MESSAGE FROM THE FACULTY DIRECTOR

The Humanities Initiative was created in 2007 to strengthen the humanities at NYU. It does so in a number of ways, as it helps humanities faculty and students work in the classroom, in the field, and in the archive, and articulates the importance of the humanities to the NYU community and the community at large.

Our move into 20 Cooper Square in the fall of 2008 – directly across from Cooper Union and only a five-minute walk from Washington Square – has aided immeasurably in the creation of humanistic communities at NYU. Our community of fellows – six graduate students, six faculty – gathers weekly on Tuesdays for lively lunch discussions of our individual research (see pages 4–5) and topics of common interest; graduate students work daily in the Graduate Reading Room, a lovely windowed-space with the exposed brick that reminds us of the building’s origins as a warehouse. Our working research groups use our conference room and breakout room to plan monthly meetings. Our team-teaching cohort meets in its entirety during the year to discuss the intellectual challenges and practical logistics of coordinating interdisciplinary courses. And the Initiative has become the home to two new series begun last year – Great New Books in the Humanities and, co-sponsored with individual departments, Distinguished Lectures in the Humanities – as well as our well-attended Authors’ Cocktails (see page 7). We’ve also hosted several lively discussions on the Morse Academic Plan – with more coming this year.

Thus, a thriving “hub” for humanities, but we can always do more. This year looks toward some exciting new additions to our roster: hosting (with the Graduate School of Arts and Science) our first-ever research workshop for graduate students on grant-writing in the fall and a larger symposium on grant-writing and the future in the humanities in the spring (with the Graduate School of Arts and Science and the Center for Teaching Excellence); a major conference on Galileo this spring as part of our Third Annual Humanities Festival; and monthly faculty seminars on key interdisciplinary topics. We’ve also just become involved in the MTA’s “Trains for Thought” project, so look for quotes from NYU fellows and faculty next time you’re on the subway! We are also busily preparing grants designed to enhance our outreach to the greater NYU community in the areas of health care and medicine, secondary school education, and arts professionals. See our state-of-the-art website for updates (www.humanitiesinitiative.org) – a resource not only for NYU faculty and students wanting to know about humanities events and research on campus, but for scholars throughout the world who will soon be able to access a variety of scholarly projects and curricular innovations through the site.

The following pages introduce you to our fellows and grant winners for 2009-10, and give you a flavor of our first year at 20 Cooper in 2008-9. Read, enjoy, and visit us often, both online and at our beautiful space.

THE HUMANITIES INITIATIVE AT NYU

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Faculty of Arts and Science

View Provost for Academic Affairs
Administrative Director: Ayesa Berger
Administrative Asst: Danella Valentin

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Faculty of Arts and Science

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Associated Faculty, Department of English

The Humanities Initiative is generously supported by funding from the Office of the Provost at NYU and an endowment from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.
This year’s cohort of faculty and graduate fellows comes to us from Arts and Science, Tisch School of the Arts, and the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. They’re immersing themselves in projects ranging from Moses Mendelssohn’s theology and political thought in 18th-century Germany and devotional culture in medieval France to the diaries of Italian POW’s in Africa during World War II, the theme of the orphan in Chinese film, and religious violence in the region of Gujarat (India). Faculty fellows receive a teaching reduction of two courses and are relieved of administrative commitments. Three of our graduate fellows are fully funded by the Initiative; three are funded by the Graduate School of Arts and Science as recipients of the Dean’s Dissertation Award, and receive a research stipend from the Initiative. Fellows meet weekly to discuss their work and take part in a host of events at 20 Cooper.

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<td>Peter Valenti</td>
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2008-9 FELLOWS GO TO FLORENCE

The 2008-9 group of fellows not only had the splendid new space in 20 Cooper in which to work, but for five days, they also had Villa La Pietra, NYU’s spectacular study-abroad and conference site in Florence, Italy. Thanks to the generosity of Ulrich Baer, Professor of German and Comparative Literature, and Vice Provost for Global and Multicultural Programs, the fellows were invited to participate in a two-day conference with faculty at NYU in Florence to discuss the curriculum at the Villa and study-abroad programs more generally, as well as the role of Italy in their research. The result was a report, circulated later in the spring among Villa and Global staff, with suggestions as to how La Pietra could move forward with innovative and interdisciplinary humanities programming—including the creation of a minor in “Villa Studies.”

