

**Faculty of Interdisciplinary and General Studies
Annual Report 2008-09**

**Phyllis Larson
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Students/Teaching

American Conversations

The enrollment prospect is excellent: many more students apply to the program than can be accepted.

American Racial and Multicultural Studies

Although ARMS has traditionally focused on Asian Americans, African Americans, Latinos and Native Americans, it will now also include Americans of Middle Eastern descent in its program because of the growing number of Muslim students enrolling at St. Olaf.

Dave Hagedorn's course on Hip Hop was heavily subscribed. Rika Ito will teach a course Asian American immigration in fall 2009.

Mike Fitzgerald is working with Jo Beld and her office on a vehicle to assess how well students develop the ability to talk about racial topics.

American Studies

Enrollments have been very strong. With 16 majors this year and another 26 declared, the director spends significant time advising them. Students in this program report increasing difficulty in completing their courses of study, as well as in selecting their courses. More and more students seem to be using independent studies and internships to complete their majors.

Judy Kutulas worked with Mary Titus to assess the ability of students to do independent research; results will be shared with faculty for next year's courses and the American Studies librarian.

Asian Studies/Asian Conversations

The language programs continue to thrive; the revised sophomore-level Asian Conversations Program was launched with 20 students; and three upper-level courses in Chinese and Japanese were developed. A successful three-year Freeman Grant funded these curricular initiatives.

Assessment of two ILOs began, one on the general knowledge of Asia and the other on language proficiency in Chinese and Japanese. Work on these will continue in 2009-10.

With the grant of a Freeman Student-Faculty Fellows award from ASIANetwork, Kathy Tegtmeyer Pak and four Asian Studies students will spend three weeks in Japan on a summer research project, "Japanese Peace and Nationalist Museums." Rika Ito worked with two students in the McNair Scholars program during the summer, 2009.

Center for Integrative Studies (CIS)

Ten students graduated with individual majors, a number of them with an additional major or concentration. The Ken Bonde Award was given to Whitney White, who completed an exemplary project documenting the Prairie Island Dakota. CIS announced two Magnus the Good Awards: for "The Ecology of Streams and Contrasting Landscapes" proposed by Assistant Professor John Schade, Erin Seybold, and Brian Kantor; and for "The Socialization of Emotions: Exploring Parental Beliefs and Expressions of Emotions with Young Children" proposed by Assistant Professor Grace Cho and Jill Humble.

Five integrative seminars were offered in 2008-09.

Environmental Studies

The department implemented substantial changes for the major and concentration that were approved in spring 2008: removing core and cognate course designations; establishing ES137 as

the gateway course; deleting the contract from the social science track; adding topics courses; and placing more emphasis on courses with an environmental studies focus. The department is assessing students in the capstone course for their ability to evaluate information about environmental issues; students also completed the Research Practices Survey. Data is being analyzed over the summer. The number of majors continues to grow, but the number of concentrators seems to fluctuate.

International and Off-Campus Studies

Please see the full report for complete statistics on international and off-campus programs at St. Olaf. In brief, 838 students studied off-campus last year, more than half of them (488) during the Interim. 21 students participated in international internships. 70% of the Class of 2009 studied off-campus. Statistics for faculty and staff participation: 54 acted as program advisers; 6 led term programs abroad; 31 led off-campus Interims; and 8 served as hosts to international scholars. This is a robust level of activity.

Initiatives during the year include: revision of the IOS manual; working on learning outcomes; and articulating a travel policy for students going to countries under a State Department travel warning. Importantly, Director Eric Lund continued to work with other institutions on the norming of the BEVI (Belief, Events and Values Inventory) instrument to assess the impact of study abroad on students.

Kloeck-Jenson Endowment for Peace and Justice

The Kloeck-Jenson Endowment supported numerous activities: bringing distinguished visitors to campus (such as James R. Lyons, vice-president for policy and communication at Oxfam America; the South African anti-apartheid activist Eddie Daniels), funding student travel to the Powershift conference in Washington, D. C. and two students as peace scholars to Guatemala; providing scholarships to 10 students for internships related to peace and justice; and offering programming for Human Rights Week on campus.

Chris Chiappari will replace Kris Thalhammer as the new Coordinator for this program, beginning in September, 2009.

Linguistic Studies

Student interest in this concentration remains very strong. (students graduated with a concentration; 33 have declared the concentration.

English 274 is the focus of several issues:

- 1) Offered just once a year, it is oversubscribed (closed at 33, with 10 on the waiting list), and even with pre-registration, not all linguistics concentrators were able to register for it.
- 2) It should be taught by someone with a specialty in linguistics; currently it is not.
- 3) whether it should continue to be housed in the English Department.

