

AIS OCCURRENCES

AIS Alumni, Students, and Faculty Convene

The first AIS Alumni and AIS and student gathering was held on Tuesday, November 17, 2009 in the Trustees Pavilion, 7-9 PM. Six of the members of the newly created AIS Alumni Advisory Board, Antonietta “Toni” Brower, Steve Fonder, Cathy Moran Hajo, Thomas M.



Photo courtesy RCNJ Press Center

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AIS FACULTY UPDATES

Roark Atkinson presented a paper titled “Empirical Wonders: Sense and Faith at Scottish Revivals, 1690–1750” at the American Society of Church History meeting in San Diego, CA on January 9, 2010.

Lisa Cassidy organized a panel discussion on “Feminism in the Classroom” at the Feminist Ethics and Social Theory conference in Clearwater Beach, Florida in September. One of Lisa Cassidy’s contributions to AskPhilosophers.org will be included in the forthcoming volume Ask Philosophers: Ethics. AskPhilosophers.org is a free website - you ask and philosophers answer!

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Professor Carter Jones Meyer Wins Bischoff Award

Carter Jones Meyer, Professor and Convener of History, has received the 2009 Henry Bischoff Award for Excellence in Teaching. Professor Edna Negron, Chair of the Award Committee, stated, “Dr. Meyer has a demonstrated record as an effective and inspiring teacher, who has creatively engaged students in the study of American history in both specialty and general education courses.” The Award Committee praised her interdisciplinary approach to teaching and her ability “to excite General Education students about



Photo courtesy RCNU Press Center

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This issue of *AIS Occurrences* was produced and edited by Professors Roark Atkinson, Risa Gorelick, and Michael Unger.

New Jersey’s Public Liberal Arts College



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Hewitt, Jonathan N. Marcus Esq., and Scott W. Stahlmann, nine AIS faculty members Professor Yvette Kisor, Professor Pinar Kayaalp, Professor Lisa Cassidy, Professor Cliff Peterson, Professor Erick Castellanos, Professor Ron Hayashida, Professor Rosetta D'Angelo, Professor Anthony Padovano, and Professor Michael Unger, and 28 students attended this event.

The evening began by a panel discussion consisting of three students and three alumni. The student members of the panel were: Marissa Dragone (Senior History Major), Elizabeth Gilmour (Senior International Studies Major), and Boris Glazman (Senior International Studies Major). The Alumni panelists were: Antonietta "Toni" Brower '02, Thomas M. Hewitt '75, and Scott W. Stahlmann '79. Panel members discussed their academic and experiential experiences at the College and in AIS. Alumni provided advice and guidance on career paths, and graduate/professional school opportunities.

The panel discussion was followed by two round tables involving the faculty, alumni, and students. □

Bischoff Award *continued from page 1*

American history, encourage upper level students to think critically and challenge stereotypical myths about the American West, supervise their internships and enrich their experiential components with visits to historic sites, particularly in the Ramapo-Hudson region." The Committee also praised her work as co-founder and faculty advisor to the History Tutoring Fellows program, "a successful peer-to-peer-program in which students help each other succeed in coursework assignments, test preparation and paper reviews." Dr. Meyer received her award and gave a presentation on her teaching philosophy in a special ceremony held in the York Room of the Mansion on September 9. □



Titus Andronicus performing in 2008. Source: Wikipedia

Undergraduate Alumni News

Recent Literature graduate Patrick Stickle is the lead singer and songwriter of up and coming indie rock band Titus Andronicus (named for a Shakespeare play Patrick read in Professor Don Fucci's Shakespeare Plays course). Their CD, *The Airing of Grievances*, has been favorably reviewed in *Spin* and *Blender*, national music magazines. As the band's name suggests, Titus Andronicus tends toward very literate songs, with song titles drawn from Shakespeare, Hunter Thompson, and Albert Camus. One of their signature songs, "Fear and Loathing in Mahwah, NJ," surely has the ring of Ramapo to it! □

Student News

☀ Elizabeth Gilmour won the King Scholarship from the New Jersey Martin Luther King Commemorative Commission (\$5,000). Elizabeth was nominated by Professor Erick Castellanos.

