

# American Studies Newsletter



## Blixen Lecturer Dr. David Chang



Each spring since 2012 the department has brought a leading scholar in American Studies to campus. These have included Carlo Rotella (Boston College), Phil Deloria (University of Michigan), Melani McAlister (George Washington University), Brent Hayes Edwards (Columbia University), and—this year—David Chang (University of Minnesota).

Chang's first book, *The Color of the Land: Race, Nation, and the Politics of Land Ownership in Oklahoma, 1832–1929* (University of North Carolina Press, 2010), was the winner of the 2010 Theodore Saloutos Prize for best book in agricultural history from the Agricultural History Society and received an honorable mention for the 2011 Lora Romero First Book Prize from the American Studies Association. His second book, *The World and All the Things upon It: Native Hawaiian Geographies of Exploration* was published in 2016 by the University of Minnesota Press.

Chang met with graduate students for a brown-bag lunch discussion on Wednesday, March 17th from 12-1pm. He then delivered a lecture centered on *The World and All the Things upon It* at 4pm. The lecture was followed by a reception where attendees had the opportunity to talk with Chang about his work.

## Letter from the Chair

Dear Friends,

When I spoke to faculty and staff for the first time in my role as department chair last fall, I talked a bit about why I had agreed to step into that role. My decision had been crystalized when I realized that all of the “cons” I could think of were about what I had heard about chairing from other departments and other institutions. The “pros” were all about *this* department, *this* place, and *this* community of scholars. The unique and very special work that we do here continues to sustain me, as I hope it does many of you.

As I worked with several of our graduate students to create this inaugural issue (special thanks to Tori Herrera,) we quickly had to accept the impossibility of summarizing a year of activity in a four-page newsletter. A true accounting would include many unrecorded hours of reading, writing, and studying, shared coffees, happy hours and commiserating over deadlines and research dead ends. Committee meetings and advising sessions are rarely photographed; daily work goes unremarked. Still we hope that these pages can communicate something more than the highlights and headlines of our collective work: behind the tangible publications and awards are the rarely celebrated but even more meaningful weeks and months of hard work and day-to-day tasks. Even more, we cherish the interactions, support, and gatherings that make us a community. For those reading this who have not been part of this physical community for several years... or several decades... we hope that this newsletter, along with our Facebook page, can help keep us connected.

Heidi Ardizzone; hardizzo@slu.edu

## Star Staff

Seen here with SLU President Fred Pestello, Terri Foster won a much deserved SLU Star Award last fall for her dedication to American Studies students and faculty. Sixteen years of service!





## SENIORS 2016:

Connor Richardson, Jerelle Jenkins, Gabe Gollum, Susan Nichols, Tom Blood, and Sarah Nash at the Senior Capstone Symposium in May 2016.



Susan Nichols, BA 2016, performs at a department social event with a friend. Susan is now a fifth-year MA student in our department.



Sarah Nash celebrates her Outstanding Student award with a few of her teachers: Dr. Ben Looker, Dr. Emily Lutenski, and PhD student Aretha Butler.

## Grad Students on the Move

**Kate Boudreau Piatckek, PhD candidate**, has just received a position as a faculty member in the English Department at Indian River State College in Florida. **Pastor Mark Koschmann, PhD candidate**, just began his second year as an Instructor of Theology and Missiology at Concordia University, St. Paul. Mark also spearheads a new mentoring program for urban and cross-cultural outreach.

From top left, clockwise: Tandra Taylor, Maurice Tracy, and Aretha Butler, PhD Students, pose with Laura Shields and Nicole Haggard, both recent PhDs, at a summer celebration of Heidi Ardizzone's tenure and promotion hosted by Ben Looker.



## Student Research Increases

The American Studies Alumni Research Fund and a Graduate Student Foreign Travel Fund from the College of Arts and Sciences enabled Kathryn Stout, PhD Candidate, to spend six days in Trinidad in December of 2015. Her archival research explored the nuances that separate local history on World War II from scholarship on World War II. Kathryn tells us, "With the knowledge gained from my research abroad, I can now highlight the personal stories of these heroines and casualties of the Battle of the Caribbean."