Media Studies (now, Media and Film Studies)

The most significant development is the establishment of the film studies concentration and the inclusion of Film Studies within the Media Studies Program. The first-time offering of World Cinema in spring attracted 50 students, and the new "Introduction to Film" course for fall 2009 has closed at 28 students.

Demand for Media Studies courses remains very high; 15 concentrators graduated this year, and 26 will in 2010. Working with students on their digital portfolios places a substantial burden on the Director's time.

Middle East Studies

10 students graduated with the concentration in 2009; 20 will graduate in 2010. Interest is high; nearly all courses are fully subscribed. There is a strong core of three faculty in the program that will be augmented by the arrival of Ibtesam al-Atiyat, a new tenure track hire in the sociology/anthropology department.

A new gateway course, "Introduction to Modern Middle Eastern Studies," will be offered in fall 2009.

Three students studied Arabic at Carleton; others were discouraged by the inconvenience or lack of time.

Nordic Studies

Please refer to the report for the Norwegian major to the Humanities Dean.

Russian Language and Area Studies

The enrollment in first-year Russian increased from an average of 27 students in past years to 42 this year, a delightful spike which nevertheless placed some pressure on the faculty.

A former student won a Fulbright Fellowship and studied in Novgorod this year.

For the second year in a row, the department received a Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant who help with teaching duties, the weekly Russian Table, tutoring and activities in the Russian House.

The department was not able to offer an Interim abroad in Russia, for staffing reasons.

Women's Studies

Student interest continues to be very strong, graduating on average 8 majors this year; but there are already 18 declared majors and 45 concentrators in the wings. Students are increasingly interested in redefining the program as a Gender and Sexuality program, but no change is foreseen in the near future. The faculty have decided to study the ILO on "mastery of disciplinary theories" through the senior seminar, and are continuing to work on the assessment rubric.

Writing Program

The Writing Program supported 256 writing courses, distributed among GE 107, 110, 111, 211, and WRI. The Director has worked closely with the Office of Institutional Research and Evaluation to assess student research practices, using the Research Practices Survey (RPS); she has also conducted an evaluation of the RPS as part of the Collaborative Assessment of Liberal learning (CALL) project. She and the CALL Effective Writing Team produced a rubric to assess writing and made it available to the faculty.

Departments/Programs

Africa and the Americas

The hiring of Abdulai Iddrisu, specialist in African history, in a tenure track position in the history department, will definitely increase the visibility of African studies on campus. His appointment stipulates that he will teach one courses in AFA.. In the next year or two, we will need to bring together all stakeholders to discuss the curriculum related to Africa and plan any changes accordingly.

American Conversations

Assessment is happening in two ways: Eric Fure-Slocum is drafting a report on one ILO, and exit interviews with students who have completed the program will take place in fall 2009.

The faculty discussed the results of an earlier review of the program.

The program will work with Admissions to try to increase the participation of students of color and to make information about the program more easily available to prospective students. This includes reworking the program web site.

Staffing for the long term remains difficult. The Director would like to see a technological solution that would permit all students to be included in *one* class folder in order to expedite collaboration.

American Racial and Multicultural Studies

The number of majors seems to fluctuate from year to year, and the causes do not seem clear.

American Studies

Judy Kutulas identified two important goals for the program: broaden the pool of teachers in the program; and add a requirement that students take one course related to multiculturalism in the U.S.

Asian Studies/Asian Conversations

Kathy Tegtmeyer Pak was awarded tenure and promotion to associate professor; she also won a Fulbright Research Award which will allow her to spend her sabbatical year in Japan focused on the project XX Karil Kucera and Rika Ito were on sabbatical for the year.

The Department began the first year of a three-year Freeman Grant to develop upper level courses in Chinese and Japanese, support student study in Asia, and provide arts programming on campus. In a joint appointment with the music department, it hired Matt Raheim as an ACM-Mellon Postdoc Fellow in ethnomusicology, It will welcome a Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant in Chinese for 2009-10. A grant proposal submitted to the Department of Education to develop content-based instruction in Chinese and Japanese and to create internships in China and Japan was awarded funding in July, 2009.

Under the leadership of Bob Entenmann, St. Olaf ably hosted the 57th annual Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs on October 10-12, 2008.

Asian Conversations needs to change its official status to "program."

Center for Integrative Studies (CIS)

As a result of CIS' earlier involvement in eportfolios and AAC&U's VALUE initiative, St. Olaf was invited to be a VALUE leadership campus and given a grant to evaluate metarubrics for integrative learning. The resulting work on web portfolios should be shared nationally.

Since students interested in the serious study of film often came to the CIS to create their own program of study, CIS joined the film studies task force and participated in drafting the proposal for a film studies concentration housed in the Media and Film Studies Program.