☀ Students Matt Heitman, Evan Brown, and Ravi Gurumurthy (now a graduate) represented Ramapo at the *International Psychohistorical Association* conference in June, 2009 at Fordham University, with a lengthy panel discussion on "Political and Psychological Insights on the First One Hundred Days of the Obama Presidency," winning the Emilio Bernabei Prize—with a plaque and stipend—for their outstanding work. This was the culmination of their independent study with Professor Paul Elovitz. Dean Hassan Nejad's funding of students to do faculty/student research had also encouraged these dedicated students. □

AIS CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Student and Faculty Events

AIS Club Events

The **Anthropology Club** organized “Do You Actually Eat That?” Students and faculty brought in something they enjoy eating that others might find strange, distasteful, horrific, or repulsive. They explained how they began to eat this and what significance, if any, it had to them. Items included dishes from various cultural traditions to eclectic personal tastes.

The **Ramapo College History Club (RCHC)** continued to bring historians to campus as part of its Speaker Series. In September, Prof. Marilyn Young, author of *Iraq and the Lessons of Vietnam: Or, How Not to Learn from the Past* (2008) and *Bombing Civilians: A Twentieth-Century History* (2009), presented “Necessary Wars of Choice” about the current American wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and lessons from the Vietnam War. Her book, *The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990* (1991), is used in several classes at Ramapo College. In November, Prof. Elektra Kostopoulou of Istanbul Bilgi Universitesi presented, “Negotiating Space in the Eastern Mediterranean: The Case of Crete,” about the fluidity and ambiguity of religious, cultural,

and national identities in the late Ottoman Empire. RCHC also co-sponsored a number of events with the Center for Holocaust & Genocide Studies and the AIS Colloquium Series. Prof. Tae Yang Kwak is the Club’s faculty advisor.

The **Literature Club** continues its tradition of Wednesday night meetings at 10:00 p.m. in the second floor lounge of the ASB building under the able direction of Mike Stringer (fstringe@ramapo.edu) and Heather Kristian (hkristia@ramapo.edu). New members always welcome. Professor Yvette Kisor is the Club’s faculty advisor. (ykisor@ramapo.edu)

In November, the **Philosophy and Anthropology Clubs** co-

hosted a lecture by Dr. Lynne Carmikle on “Are Emotions Biological or Social?”

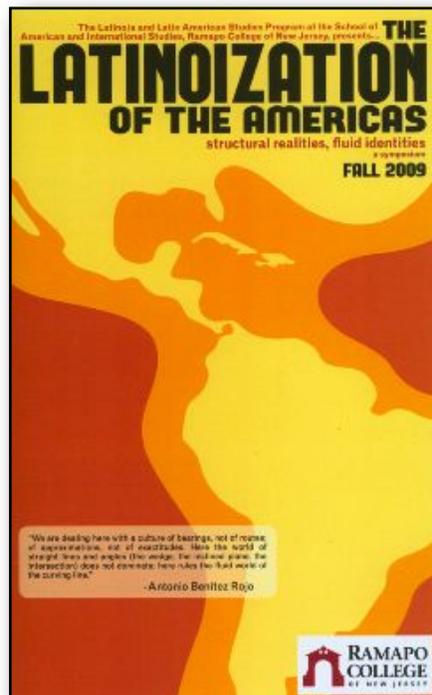
“The Latinoization of the Americas: Structural Realities, Fluid Identities”

The Latino/a and Latin American Studies program received a grant from the Platinum Series for a Latinoization of the Americas symposium celebrated in October. The symposium featured twelve outside speakers and seven panels on such topics as Latin America in the 21st century, reporting on Latin America and Latino USA, Latinos and the census, Latino and Latin American literature, transnational Latino communities, José Martí’s “Our America,” and people and the environment in the Amazon Basin. The panels were all chaired by Ramapo faculty. There were also film screenings in conjunction with the Cinematheque and the Center for Holocaust Studies. □

