how eyewitness identification errors shape the lives of both mistaken eyewitnesses and those who are mistakenly identified using a first-person account of mistaken identification as an example (*Picking Cotton: Our Memoir of Injustice and Redemption*, Jennifer Thompson Canino, Ronald Cotton, & Erin Torneo, 2009). She also demonstrated how the text provides specific examples of empirical phenomena. In discussing these examples, she provided information about how U.S. courts view memory errors by reviewing specific recent court decisions.

On November 6, 2014, **BRIAN BORNSTEIN**, Professor of Law and Psychology at the University of Nebraska, and **SCOTT GRONLUND**, Roger and Sherry Presidential Professor of Psychology at the University of Oklahoma, gave lectures on eyewitness memory and the dilemmas of identification reform. Dr. Bornstein talked about his recent book *Memory Myths in Media*, and Dr. Gronlund discussed his work with memory errors and gaps. Their talks each touched on how memory (false memories, repressed memory, and eyewitness memory) are portrayed in popular media and how these myths influence everyday decisions especially with respect to legal situations and juries. Dr. Gronlund talked about the "CSI effect" or how crime shows affect the type of evidence that jurors expect and how this affects their decision-making.



Books:

Constituting Americans: Cultural Anxiety and Narrative Form (1995)

Contagious: Cultures, Carriers, and the Outbreak Narrative (2008)

Priscilla Wald

English Scholar

Priscilla Wald visited UAH from April 9 to 11 to deliver the keynote address for the English Graduate Student Conference, the theme of which was "Identity and Materialism: Reading the Space Between People and Things." Dr. Wald is a Professor of English and Women's Studies at Duke University, and she is the editor of *American Literature*, the oldest and most respected journal in the field of U.S. literary studies. Her work engages the intertwining of the history of medicine and the history of American culture, as demonstrated in her two books, *Contagious: Cultures, Carrier, and the Outbreak Narrative* (2008) and *Constituting Americans: Cultural Anxiety and Narrative Form* (2008). While at UAH, Dr. Wald visited and addressed a class of graduate and undergraduate English students studying the nineteenth-century American novel. She also closed the first day of conference activities by using her rich editorial experience to talk about the academic publication process. Finally, on the last night of the conference Dr. Wald delivered a keynote address at the Shelby Center titled "Strange Life: Replicant Humanity in the Age of the Anthropocene." The lecture explored Ridley Scott's sci-fi classic *Blade Runner* and its depiction of revolutionary violence as practiced by the film's enslaved cyborgs, who kill in defiance of corporate mastery over their lives. As she is known for her wide-ranging scholarship, Dr. Wald's talk considered such topics as the modern cultural trope of artificially created life from *Frankenstein* onward, recent developments in the field of genetic patent law, and theories of revolutionary politics.

Wolfram Schmidgen

English Scholar

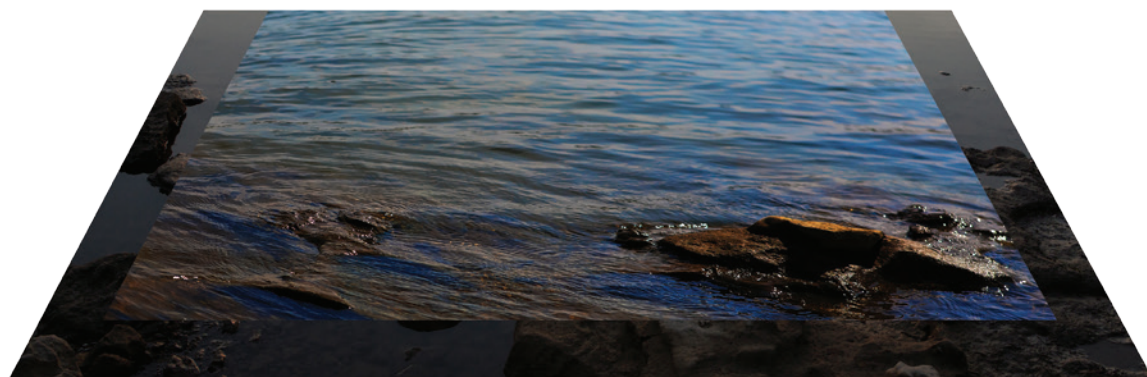
In November 2014, the UAH English Department and the Humanities Center welcomed Eminent Scholar Wolfram Schmidgen, Professor of Eighteenth-Century Literature at Washington University in St. Louis. His books include *Eighteenth-Century Fiction and the Law of Property* (2006) and *Exquisite Mixture: The Virtues of Impurity in Early Modern England* (2012). Dr. Schmidgen's scholarship addresses the new ideological paradigms and cultural forms that evolved out of the economic, legal, scientific, political, and economic transformations that affected England after 1688. While at UAH, Dr. Schmidgen visited two classes,