While in Florence, fellows also had the opportunity to tour the Uffizi Galleries, the Franciscan church of Santa Croce, and Harvard’s Villa I Tatti—as well as places central to some scholars’ individual research. Thus they had a private visit to the fascinating Protestant Cemetery (relevant for Shane Minkin’s work on the cemetery for foreigners in Alexandria, Egypt) and the synagogue in Florence (helpful for Professor Hasia Diner, from the departments of Hebrew and Judaic Studies and History). Such an introduction to Florence for scholars unacquainted with its riches was crucial for the ensuing conversations with Villa faculty as to what makes La Pietra—and Florence as a city—unique for undergraduates interested in going abroad. Hence the fellows’ recommendation to consider the Villa as a residential college that can deepen students’ experience not only of Florence but of a unique villa culture that can project students into the past and familiarize them with a host of contemporary issues and activities (making olive oil and the “slow food” movement, and the role of Italy in the EU). This year’s fellows hope that they too will have the opportunity to visit one of NYU’s global sites!

AUTHORS’ COCKTAILS

In March, NYU Press hosted with the Initiative our second annual “Authors’ Cocktails,” an event to which all humanities faculty who published a book during the previous year were invited. Over 100 books in humanities-related fields were featured at our book exhibit, and many authors generously donated copies of their books to our ever-growing library in the Graduate Reading Room. Provost David McLaughlin and Director of NYU Press Steve Makowski greeted the guests, and Jane Tylus gave out a series of awards—some serious (most books published in 2008, which went to Maureen McLane in English and Lawrence Weschler in Journalism)—some tongue-in-cheek: the most alliterative title (Dostoyevsky’s Democracy by Nancy Rutsenber in Comparative Literature) or the most evocative (Bite Me. Food in Popular Culture by Fabio Parasecoli in Steinhardt).
This year the Initiative is supporting five team-teaching pairs from a wide variety of schools and programs, including the Tisch School of the Arts, the Gallatin School for Individualized Study, the Faculty of Arts and Science, and the new four-year Liberal Studies Program. Faculty need to represent different disciplinary fields and methodologies, and may teach an undergraduate or graduate course. Seasoned team-teachers Joanna Waley-Cohen (History) and Jennifer Liu (Art History) meet with the 2009-10 cohort this semester to discuss their current undergraduate course on “The Silk Road,” while Jo Labanyi (Spanish) and Thomas Abercrombie (Anthropology) will meet next spring to talk about their work on their graduate course entitled “Hauntings: Memory, Patrimony and the Contested Past in Post-Violence Spaces in Contemporary Spain and Spanish America.” Last year Ulrich Baer (German and Comparative Literature, FAS) and Shelley Rice (Photography, Tisch) presented on their highly successful course on “The Archive” to 2008-9 faculty winners of our team-teaching grant.

Audiovision: Sound and Listening in Film and Other Media
Associate Professor Jonathan R. Kahana
Cinema Studies, Tisch

Human Rights, Health, and the Environment
Joyce Apfel
Master Teacher of Humanities
Liberal Studies Program

The Politics of Style
Associate Professor Nina Comnyns
Gallatin School of Individualized Study

Staging Ancient Drama: Text, Culture, and Performance
Professor Laura M. Slatin
Gallatin School of Individualized Study

Women and the Book: Scribes, Artists, and Readers from Late Antiquity through the Fourteenth Century
Associate Professor Fiona J. Griffiths
History, FAS

Associate Professor Kathryn A. Smith
Art History, FAS
Eight Working Research Groups are being supported by the Humanities Initiative this year, extending our reach into exciting projects at the Medical School in health and humanities as well as into the field of recorded music in a project sponsored by Tisch and Steinhardt. Groups will meet at least once a month to discuss ongoing work of faculty and students, and will use the Initiative space both for planning meetings and for symposia during the year.