The ASTD Alumni Research Fund has allowed over a dozen students to visit archives and cultural institutions through out the country and the world.



## Class of 2016

### Majors

Sarah Nash  
Jerelle Jenkins  
Gabe Collub  
Connor Richardson  
Susan Nichols

### Minors

Leslie Hartje-Dunn  
Kaitlin Ford  
Tom Blood

### M.A.

Manu Engstler  
Elizabeth Eikman  
Cicely Hunter

### PhD

Melissa Ford  
Sabrina Davis

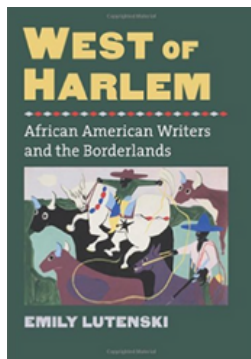
## Spotlight on Dr. Emily Lutenski



An Assistant Professor at SLU since 2012, Dr. Lutenski received her PhD in English and Women's Studies at the University of Michigan and previously taught in Ethnic Studies at Bowling Green University. At SLU, she teaches courses on literature and culture focusing on a range of topics from the Harlem Renaissance to Borderlands to Race, Gender, and Social Justice. This last course is her newest undergraduate offering and will incorporate both Micah students and a Learning Community with an expected enrollment of 50 students.

Emily's passion for teaching and dedication to her students was formally recognized in her appointment as our Undergraduate Coordinator last fall. In that capacity she works on recruitment, curriculum development, advising, and programming for our undergraduate majors and minors. One of our departmental goals is to continue to grow our undergraduate major and Emily is working hard to make that happen. Visiting speaker Daphne Brooks described her as a "force of nature," and we are privileged to have her energy focused on our students and our department.

Dr. Lutenski recently published her first book *West of Harlem: African American and the Borderlands* (University Press of Kansas, 2015). She also serves on numerous college and university committees on campus and is a leader in regional and national professional organizations.



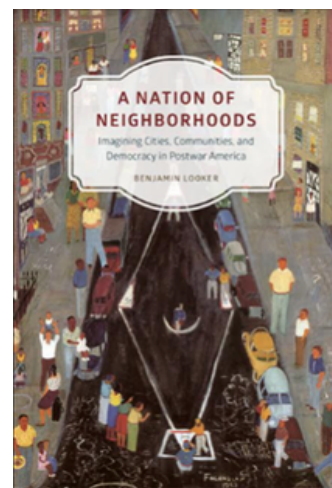
## Memorial Event

This summer, Heidi Ardizzone was invited to participate in a moving event in honor of Rhelda Marbry Morgan, who received her American Studies degree posthumously in 1996. Dr. Morgan's family has established a book award for SLU students and Dr. Ardizzone had the great honor of presenting the Morgans with Rhelda's unfinished dissertation, which the Graduate Education Office had edited and bound. A copy is available in Special Collections.

## Award Trifecta!



Dr. Looker receives one of three awards for his recent book, *A Nation of Neighborhoods*



Associate Professor Ben Looker has received three major awards for his second book, *A Nation of Neighborhoods: Imagining Cities, Communities, and Democracy in Postwar America* (University of Chicago Press, 2015). The Organization of American Historians acknowledged it with the Lawrence W. Levine award for the best book in American cultural history. The 2016 Missouri Conference gave him their History Book Award in March. And, just a few weeks ago, Dr. Looker won the 2016 Kenneth Jackson Award for the best book in urban history given by the Urban History Association. This is an incredible achievement and we've heard rumors that there may be more coming! Watch our Facebook page to see what happens... [facebook.com/sluamericanstudies!](https://facebook.com/sluamericanstudies/)



The department faculty with retired chair Elizabeth Kolmer at the celebration of our 50 year anniversary as a PhD program. (Our undergraduate degree came later!) From left to right: Heidi Ardizzone, Kate Moran, Cindy Ott, Elizabeth Kolmer, Ben Looker, Matt Mancini, and Emily Lutenski. Dr. Cindy Ott has since left St. Louis, joining the University of Delaware faculty. We wish her every success in her future.