one an introduction to the English major course in which he discussed *Frankenstein* and its relation to the history of English science. Then he visited a graduate seminar on the study of "things in literature" in which he participated in a conversation about the narrative function of description in novels, and why lists of "things" matter so much to the realist literary tradition. Finally, Dr. Schmidgen delivered a lecture in Wilson Hall titled "Species and the Literary Imagination." The talk related to Dr. Schmidgen's new scholarly project on the genealogy of the concept of "species," and especially the overlap of natural historical and novelistic discourses.



Cuba: Reconstructing Memories

By José Betancourt's





Tierney Malone

Art, Art History & Design

Beginning February 5, the UAH Department of Art, Art History & Design hosted an exhibit by Houston artist Tierney Malone. Malone is a visual artist and veteran of Dr. Jon Bigger's program at Texas Southern University. He is known for his room-sized collages of re-created and altered posters from black cultural history and other sources, and has exhibited nationally. He is also a storyteller/interviewer, and a jazz historian and musicologist with a regular Houston-area radio show. Malone installed a show in the Salmon Library Gallery that was on view February 5-27, and gave a public talk, "Southern Sounds: Recontextualization of Typography, Music and Cultural History in the Creative Process," on February 26 in Wilson Hall Theatre about his incorporation of black history and culture into his art and music projects. Malone graciously participated in an after school storytelling event at Lowe Mill for the benefit of younger students in our community.

Vanessa Wills

Philosophy

In April of 2015, the Philosophy Department hosted Professor Vanessa Wills, St. Joseph's University. A specialist in political philosophy and ethics, Dr. Wills delivered a lecture entitled "The 'White Privilege' Concept in Marxism and Critical Race Theory" to a packed house (despite a tornado warning for that evening). Professor Wills also discussed her research with students and faculty over lunch, dinner, and at a post-talk reception.

National History Honor Society

History

UAH's Tau Omega chapter hosted the annual Alabama regional meeting of Phi Alpha Theta, the National History Honorary Society. Students travelled from across Alabama to share their work in several sessions throughout the day and were joined by UAH students presenting papers, theses, and works in progress.

Gwen Bradford

Philosophy

In March of 2015 we were delighted to welcome Dr. Gwen Bradford to UAH. Professor Bradford visited us from Rice University, where she is Assistant Professor of Philosophy. Dr. Bradford researches value theory and normative ethics. Her lecture, "The Value of Uniqueness," engaged the approximately 60 students who attended, many of whom peppered Professor Bradford with questions in a lively Q&A session.

Peter Alagona

History

The History Department received public programming funds to assist with the visit of Dr. Peter Alagona as part of the Distinguished Speaker Series organized by Dr. Nicole Pacino, History.

Dr. Alagona is Associate Professor of History, Geography, and Environmental Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He received his Ph.D. from UCLA in 2006, and has held postdoctoral fellowships at Harvard and Stanford Universities.

Dr. Alagona has distinguished himself as a scholar of the environmental history of the U.S. West. His book, *After the Grizzly: Endangered Species and the Politics of Place in California* (University of California Press, 2013), seeks to explain why Americans have often fought so bitterly about the conservation of endangered species and shows how current endangered species debates are as much about the politics of places as they are about the creatures that live there.

He visited UAH in March 2015 and gave a talk in Dr. Stephen Waring's Environmental History seminar. He also gave a public lecture entitled "Species Complex: Classification and Conservation in American Environmental History." During his visit he met with faculty from several departments and colleges.