CIS is working to increase its visibility on campus. The tools and practices they have developed could be used more widely by the college community as students elect to do more and more interdisciplinary work.

CIS will need a new director by fall 2010.

Environmental Studies

The physical environment for the department in Regents Hall is excellent for the faculty and for teaching, especially for collaboration; however, the department still lacks a visible "home" in the building where students can gather and interact with each and the faculty.

The CFD postdoc Stephanie Schmidt has made a very positive contribution to the department.

The department needs to have a core group of faculty identified as members of the department in order to move ahead on staffing, curriculum and assessment issues.

Faculty have been very successful in winning grants from the National Science Foundation for Polar Research and Major Research Instrumentation. The department intends to prepare a proposal for a ACM-Mellon Postdoc Fellow in Environmental Studies for June 20

Linguistic Studies

There is a lack of communication about the staffing of English 274. The course was offered in the first summer session in 2009, without notifying the Linguistics director. Offering it in the summer may be a good solution, but more coordination would be very helpful.

The director is sponsoring a Linguistics Reading Group, which had 15 participants. This will be continued in the fall.

Media Studies (now, Media and Film Studies)

Bill Sonnega will direct the combined programs until his term ends in 2011; at that time, this administrative structure will be reassessed. A Film Advisory Board will work with the director of the program to guide film studies.

Middle East Studies

The program suffers from inconsistent coverage of the Middle East in the disciplines of history, political science and art and art history. Students must be diligent in cobbling together a solid program of study from on and off-campus offerings.

Russian Language and Area Studies

The department feels the loss of Bryn Geffert very keenly. The full-time positions of Marc Robinson and Irina Walter are supplemented by four courses from Anna Kuxhausen and two from Paddy Dale; but the curriculum is very lean.

The faculty continued to be very active professionally, locally, regionally, and nationally. Irina Walter will be on sabbatical for the spring semester 2010.

St. Olaf Archives (Shaw-Olson Center for College History)

The Archives has processed major new acquisitions, provided assistance to many patrons, encouraged students, staff and alumni to use the Archives, and advised numerous museums and historical societies regarding the archiving historical materials. It has continued to treat, preserve and display historical materials important to the College and to the Norwegian American Historical Association. The staff have uploaded an online photo collection of images of St. Olaf and Northfield, documented the history of science and math at the college, and made many presentations on aspects of St. Olaf's history. They have also provided improved access to NAHA and College archives.

Some ongoing problems are the inadequate climate control for the NAHA vault; the task of coordinating two archives; and the need to convert old media to CDs.

Women's Studies

In the past, students have had difficulty registering for the introductory course early in their careers at St. Olaf. Now pre-registration has alleviated this problem; it remains to be seen whether offering the introductory course in summer school also relieves pressure on enrollments. The Director provided social events for students and faculty and provided leadership for Women's history Month.

A new Director will have to be appointed for this program, starting in 2010.

Writing Program

In May, 2009, the Director offered a Writing Workshop focused on integrating writing instruction into courses across the curriculum. She also facilitated a workshop, for "Writing in the Great Conversation."

In addition the Director co-sponsored numerous CILA conversations on topics such as journaling, designing rubrics, and teaching creativity.

With the Curriculum Committee, she initiated a review of WRI and Writing in the major.

The Director is concerned that the declining number of WRI courses offered in the spring is based on logistics rather than pedagogy.

Issues of Broad concern

1) Space: This is an issue in two respects:

a) Faculty in Asian Studies housed in Steensland continue to deal with the wear and tear of an office situation that does not allow privacy or a quiet work space. They have already tolerated this difficult situation for nearly two years. The move to New Main cannot come soon enough.

b) An interdisciplinary department such as Environmental Studies, with its faculty scattered not only through Regents Hall but all around campus, needs the visibility afforded by a dedicated space where students can gather, interact with faculty, and access departmental materials.

This is a pressing concern for Environmental Studies, but it is shared by many programs and departments in this Faculty.

2) Sustaining interdisciplinary work

a) Administration: This is very time intensive because faculty are scattered and have divided loyalties, and effective communication within the program or department requires great intentionality. In particular, many program directors feel overwhelmed by the level of reporting and data keeping that is required of them.

b) Staffing: Providing stable staffing for interdisciplinary programs is an ongoing challenge in terms of recruitment and long-term planning. We need to develop a kind of “joint appointment” category that is flexible enough to allow faculty to work in interdisciplinary programs for periods of time and participate fully in the work of the program without jeopardizing their position in the “home” department.

c) Budgets: Tightening budgets place more demands on chairs and directors to find funding for projects and initiatives, or they donate more of their own time to fill the gap.

3) Inequities among the “Conversations” programs.

Now that we have four “Conversations,” inequities among them in terms of funding and staffing need to be addressed.