

New Liberal Studies Major Offered

By Lisa Cassidy

Ramapo College students have long enjoyed the freedom of individualized “contract” majors. The new Liberal Studies major is the contract major for the School of American and International Studies. This major is ideal for students whose needs are not met by majors currently on offer, and for students who are truly “free thinkers.” In particular, Liberal Studies majors may pursue a course of study that expands upon an existing American and International Studies minor or may pursue a course of study that is more individualized. No matter what an individual student chooses as his or her particular course of study the degree awarded will be a B.A. in Liberal Studies.

This Liberal Studies major is particularly exciting for faculty teaching Philosophy and teaching Italian, as a number of students have expressed interest in majoring in these fields. Now it will be possible for students to study Philosophy or Italian Studies under the rubric of Liberal Studies.

A Liberal Studies major is a preparation for a free and fulfilled life in any area of specialization: business, the arts, education, science, medicine, or law. Liberal Studies majors gain this preparation through coursework, as well as through a significant experiential learning activity (e.g., study abroad, presenting a paper at a conference, or an internship) and an independent research project.

The vision statement for the major reads, in part: “The Ramapo College graduates awarded baccalaureates in

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This issue of *AIS Occurrences* was produced and edited by Prof. Jeremy M. Teigen and Prof. Michael Unger.

AIS Faculty Updates

Faculty Research and Pedagogy Events

Lisa Cassidy was invited to participate in a panel on “Sharing Strategies for Succeeding as a Feminist Philosopher” at the Feminist Ethics and Social Theory conference in Florida this September.

Rosina D’Angelo was invited and participated to read poetry from her book *ITINERARI* in September. Professor D’Angelo also presented a scholarly paper, “African Women Writers in Italy: Shaping a New Discourse” at the ASWAD international conference in Barbados (October) and gave a lecture on Gabriele Muccino’s film “L’ultimo bacio” at the Upper Saddle River Library in November.

Paul Elovitz published 15 separate articles in three different journals in 2007. (AIS’s **Karen O’Brien** was one of the Colonial historians who provided expertise for his article, “Thomas Jefferson without Idealization”). His “Giuliani as His Father’s Son” was just published in December. Another essay is still in the hands of editors/anonymous referees while an article scheduled for publication is being enlarged to fit the format of a book Greenwood Press is considering. Elovitz’s five professional presentations this year have been at three international and one regional organizations, most recently at Rutgers University. Before giving his paper, “How Presidents Deal with National Trauma: Nixon, Carter, and Bush,” at the International Society for Political Psychology in Portland, Oregon, he and his wife Geri took a cruise to and into the inland of Alaska. In the fall he was also interviewed on presidential families by a reporter for the *Washington Post*.

Niza Fabre presented a paper on “Afro-Ecuadorian Women: Social Struggles and Achievements,” for The Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora, (ASWAD), Barbados, October, 9-12, 2007, as a participant in a panel organized by the Africana Studies Faculty in the School of Social Sciences and Human Services.

Ting Gong’s paper on “Objective Responsibility vs. Subjective Responsibility: an Analysis of Chinese Communist Party’s Internal Supervision” has been accepted by *China Review*, a refereed international journal, for publication in 2008. Another paper, “The Party Discipline Inspection in China: Evolving Trajectory and Embedded Dilemmas,” will come out in early 2008 in *Crime, Law and Social Change*, also a refereed international journal.

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Liberal Studies major will be thoughtful, well-educated individuals with understanding of and an appreciation for multiple ways of seeing the world. The Liberal Arts encourages and foments reflection, critical thinking, emotional maturity, and the broadening of the mind through the contemplation of new possibilities. The Liberal Studies major spans the great themes of human inquiry and critical expression in the humanities, in world languages, and in social studies."

The Ramapo College Catalogue will carry a description of the Liberal Studies major in the upcoming edition, but several eager students are already preparing their courses of study. In addition to the General Education and AIS School Core requirements, majors will take eleven courses for their Liberal Studies degrees. In time this major may connect with the Masters in Liberal Studies (MALS) degree offered by AIS for a combined five-year degree.

Students who are interested in a Liberal Studies major should contact Lisa Cassidy, the convener of the program at lcassidy@ramapo.edu.

New Jersey Regional Philosophy Association Meeting Held at Ramapo College

By Bernard Roy

On Saturday, November 3, 2007, AIS and the Philosophy Convening Group hosted for the second year in a row the meeting of the New Jersey Regional Philosophical Association (NJRPA). Dean Jennefer Mazza greeted the 60 or so guests at the breakfast gathering. Twelve morning and seven afternoon break-up sessions offered opportunities to 39 philosophers to read their papers and to hear other philosophers comment on their work. Each session ended with a Q&A discussion period. The turn out and the interest were quite impressive.