Andrew Feldherr

Society for Ancient Languages

In April, Dr. Andrew Feldherr of Princeton University delivered two lectures as part of Classics Week. These lectures examined the Latin texts studied throughout the fall and spring by the Society for Ancient Languages. In his morning lecture, Dr. Feldherr discussed the way in which Ovid's *Metamorphoses* draws attention to itself as fiction and makes the rhetorical moves usually attributed to modern novels. In the evening lecture, Dr. Feldherr presented his research in progress, an examination of how Lucan's *Civil Wars* depicts Cleopatra and makes her a foil for the Roman values exhibited by Cato. During the day and on Saturday, Dr. Feldherr met with UAH history and classics students, talking about the state of classical studies, graduate programs, and UAH's Latin program. About 40 students and their guests – local high-school students and community members – attended these events.



Mark Roberts

Theatre

The Department of Communication Arts hosted playwright, producer, actor, and comedian Mark Roberts for a panel discussion about his writing career in theatre, TV, and films. He conducted a question and answer session following a performance of his new play *New Country* produced here at UAH. Roberts is the creator of the CBS television series *Mike and Molly*. He is also an Emmy nominee for producing and writing *Two and a Half Men*. Three of his plays have been published by Dramatists Play Service. He is represented by the prestigious Creative Artists Agency in NYC and Hollywood.

Roberts's unfiltered comedy *New Country* made its debut at UAH before its official off-Broadway opening at the Cherry Lane Theatre in New York. Performances were held in the Wilson Theatre in April and May. Written by Roberts and directed by David Harwell, Associate Professor and Director of UAH Theatre, *New Country* marks the first time a professional company of theater makers from New York developed new work on the UAH campus.



DAVID JOHNSON traveled to Germany and Poland in March 2015 to pursue research associated with the project "Silesian Landscapes: Transformations and Tensions, 1900 to the Present." His travel was divided into two components with ten days in Germany and ten days in Poland. In Marburg, Germany, Dr. Johnson spent one week at the Herder Institute for Eastern European Research researching Silesia, a province formerly part of Germany and now part of Poland. In Poland, he concentrated on Breslau/Wrocław and the region of Upper Silesia (Gleitwitz/Gliwice, Katowitz/Kattowice, Beuthen/Bytom, and Hindenburg/Zabrze) (note: the German name for the city is listed first, the Polish name listed second), walking and traveling through the region to familiarize himself with the various spatial and cultural landscapes that figure so prominently in the literary and journalistic works central to his larger project. The most immediate result of this research trip is a conference paper entitled "Landscapes of Intimacy and Alienation: Silesia in Post-War German Travel Writing," which Dr. Johnson presented at the annual conference of the SCMLA in Nashville in November 2015.

ANDREI GANDILA received a Humanities Center Research Grant to begin the first stage of his second book project, "Money in a Pre-Modern Economy: Coin Circulation in the Eastern Mediterranean, c. 500-650 CE." The award enabled him to employ Aaron McNully, a history major with a strong interest in ancient history, to help assist in developing an archaeological database. The main goal was to create a database of finds, copper coins in particular, because they are the most abundant and also most neglected due to their low value. Currently the database includes fields such as archaeological context and site information, as well as technical information regarding size, weight, and dating. The function of the database is to provide the necessary data for distribution maps (GIS), statistical calculations, and the proper classification of finds in their archaeological context on which the historical interpretation ultimately rests. Several chapters of Dr. Gandila's book will rely on the database started this year.



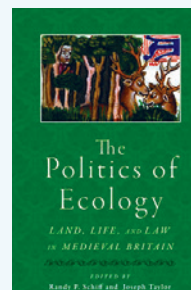
LILLIAN JOYCE, Chair of the Department of Art, Art History & Design, spent two weeks in June at the American Academy in Rome (AAR). The AAR has a competitive Visiting Artist and Scholar Program for residence in the Academy and use of its spectacularly comprehensive library of ancient Roman art, archaeology, and culture. At the AAR she completed final edits and photo permissions for two manuscripts. "Roma and the Virtuous Breast" is forthcoming in the 2014/2015 volume of the journal *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*. "Ariadne Transformed in Pompeii's House of Fabius Rufus" will be a chapter in *Icon, Cult, and Context*, which will be published by the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press at UCLA. She also began a new project on the lost colossal cult images of Venus and Roma that appeared in the largest and one of the most unusual temples built in ancient Rome.