First Year Seminar Field Trip

By Yvette Kisor

On Sunday, 18 October the FYS students were taken to see a rendition of Charles Smith’s award-winning play, *Free Man of Color*. This three-person play revolves around John Newton Templeton, an ex-slave and the



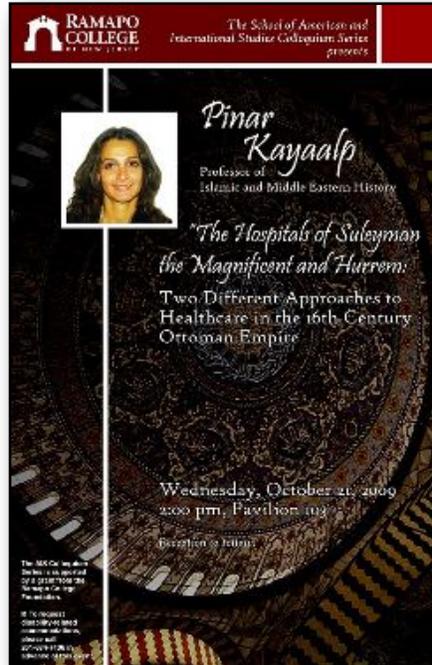
Latina/Latin American Studies Symposium

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AIS FACULTY
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Erick Castellanos presented a paper entitled, “The National and Transnational Lives of Corn: Technological, Political, Edible Object,” at the Society for the Social Studies of Science Conference in Washington, D.C. He also organized and chaired the session “Political Charisma” at the American Anthropological Association annual meetings in Philadelphia, PA, in which he also presented the paper “Charm, Polenta, and Pasta Sauce: Italian Political Charisma.” His Food and Culture course visited Glynwood Farm in Cold Spring, NY to meet organic farmers and see first hand how an organic farm works. Students were able to pick fresh vegetables from the fields, and they received a recently laid egg (it was still warm). He also organized a group to attend the play “De Novo” at SUNY Rockland.

Paul Elovitz published (with Prof. Ken Fuchsman of UConn) “A



AIS Colloquium Series

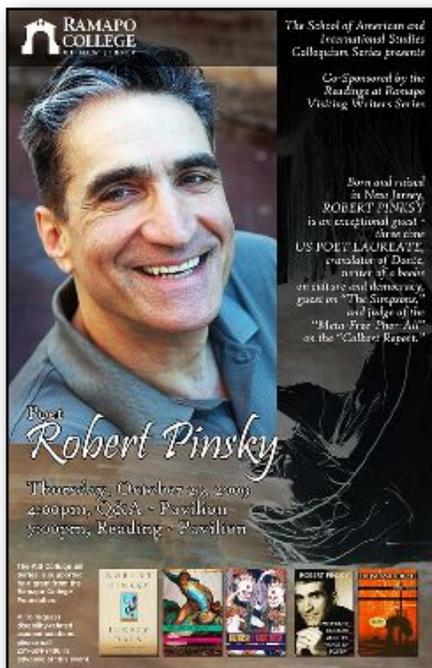
Psychohistorical Exchange on Barack Obama’s Family Background,” and the following articles in the same issue “Anxiety, Denial, Fantasy, Fear, and Hysteria Regarding Health Care Reform,” “Reflections on Health Care and Its Reform,” and “Psychohistorical Insights on Remembering September 11th.” In September 2009, he published “Nancy Kobrin’s Journey from Psychoanalysis to Fighting Terrorism,” “A Psychohistorical Retrospective of September 11, 2001,” “Exploring the Psychobiography of an Elusive Artist” (with Cassandra Langer and Irene Javors), and “How Will You Use Psychohistory?” In June, he published “Psychological Explorations of Economic Crises” and “Searching for the Origins of European Identity.” In addition, Elovitz continues to serve as editor of *Clio’s Psyche* including special issues on the psychology of economic crisis, the uses and abuses of 9/11 remembrance, and the psychology of health care reform, and a five-article

symposium “What Makes Europeans European?” Elovitz has presented papers at the 32nd International Psychohistorical Association meeting, the Manhattan headquarters of the World Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis, and at the Association for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society (APCS). On November 7, 2009, Elovitz presented on the psychology of health care reform in Manhattan, together with colleagues from NYU and the U. of Massachusetts.