The keynote speaker was Professor Dmitri Nikulin of the New School University Graduate Faculty. The title of his talk was: "Interruption and Dialogue." The day ended with a wine and cheese reception.

AIS Clubs & Organizations

Students and Faculty Events

AIS Colloquium Activities

- Mónica Peláez presented her scholarship to the colloquium on October 24. Her talk was entitled "Emily Dickinson's Wartime Protest."
- James Hoch, after appearances across the country, read selections from his recent title *Miscreants* (Norton, 2007) on December 5.

Culture Club Activities

As usual, the Culture Club was very busy in fall of 2007 with

- Gala Night: "Tuvan Throat Singers" performed by the Chikgilchin Ensemble, from Tuva, South Siberia, October 12, 2007.

Speakers:

- October 22. Dr. Henry Bischoff, Professor Emeritus at Ramapo, author of a book on Ramapo History, presented a paper on "The Changing Face of New Jersey: Culture and Immigration from 1940 to Present." At his retirement Ramapo created The Henry Bischoff Award for Excellence in Teaching, in his honor.
- November 19. Dr. Bernard Roy, assistant professor of philosophy, will give a talk on "Culture and Society: Doing Philosophy with Nursing Home residents in France."
- December 3. Dr. Srikrishna M. Govindulari, assistant professor of management, Anisfield School of Business, presented "The India Student in USA: Cultural Encounter, First Week and Beyond."

Italian Club

- There was a lecture by historian Stan Pugliese on the Holocaust in Italy. The club also enjoyed "La Traviata" in New York on December 1.

Philosophy Club

- The Philosophy club teamed up with student activities to offer *Action Philosophers!!!* Fred Van Lente, the author of the *Action Philosophers!* comic book series, read from his comic at a well-attended session. Attendees received free comics. The Philosophy Club also held a lunchtime discussion of the film *The Matrix*.

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Student News:

American Studies/Literature major **Kristin Knudsen** presented her research paper “Barbie: An American Icon” at the Fifth International Conference on New Directions in the Humanities which was held in Paris, France on July 19, 2007 which was originally written for Professor Tom Heed’s Introduction to American Studies class and modified for this conference.

Two students minoring in Italian, **Matthew Sullivan** and **Angie Aucello**, were selected last month to Attend the National Italian American Foundation’s 2007 Convention in Washington, D.C. The NIAF honored a variety of Italian Americans for outstanding achievements in public service, entertainment, philanthropy, and public advocacy. This year, the NIAF recognized Martin Scorsese, Jack Valenti, Nancy Pelosi, Rudolph Giuliani, and Antonin Scalia.

New Film Series Screened by AIS Faculty

By **Mónica Peláez**

The AIS Film Series got off to a great start this fall. We opened with Literature Professor Yvette Kisor’s presentation of “The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King” in September. This was followed by History Professor Karen O’Brien’s showing of “Dirty Dancing” in October, and Spanish Professor Natalia Santamaria Laorden’s presentation of “Flores de Otro Mundo” in November. We closed the series this semester with Political Science Professor Michael Unger’s presentation of “The Fog of War” in December.



All professors have responded favorably to their involvement, citing the “great discussions” that have followed their films. Students, as well, have enjoyed the opportunity to engage in conversations with their professors. The AIS Film Series will resume in the spring, and we look forward to hearing from interested faculty. Please contact Mónica Peláez (mpelaez@ramapo.edu) if you would like to participate, suggest films, or moderate future discussions.

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In addition, **Gong** presented a paper titled “Capital corruption and State Asset Drain in China’s Industrial Restructuring” at the International Conference on State Capacity of China in the 21st Century, held at the City University of Hong Kong in April 2007. When she was a Fulbright visiting scholar in Hong Kong, she lectured on corruption-related issues on several campuses in Asia such as the National Taiwan University, Fudan University, Sun Yat-sen University of China, and University of Macau.

James Hoch’s poems have appeared or are forthcoming this year in *Washington Post*, *Seattle Review*, *Blackbird*, *Gulf Coast* and *32 poems*. He was selected to be the 2008 Resident Poet at The Frost Place (Robert Frost’s house) in Franconia, NH and will spend the summer there. Professor Hoch will be reading at Vanderbilt, Seton Hall, West Georgia, Columbus State, Greenfield CC, Univ. of Pittsburgh-Johnstown, Idyllwild Arts Academy, St. Albans School for Boys and Gonzaga High School (Washington, DC), and will spend many hours driving his son to preschool.