Exporting Enlightenment: The Local Careers of a Global Idea
Harry Harootunian, East Asian Studies (FAS)
Arvind Rajagopal, Media, Culture, and Communications (Steinhardt)

An interdisciplinary seminar to consider the global impact of the Enlightenment on culture and society.

Health, Humanities, and Culture
Bradley Lewis, Gallatin
Jerome Lowenstein, School of Medicine

Designed to challenge the famous “two culture” divide between the humanities and the sciences, with the goal of furthering the humanities’ understanding of embodiment and enriching the human dimensions of health care delivery.

Ideologies of Slavery and Freedom in the Atlantic World
Sybille Fischer, Spanish (FAS)
Jennifer Morgan, History (FAS)

Seeks to grapple with the analytic spaces opened up by Paul Gilroy’s call to “rethink modernity via the history of the black Atlantic and the African diaspora in the Western Hemisphere.”

Mediterranean Studies
Jacques Lezra, Comparative Literature (FAS)
Lisa Santarelli, Center for European and Mediterranean Studies (FAS)

Provide a forum in which faculty and graduate students can meet to discuss the Mediterranean—a sort of commerce, translation, and conversation among fields and between scholarship and teaching that seem peculiarly suited to the study of the Mediterranean, the first great crossing-space of modernity.

Music and Audio Research Laboratory
Jim Anderson, Recorded Music (Tisch)
Robert Rowe, Music and Performing Arts Professions (Steinhardt)

Combines techniques and methodologies from the arts, the humanities and the sciences to understand and model human cognitive abilities in music, and innovate the analysis, organization and creation of music.

Problems in Poetics and Theory
Martin Harries, English (FAS)
Arsenin Hawkamp, English (FAS)
Jacques Lezra, Comparative Literature (FAS)

Emerges from the interdisciplinary certificate program in Poetics and Theory; the 2009-10 topic will be the concept of Cura (Care)—care of the self and care with respect to shifting models of agency.

Technologies of Mediation
Gabriella Coleman, Media, Culture, and Communication (Steinhardt)
Ben Kafka, Media, Culture, and Communication (Steinhardt)
Clifford Siskin, English (FAS)
Robert Young, English (FAS)

How to work through often surprising combinations of similarities and differences between academic disciplines; the 2009-10 year will focus on education, translation, and history as topics.

The 21st Century and Critical Perspectives in Africana Studies
Awani Amipia, Drama (Tisch)
Michael Ralph, Social and Cultural Analysis (FAS)

A seminar series to explore transnational and national histories, cultures and politics within the field of Africana Studies; the 2009-10 topic is “Africa and Imaginaries of Alternative Modernities.”

On Security
In 2008-9 the Humanities Initiative continued its outreach to faculty in search of funding for conferences, symposia, and book subventions. What follows is a list of some of the many projects that the Initiative was able to support from its funds.

**Adelphiques: Brothers and Sisters in Nineteenth-Century French Literature**
Claude Bernard (French)

**Archives, Archival Practice, and the Concepts of the Archive**
Peter J. Walsh (History)

**Blowing Up the Brand: Critical Positions on Promotional Paradigms**
Ted Magder (Media, Culture, and Communication)

**Concordia Discors**
Benoît Bolduc (French)
Henriette Guldberg (French)

**Cultural Conversions: Religion, Gender, and Latin/o America**
Arn Pallegrino (Gender and Sexuality Studies, Religious Studies, Performance Studies)
Joselina Saldana-Pontillo (Latin Studies, Social and Cultural Analysis, Latin American and Caribbean Studies)

**Diderot Today: New Perspectives**
Lucien Nouis (French)
Anne Deneyes-Turney (French)

**Food for Thought: A Conference of Scholars, Curators, and Librarians from Institutions with Strong Food-Related Collections**
Krishnendu Ray (Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health)
Marvin J. Taylor (Libraries)