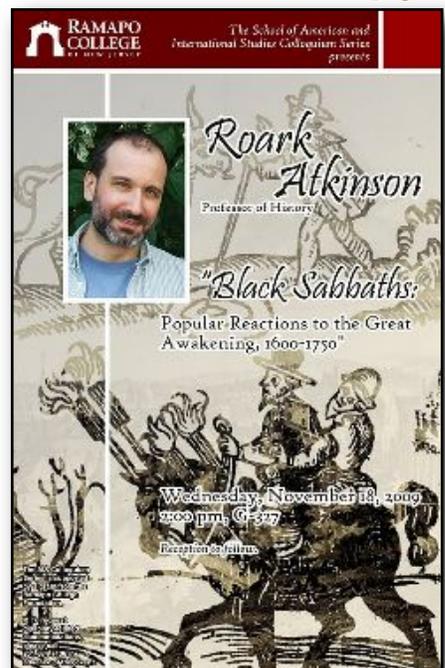
Risa Gorelick published three podcasts/e-lectures for Pearson Professional Services on “Focusing First-Year Composition on Food Writing,” “Fun with Food: Service-Learning Cookbook Writing Project,” and “Writing ‘for’ the Community: Service-Learning Writing for Non-Profits.”

Tae Yang Kwak’s chapter titled, “The Clash of Civilizations: Obfuscating Race, History, and Culture in the Film ‘300’ (2007),” in *The Americanization of History:*

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AIS Colloquium Series



AIS Colloquium Series

AIS ORGANIZATIONS

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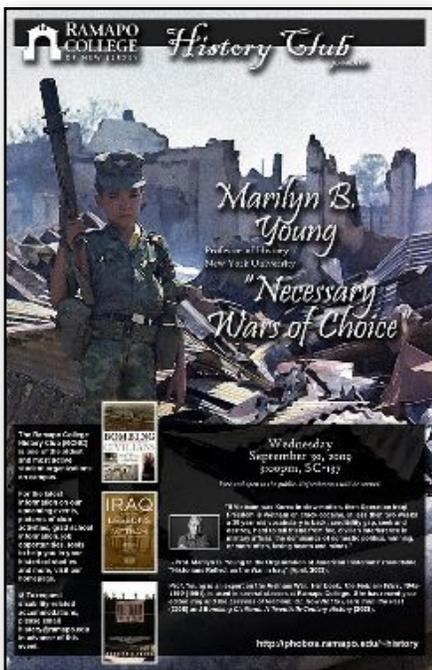
first black man to attend Ohio University during the years 1824-1828. The play takes place during these years, when pro-slavery factions argued against emancipation, four decades before Abraham Lincoln signed the emancipation proclamation. The other two characters are Ohio University's president, Robert Wilson, an avowed abolitionist, and Templeton's wife, a complex woman who is skeptical about the big plans that her husband has for Templeton. The play took place in the Penguin Rep Theatre, located in Stony Point, NY. The FYS faculty and students were grateful to Professor Erick Castellanos for introducing us to

Penguin Rep, a small, local, yet highly professional and renowned theatre. Students were first treated to a delicious buffet-style dinner before making their way over to the theater itself, a beautifully restored barn house. Afterwards, Professor Yvette Kisor and director Joe Brancato opened the floor to a lively question and answer session. Actors Sheldon Best, Tom Frey, and Emma O'Donnell stayed on to contribute to the discussion. Overall, the FYS students were very pleased with the event, which was reflected in the following class discussions and written assignments. □

Ramapo Students, Cahill Center, and Faculty Attend World Food Day Event
College English students, members of the Cahill Center and Professor Risa Gorelick attended the World Food Day Event at Rutgers in October. Ramapo College students were sponsored by the Cahill Center. □