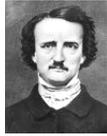
Yvette Kisor published an article titled “Harthgrepa” in *ANQ* 20, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 63-5. This is a special issue devoted to *Beowulf*; Professor Kisor’s section is an introduction and translation of an episode from Saxo Grammaticus’ *Gesta Danorum* related to the Grendel and Grendel’s mother episodes.

Tae Yang Kwak joined AIS this year. His forthcoming article, “The Nixon Doctrine and the Yusin Reforms” will appear in the *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*. He will present a paper in March entitled, “Korea’s Changing Roles in Southeast Asia” at an international conference in Seoul.

Iraida H. López presented a paper, “Footprints in the Sand: Homeland and Family in Tony Mendoza’s Photographic Essays” at the XXVII International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association that took place in Montreal, September 5-8. The paper was part of a panel, “Variations on a Theme: Narratives of Return in the Cuban and Dominican Diasporas,” that Professor López organized and chaired.

Dean Jennefer Mazza, Judith Jeney (Employee Relations) and Babs Varano (OIRP) presented “The Humanities in Practice: Teaching and Learning in the Humanities” at the Fifth International

Conference on New Directions in the Humanities which was held in Paris, France on July 19, 2007. Dean Mazza presented a paper, "Reflections on Teaching, Learning Goals and Information Fluency: A Case Study", which focused on the evolution of learning goals and the assessment of those goals in the Political Science seminar over a period of four years. This panel presentation was one of the best-attended sessions of the conference.



Mónica Peláez's article "The Sentimental Poe" will be published in the forthcoming Fall 2007 issue of The Edgar Allan Poe Review. Peláez also presented on "Dickinson's Wartime Protest" for the AIS Faculty Colloquium Series in October 2007. During the summer, Peláez attended the Leadership Alliance National Symposium in Stamford, CT, where she was a discussant on the panel, "Life Beyond Graduate School" in July 2007.

Sharon Rubin's article, "Professors, Students, and the Syllabus" was recently reprinted in *Composing Knowledge: Readings for College Writers*, edited by Rolf Norgaard. The article, which first appeared as a "back page" in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, has been reprinted many times in teaching handbooks, and has frequently been used in workshops for new faculty at many colleges and universities.

Natalia Santamaria-Laordan defended her doctoral dissertation at Harvard University at the beginning of the Fall semester. It is entitled "El Retorno de las Carabelas": Debates Finiseculares entre Autores Españoles y Latinoamericanos sobre el Regeneracionismo Español ("The Return of the Ships": Fin-de-siècle Debates among Spanish and Latin American Authors on the Spanish Regeneration Movement). Her dissertation explores the importance of considering the debates on "regeneracionismo" from a transatlantic perspective, to allow a better understanding of the connections between the philosophical and the political discourses at the end of the nineteenth century. Specifically, she focuses on the debates among Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío, Uruguyan essayist Enrique Rodó and Cuban Anthropologist Fernando Ortiz and Spanish essayists Miguel de Unamuno, Ángel Ganivet and Joaquín Costa.

Ira Spar is featured in a chapter with Danny Danziger's 2007 Viking book *Museum: Behind the Scenes at the Metropolitan Museum of Art*. The chapter is entitled "Brava Kabaivanska. Bravo Bergonzi."

Jeremy M. Teigen presented a paper entitled, "NATO Expansion in the Caucasus: Changes in Civil-Military Relations, Corruption, and Conscription in Post-Soviet Georgia" at the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society in Chicago, Illinois in November. Professor Teigen is a fellow of the organization.

Michael Unger joined AIS in Fall 2007. Professor Unger's forthcoming article, "After the Supreme Word: The Effect of *Van Orden v. Perry* and *McCreary County v. ACLU* on Support for Public Displays of the Ten Commandments" will appear in *American Politics Review*. He will also present a paper at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association entitled, "The Effect of Mediating Actors on Public Response to Supreme Court Decisions."

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Republican Club

- Over fifty students and faculty attended a November 29th visit by Bogota Mayor Steve Lonegan, sponsored by the College Republican Club. He spoke on tax burdens and New Jersey's revenue prospects.



ON A PERSONAL NOTE

Ting Gong will be leaving AIS and Ramapo College, where she has taught for sixteen years, to take a position at City University of Hong Kong starting in the spring semester. The political science convening group held a dinner in her honor in December, where current faculty and emeritus **Stephen Arianas** bade her farewell and presented her with a handsome plaque.

Three AIS faculty members expanded their families since spring. Tae Yang Kwak's family had a boy, Ryan Hyung-Woo, Jeremy Teigen's family had a girl, Amelia Rose, and Bob Christopher's daughter Nina had a daughter.