CHAD THOMAS traveled to Stratford-upon-Avon in the United Kingdom in May 2015, where he conducted research on cross-gendered performance at the Royal Shakespeare Company. In addition to a new production of John Ford's play "Love's Sacrifice" (directed by Matthew Dunster), he examined archival records for several past cross-gender cast productions of Shakespeare's works including "King John"

(directed by Maria Aberg, 2012), "The Taming of the Shrew" (Edward Hall, 2008), "Twelfth Night" (Neil Bartlett, 2007), "Romeo and Juliet" (Neil Bartlett, 2006), "The Merchant of Venice" (Bill Alexander, 1987) and "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (John Caird, 1989). He plans to use my findings for chapters in a book project, "Performing Queer Shakespeare."

CHRISTINE SEARS conducted research at the National Archives at Boston, where she focused on admiralty cases in the New England District Court Records (Record Group 21), an extensive collection that covers NH, VT, ME, CT, MA from the 1780s through the 20th century. She reviewed the MA cases from the 1780s to 1820s in which sailors sued for wages and against mistreatment. This collection also covered records relating to privateering, like prize adjudication and division of prizes.



◀ **JOSEPH TAYLOR** received a Humanities Center Research Grant to help fund permissions for images key to arguments in his edited collection *The Politics of Ecology: Land, Life, and Law in Medieval Britain*, recently published by the Ohio State University Press.



HUMANITIES CENTER SPONSORED SCHOLARSHIP

AY 2015-2016

ANGELA BALLA: "Grounding *The Temple*: Natural Law and Reasoned Revelation in Herbert and Hooker," Fourth Triennial George Herbert Society Conference, Phoenix, AZ, October 2014.

ANGELA BALLA: "Donne Practices Religion," The 30th Annual John Donne Society Conference, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA, February 2015.

DIANA BELL: "Grammar in the 21st Century: Theory and Practice," Southeast Coastal Conference on Languages and Literature., Savannah, GA, March 25 to 28, 2015.

LAUREL BOLLINGER: "Plague and Revelation: The Spanish Flu in Katherine Anne Porter's 'Pale Horse, Pale Rider,'" Invited presentation at the American Literature Association Annual Convention, Boston, MA, May 2015

ANNE MARIE CHOUP: "Campus Disciplinary Committees and Sexual Assault: Making the Imperfect-but-Necessary as Efficient as Possible" at the panel entitled "Sex, Power, and Protest: College Campus Sexual Policies--What's Missing? What's Working?" at the annual National Women's Studies Association conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico, November 2014.

ANDREW CLING: "Epistemic Reasons and the Problem of the Criterion," Tennessee Philosophical Association Annual Meeting, Nashville, TN, October 2015.

ANNA FOY: "Johnson and the Luxuriating Imagination: A Review of Grainger's *Sugar-Cane* (1764)," East-Central / American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Annual Meeting, Newark, DE, November 2014.

ANNA FOY: "The Convention of Georgic Circumlocution and the Proper Use of Dung in Samuel Martin's *An Essay Upon Plantership*," Alabama Seminar on Early America, Tuscaloosa, AL, February 2015.

ANNA FOY: "Intellectual History and the Affective Turn: Thoughts on *The Story of Joy: From the Bible to Late Romanticism* (2007)," Inaugural Meeting of the Alabama Symposium on Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Studies, Birmingham, AL, October 2014.

ALANNA FROST: "The Affordances and Constraints of Global Translingual Research: Sites, Methods, Tools." *Thomas R. Watson Conference in Rhetoric and Composition* Louisville, KY, October 2014.

ANDREI GANDILA: "Byzantium and Lazica in the Sixth Century: The Numismatic Evidence," XV International Numismatic Congress, Taormina, Italy, September 2015.

ELETRA GILCHRIST-PETTY: "Students' Perceptions of Professor Verbal and Nonverbal Immediacy Behaviors as Learning Predictors," 85th Annual Southern States Communication Association Conference, Tampa, FL, April 2015.

ROLF GOEBEL: "Heidegger's Noise." Thirty-Ninth Annual Conference of the German Studies Association, Washington, D.C., October 2015.

ROLF GOEBEL: "Commentator, Session 110: Texts and Music: Explorations of Connections and Interactions During the 19th Century," Thirty-Ninth Annual Conference of the German Studies Association, Washington, D.C., October 2015.

DEBORAH HEIKES: "Can Mind Be a Virtue?" International Association of Women Philosophers, Madrid, Spain, June 2014.