Posters from the 2009 AIS Film Series



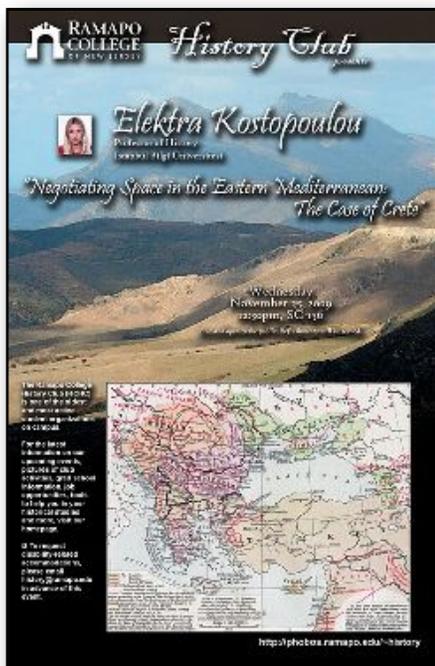
Marilyn B. Young at the AIS History Club



Photo courtesy Risa Gorelick

AIS FACULTY*continued from page 4*

Conflation of Time and Culture in Film and Television edited by Kathleen McDonald will be published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Based on research conducted last year on an SBR summer grant, Professor Kwak will be presenting at the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) annual meeting a paper titled, "Behind the Myth of the 'Korean Model,'" on a panel with four other scholars from the US and Korea titled *The Dynamics of the International Order in Northeast Asia during the Vietnam War and the Detente*. AAS is the largest and most respected organization in the field of Asian Studies.



Elektra Kostopolou at the AIS History Club

On campus **Tae Yang Kwak** and **Peter Scheckner** led a panel presentation and discussion titled "The State of Higher Education in NJ and the Effects of a Recession in a Time of War," as part of the two-day teach-in on the *Economic Crisis and the Future of NJ Higher Education*. About two hundred

students attended the panel and participated in the discussion with both frustration and enthusiasm about the present situation.

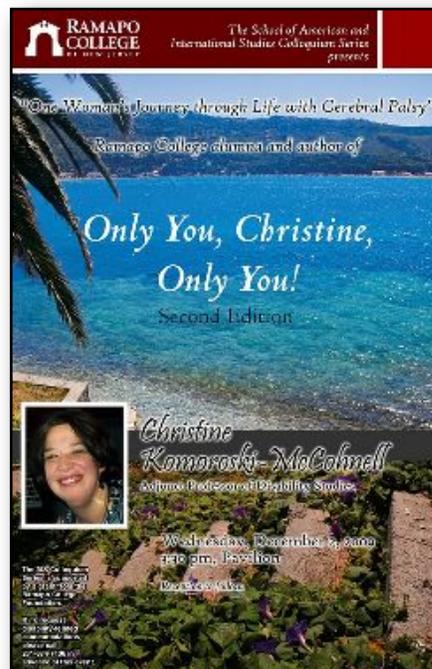
Carter Jones Meyer has written four book reviews for major publications in U.S. and Western history. Reviews of Marit K. Munson, ed., *Kenneth Chapman's Santa Fe: Artists and Archaeologists, 1907-1931* and Emily Abbink, *New Mexico's Palace of the Governors: History of an American Treasure* appeared in the summer 2009 issue of *Journal of the West*. A review essay commissioned by H-NewMexico, "Championing Southwestern Indian Art in the Early Twentieth Century: The Life of Kenneth Milton Chapman," appeared on H-Net in October 2009. A review of Tisa Wenger, *We Have a Religion: The 1920s Pueblo Indian Dance Controversy and American Religious Freedom* is forthcoming in *The Journal of American History*.

Yvette Kisor's "Totemic Reflexes in Tolkien's Middle-earth" has been accepted to the journal *Mythlore*. Her article "Numerical Composition and Beowulf: A Reconsideration" will be published in *Anglo-Saxon England*. The volume *On the Aesthetics of Beowulf and Other Old English Poetry*, edited by John Hill, is due to be published by the University of Toronto Press this spring; her essay "The Aesthetics of Beowulf: Structure, Perception, and Desire" will appear in its pages.