**Icons of the Desert: Early Paintings from Papunya**
Fred Myers (Anthropology)

**Lecture Series on Translation**
Hala Halim (Comparative Literature, Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies)

**Manhattan Manuscripts**
Eckart Griesbol (German)

**Music, Language, Thought: Im/Material Affinities**
Magalí Arriolas-Texeira (Comparative Literature)
Amy Cimini (Music)
Michael Gallup (Music)
Daniel Hoffman-Schwarz (Comparative Literature)
Ceci Moss (Comparative Literature)

**New French Philosophy: Text and Media**
Emily Apter (French)
Alexander Galloway (Media, Culture, and Communication)
Danis Hollier (French)
Ben Kafka (Media, Culture, and Communication)

**Printing of the Bellevue Literary Press Book, Science Next: Innovation for the Common Good from the Center for American Progress**
Jerome Lowenstein (School of Medicine)
Erika Goldman (School of Medicine)

**Schubert and Solitude**
Lawrence Weschler (New York Institute for the Humanities)

**Sixth Annual Conflux Festival**
David Darts (Art and Art Professions)

**Teatro Vivo/Living Theatre: A Festival**
Sylvia Molly (Spanish and Portuguese)
Lila Zemborain (Spanish and Portuguese)
Mariela Dreyfus (Spanish and Portuguese)

**Truth be Told**
Linda Mills (Law)
Brian Dijl (Institute of Film and Television)

**Wonder Cabinet**
Lawrence Weschler (New York Institute for the Humanities)
IX Centenary of King Alfonso VI’s Death
Salvador Martinez (Spanish and Portuguese)
DISTINGUISHED LECTURES IN THE HUMANITIES

Each month the Initiative hosts a distinguished lecturer in the humanities, an event co-sponsored with individual departments. Our inaugural lecture for the series was presented by Professor Francesco Casetti from the Universita’ Cattolica in Milan, speaking on “Is Film A Modern Art?”; the Departments of Italian Studies and Cinema Studies were co-sponsors. Quentin Skinner from the University of London presented the 2008 Anson G. Phelps Lecture, co-sponsored by the Department of History, “Word and Image in the Philosophy of Hobbes.” Other speakers in 2008-9 included Hazel Carby (Yale), whose talk “Belonging to Britain” focused on W.E.B. DuBois and was co-sponsored by the Gallatin School; Nancy Condee, from the University of Pittsburgh, speaking on “The Challenge of the Humanities in the Post-Soviet Era in the US and Abroad,” co-sponsored by the Liberal Studies Program, and our own Richard Allen from Cinema Studies at Tisch, who gave a lively talk on the fiftieth anniversary of Hitchcock’s Vertigo.

GREAT NEW BOOKS IN THE HUMANITIES

The Humanities Initiative takes great pride in the stellar work done by its scholars in the humanities at NYU. As is clear from the enormous turnout at the annual Authors’ Cocktails, faculty are extremely productive when it comes to publishing the fruits of their labors, whether it be at Yale, Chicago, Oxford, California, or our own NYU Press. Only a fraction of our books can be featured in our new series, “Great New Books in the Humanities”; last year, two of our fellows, Hasia Diner and Kim Phillips-Fein, celebrated book launches (for We Remember with Reverence and Love and Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan, respectively), as did Director Jane Tylus for her Reclaiming Catherine of Siena.
Henry Papprill (active 1846-1848), (after John William Hill (1812-1879)), West Nyack, NY; Publisher: Published by Henry J. Megarey. New York from the Steeple of St. Paul's Church, Looking East, South, and West. 1849. Aquatint with hand coloring, first state. 21-1/4 x 36-3/8 in. (54.0 x 92.4 cm).
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, U.S.A.

John Frederick Peto, 1854-1907, American. Detail from Job Lot Cheap (still life: Old Books), Painting, 1900, oil on canvas.
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