DEBORAH HEIKES: Comments on Seena Eftekhari's "Aristotle on Woman's Capacity for (Practical) Reason," Southwestern Philosophical Association, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, November 2015.

DAVID JOHNSON: "Landscapes of Intimacy and Alienation: Silesia in Post-War Travel Writing." South Central MLA Annual Conference. Nashville, TN, November 2015.

DAVID STEWART: "Fracturing the Renaissance: G. F. Watts' Powerful Women" Southeastern College Art Association Conference, Sarasota, FL, October 2014.

LILLIAN B. JOYCE: "It's good to be Rhome: A Greek Goddess becomes Roma," 2015 SECAC Annual Conference, Pittsburgh, PA, October 2015.

LINDA S. MAIER: "A Study of Borges's First Poem," 97th Annual American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) Conference, Denver, CO, July 2015.

NICOLE PACINO: "The Politics of Public Health: Negotiating Health, Citizenship, and Identity in Revolutionary Bolivia, 1952-1964," Latin American Studies Association, San Juan, Puerto Rico, May 2015.

NICOLE PACINO: "'A Grand Crusade!' Smallpox Eradication and the Exercise of Political Power in Post-revolutionary Bolivia," American Historical Association Conference, Atlanta, GA, January 2016.

CLARKE ROUNTREE: "Shades of *A Grammar of Motives* in Edward Levi's Classic, *An Introduction to Legal Reasoning*," The National Convention of the National Communication Association, Chicago, IL, November 2014.

CLARKE ROUNTREE: "Withstanding Motivational Scrutiny in an early Supreme Court Reversal: The Legal Tender Cases," The Kenneth Burke Interest Group at the Annual Convention of the Southern Speech Communication Association, Tampa, FL, April 2015.

PAVICA SHELDON: "Alerting students about a crisis: Technology preferences and secondary crisis communication," The International Communication Association Conference, San Juan, Puerto Rico, May 2015.

PAVICA SHELDON: "An analysis of imagined interactions with Pro-Ana (Anorexia): Implications for mental and physical health," The International Communication Association Conference, San Juan, Puerto Rico, May 2015.

PAVICA SHELDON: "Self-monitoring and narcissism as predictors of sharing Facebook photographs," The Southern States Communication Association Conference, Tampa, FL, April 2015.

PAVICA SHELDON: "Understanding students' motivations for adding faculty as Facebook friends," The Annual Meeting of the National Communication Association (NCA), Chicago, IL, November 2014.

ERIC SMITH: Invited symposium participant and discussion leader, "Creating Futures Rooted in Wonder: Bridges between Indigenous, Science Fiction, and Fairy Tale Studies," Honolulu, HI, September 2015.

DAVID STEWART: "Fracturing the Renaissance: G. F. Watts' Powerful Women" at the Southeastern College Art Association Conference, Sarasota, FL, October 2014.

WOLFRAM VERLAAN & D.L. PEARCE: "The relationship of gender to the listening and reading comprehension of narrative and expository text," The 58th Annual Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers (ALER) Annual Conference, Delray Beach, FL, November 2014.

RYAN WEBER: "Using Research to Build and Benefit from Your Own Advisory Board," Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication, Logan, UT, October 2015.

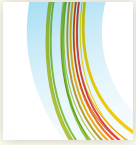


MELODY NG: "Pedagogical and Performance Aspects of Folk Music," College Music Society 2015 International Conference in Scandinavia, Stockholm, Sweden, June 2015.



JOHANNA SHIELDS: A TRIBUTE

Reflections on UAH Humanities Center's Founding Director



IN 1989, DR. JOHANNA SHIELDS, Professor Emerita of History, spearheaded a joint initiative of humanities faculty and administration to establish a center for humanities research at UAH. Operating under the audacious title of the "Daedalus XXI" project, Professor Shields and her colleagues worked tirelessly to define and realize a plan of action combining a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Challenge Grant with the state of Alabama's newly established Eminent Scholar Program. After mounting an unprecedented fundraising campaign and making numerous trips to Washington, D.C., to confer directly with NEH officials, Professor Shields and her colleagues completed twin challenge grants for the establishment of the UAH Humanities Center, over which she presided as founding director (1990-1993, 1998-2003) and as assistant director (2003-2008). It is as impossible to overestimate the contributions that Professor Shields has made to the life of our campus and community as it is to repay the debt owed her by those humanities scholars who can thrive at UAH today because of her visionary efforts. Professor of History Stephen Waring offers the following reflections on his colleague and friend.