Edited by **Iraida H. López**, *El viejo, el asesino, yo y otros cuentos* (The Old Man, the Assassin, I, and Other Stories) features nine stories and a testimonial essay by Cuban writer Ena Lucía Portela. López's prologue offers an overview of short fiction in Cuba since 1959, focusing particularly on the 1990's generation and Portela's fiction. She

AIS ORGANIZATIONS*continued from page 3*

worked with the author in drafting two hundred notes on the myriad cultural and literary references in the texts. Portela was selected in 2007 as one of the 39 most important writers in Latin America under the age of 39.



AIS Colloquium Series

Ed Shannon's essay "Shifting Identity, Disguise, and Christian Typology in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*" was published in November's the 2009 *Mark Twain Annual*, a publication of The Mark Twain Circle, the premier Mark Twain scholarly organization. He was also accepted into the Faculty Resource Network's "Literature And The Environment" Seminar to be held at the University of the Sacred Heart in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Jeremy Teigen had two articles accepted for publication in the fall. "Orphan Counties and the Effect of Irrelevant Information on Turnout in Statewide Races" (with Keena

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Award-Winning Author Speaks On Armenian Genocide

(MAHWAH, NJ) – Peter Balakian, an award-winning author and Bergen County native, spoke at Ramapo College of New Jersey on November 12 Under the auspices of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies and the Armenian National committee of New Jersey. His third appearance at Ramapo, Balakian discussed his new book, “Armenian Golgotha.” Recently published by Alfred A. Knopf, it is the translation, on which Balakian collaborated with Aris Sevag, of his great great-uncle Rev. Grigoris Balakian’s first-person account of the Armenian Genocide, including his arrest and subsequent trek to avoid death at the hands of the Turkish authorities and their allies.

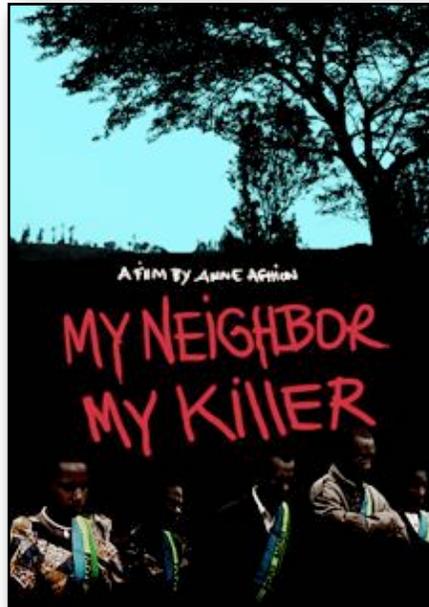
A uniquely insightful and compelling first person account of the Ottoman genocide of the Armenians, it is far from being simply a chronicle of oppression. Rather it, as Peter Balakian took pains to point out, a multidimensional rendering and reflection on a world that no longer exists. Finally available in English, it will enrich the study and remembrance of the Armenian Genocide for decades to come.

Cognizant of his and the other arrestees’ limited prospects for survival when they were shipped into the interior of the country, Balakian became a leader among his peers. His knowledge of languages, especially German, and penchant for diplomacy enabled him to gain unusual access to Ottoman and German officials and soldiers. Most importantly, perhaps, he was on several occasions able to intervene on behalf of his fellow refugees. Balakian used his position to save the refugees from certain death by

pleading with their captors or facilitating bribes. In some of these instances and generally to elude his Turkish oppressors, he put his talent to assume disguises from that of an Ottoman soldier to a German engineer to survive by, for example, finding work on the Berlin-Baghdad Railway and at various vineyards.

A native of Bergen County, Peter Balakian earned his bachelor’s from Bucknell University, a master’s from New York University, and a doctorate from Brown University in American Civilization.

He probably best known for his



memoir “Black Dog of Fate,” the winner of the PEN/Albrand Prize for memoir, and “The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America’s Response,” that won the 2005 Raphael Lemkin Prize. Both books were also New York Times and national best sellers.

However, Peter Balakian is also prolific poet, scholar and educator. The most recent of his five books of poems was “June-tree: New and Selected Poems 1974-2000, and he authored “Theodore Roethke’s Far Fields,” published by LSU Press in 1989.