## 2015 PhD Grads



From left to right: Where are they now?  
**Laura Shields**, Corporate Liason at PETA

**Nicole Haggard**, teaching at Mount St. Mary's University's Film, Media, and Social Justice Program, CA

**Corinne Wohlford**, tenured Associate Professor and Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs, Fontbonne University, MO

**Brandy Boyd**, teaching at SLU's Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; just received a book contract for her dissertation project on women in country music.

**We are so proud of the great work our graduates do, in universities, museums, and nonprofits, in St. Louis and the world. Here are a few of the great updates we've received this year: please send us more!**

**Jerelle Jenkins, BA 2016**, is now a first-year master's student in Arts Management at American University.

**Sarah Nash, BA 2016**, is living and working in the Catholic Worker Karen House in North City St. Louis.

**Connor Richardson, BA 2016**, is a staff writer for SLU's Office of the President.

**Charles Bowles, BA 2014**, recently moved from Arlington, VA, to New York City, where he is beginning a project to chronicle the life of Dr. Lonnie MacDonald, psychiatrist and close associate of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

**Laura Frye, BA 2012**, is now a first-year law student at Northeastern University.

**Rebecca Gorley, BA 2011**, recently accepted the Communications Director positions with ArchCity Defenders, Inc., a nonprofit providing legal aid to impoverished and homeless people.

**Lisa Brunette, BA, 1994**, is a career writer and editor, author of the Dreamslipper mystery series, numerous articles, gaming storylines. She tells us that *Cat in the Flock* is set in St. Louis with a SLU alum protagonist.

**Doug Cooper, MA 1999**, has published his second novel, *The Investment Club*.

**Becky Preiss Odom, PhD 2014**, is a history curator at the Ohio History Connection where she curates the quilt, textile, fine art, decorative arts and transportation collections.

**Jacky Kerouac-Fram, PhD 2013**, recently became Director of Development at FOCUS, St. Louis, a non-profit providing leadership training, citizen engagement, and community enrichment.

**Jamie Wagman, PhD 2011**, Assistant Professor of History and Gender & Women's Studies at Saint Mary's College, Indiana, published an essay, "Let Us Run" in *Quail Bell* magazine.

**Betsy Schlabach** (formerly **Schroeder**), **PhD 2008**, was tenured and promoted to Associate Professor of History and African American Studies at Earlham College this past spring. Her 2013 book *Along the Streets of Bronzeville: Black Chicago's Literary Landscape* will soon be released as a paperback by the University of Illinois Press.

**Ying Ye, PhD 2007**, Professor of American Studies at Sichuan University in Chengdu, China, has published a research essay on "The Image of the Confucius Institutes in US Newspaper Reports," in an anthology *The Power of Culture: Encounters between China and the United States*, ed., Priscilla Roberts, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

**Valerie Padilla Carroll, PhD 2005**, a faculty member in the Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies Department at Kansas State University, published an article in *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*: "The Radical Possibilities of New (Feminist, Environmentalist) Domesticity: Housewifery as an Altermodernity Project."

**Bryan Jack, PhD 2004**, was tenured and promoted to Associate Professor of Historical Studies at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville.

**Regina Faden, PhD 2000**, is the executive director of Historic St. Mary's City in Maryland. This "living history museum" recently dedicated a new building which will house the Historic St. Mary's City Museum along with St. Mary's College of Maryland classrooms.

**Michael Steiner, PhD 1994**, is now Dean of the College of Arts and Science, Northwest Missouri State University. He wrote to us about doing his doctoral work while working full time, a familiar challenge for many of our current students!