I cannot write about Johanna Nicol Shields using the historian's impersonal language. Johanna has been my good friend for decades, and I cannot separate memories of her professional life on UAH's campus, including her role in creating the Humanities Center, from memories of our friendship. To me, Johanna is the model humanist.

Johanna called me on the telephone in the spring of 1988, inviting me to Huntsville for a job interview. In a writer's trance, I was working on my dissertation in a basement duplex apartment. Her voice, warm and Southern, woke me up (the first of many times she made me pay attention). The History Department hired me, based mainly on Johanna's faith (evidently my mix of awkwardness and arrogance proved a perverse attraction).

As a teacher, Dr. Shields was a wonder. She taught at UAH from 1967 to 2007 (including 10 years after retirement). Chatting with her before class, I never saw dog-eared notes. She sat at her desk with a couple of open books and a fountain pen, scrawling a few facts and question fragments on a notepad. Then she strode into class (alumni from the 1970s report she wore miniskirts) where her stories enthralled and her queries challenged and inspired. One of her graduate students, now a history professor at Kansas State University, told me "no one can gut a book like Johanna Shields." I took a photo of her last graduate seminar class at UAH, and that image captured her style, with Johanna the inquirer-in-chief and students before her. She loved teaching at a university like UAH where she could teach students as freshmen, see them grow as seniors and then some as graduate students.

Johanna's research mapped the lost worlds of elites of the antebellum South. Her first book explored maverick congressmen, mostly Southerners and democrats, who voted against their party's line. Moved by elitist values of the last century, the mavericks rebelled against the centralizing and levelling of their era. For this book, she earned the Ralph Henry Gabriel Prize in American Studies. Dr. Shields then moved into a different interdisciplinary realm where she used antebellum fiction to explore culture and society. Johanna situated the fictional character of Captain Simon Suggs as the self-made everyman in the Old Southwest. As a confidence man, Suggs put no limits on self-promotion (his favorite line was "it is good to be shifty in a new country") and pretended to be as rough or educated as need be to trick his marks. Modern readers accustomed to navigating different social roles, Johanna observed, laughed at Suggs

when the trickster fooled the powerful, but cringed at his mockery of slaves.

Dr. Shields retired from UAH in 1997 but continued to do her historical research. Cambridge University Press published her grand book in 2012, *Freedom in a Slave Society: Stories from the Antebellum South*. Hundreds of footnotes show the depth of her learning and her rich relations with other historians. Her history of eight antebellum Alabama authors is complex and ironic. They expressed the optimism of the white middle class of the rising South, and the pessimism of an elite dependent on the brutal exploitation of black slaves. For whites, they championed self-mastery – free choice and moral responsibility in a democracy and a free market would lead to progress. For blacks whom they deemed inferior and barbaric, the writers asserted mastery – authority to oppress forever. The hypocrisy and

corruption Dr. Shields interpreted as being as very Southern, unique to a place and culture. Even so she hinted at how the contradictions in thought were also very American and indeed universal to any society where the freedom and wealth of some depends on the oppression and poverty of others.

Dr. Shields helped establish the Humanities Center and became its first director. I recall that she directed me to attend the very first planning meeting. I asked Johanna why, knowing that I had nothing to contribute and that the university president who advocated the plan was fading in popularity. "Because, young man," she said, "a center is a great idea and the department wants to show its support!" I attended the meeting.

Throughout the formation of the center, Johanna was the leader. The NEH had some one-size-fits-all rules that did not fit the needs of UAH at the time. Dr. Shields was never shifty like Simon Suggs, but she kept persuading and revising until the NEH approved her plan. Once the matching money was raised, the Humanities Center that Johanna helped create became a wide-ranging sponsor; it funded research by humanities scholars, dozens of eminent visiting speakers, and thousands of library acquisitions.

Through the years, I treasure the gift of thousands of conversations with Johanna, the kind of talks that academic colleagues and good friends have. Subjects flowed from matters departmental, pedagogical, intellectual, professional, financial, literary, political, cultural, personal, historical, familial, and back again. I can never express how much I benefited from Johanna. The Humanities Center is Dr. Shields' legacy to UAH faculty and students she never met.





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