He is also co-founder and co-

editor with the poet Bruce Smith of the poetry magazine Graham House Review, which was published from 1976-1996, and is the co-translator (with Nevert Yaghlian) of the book of poems “Bloody News From My Friend” by the Armenian poet Siamanto.

In his academic career, Balakian has been at Colgate University since 1980 where he is currently Donald M. and Constance H. Rebar Professor of the Humanities in the department of English, and director of creative writing. He was also the first director of Colgate’s Center For Ethics and World Societies. □

Acclaimed Post-Genocide Rwanda Film Screened

(Mahwah) – On October 5th, Ann Aghion screened and led a discussion of her film “My Neighbor, My Killer” at Ramapo College of New Jersey Monday. The presentation was sponsored by Ramapo College’s Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies and Communication Arts Major with the support of the Office of Student Affairs Platinum Series. Screened out of competition at this year’s Cannes Film Festival, “My Neighbor My Killer” charts the impact of the government’s open air Gacaca Tribunals in Rwanda as part of the attempt by survivors and perpetrators alike to reconcile after the genocide that tore apart the country through an open process of admission and forgiveness. Announced in 2001, and ending this year, the government put the Gacaca Tribunals in place with citizen-judges meant to try their neighbors and rebuild the nation.

“My Neighbor My Killer” has been critically acclaimed and was the winner of the 2009 Human Rights Watch Nestor Almendros

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Genocide *continued from page 7*

Prize for courage in filmmaking. It has also been nominated for a Gotham Award in the documentary category. "My Neighbor My Killer" is the fourth and last in Ms. Aghion's series of films about the genocide in Rwanda, one of which won an Emmy.

A graduate of Barnard College, Anne Aghion lives in New York and Paris.

Her other films include "Ice People," a study of geologists working in Antarctica that she made in 2006, and her first film, "The Earth Moved Under Him," that examines the lives of Nicaragua's urban poor. □

Harvard Professor Gives Workshop

On Wednesday, December 2, Dr. Nancy Sommers, Harvard University professor and writing specialist, gave a workshop to 60 faculty, staff, and students on "Responding to Student Writing" facilitated by Dr. Risa Gorelick. Faculty from the writing programs at Bergen Community College and Kean University also attended. The workshop asked those who respond



to student writing to first think what the assignment requires for a student to be successful and then to work backwards in terms of thinking about what a student needs in order to revise a piece of writing.

Dr. Sommers is the author of *Rules for Writers*, the handbook being used in College English, Readings in the Humanities, and First-Year Seminar.

Dr. Sommers studies the writing development and literacy skills of college and high school students. As principal investigator of the Harvard Study of Undergraduate Writing, she tracked the college writing experiences of 400 students from the Harvard Class of 2001, to understand the complex role writing plays in undergraduate education. For twenty years, Sommers directed Harvard's Expository Writing Program, as the Sosland Chair in Expository Writing and as a Senior Lecturer. In addition to directing the freshman writing program, she established and directed the Harvard Writing Project, a cross-disciplinary writing program, and also conducted a series of studies, sponsored by two Harvard Presidents, to research Harvard's culture of undergraduate writing. Sommers is highly regarded within the field of writing instruction for her six textbooks and her essays, articles, and films on the theory and practice of teaching writing. Her prize-winning articles "Revision Strategies of Student and Experienced Writers" and "Responding to Student Writing" are two of the most widely-read and anthologized articles in the field. Her films—"Shaped by Writing" and "Across the Drafts"—have received international recognition for bringing students' voices into a larger discussion about writing instruction. Sommers is currently writing a book about the Harvard Study of Undergraduate Writing and developing a longitudinal study of high school literacy practices.

Faculty and staff who teach found practical applications to apply to their classrooms and grading from Sommers' workshop.

Students in the Teacher Education program saw a connection to what they were studying about responding to writing in person. The workshop was sponsored by the School of American & International Studies, the Writing Convening Group, and Bedford/St. Martin's Press, the publisher who produces *A Writer's Reference*. □

AIS FACULTY *continued from page 6*

Lipsitz at Queens College) in *Political Communication* examines how irrelevant political ads from neighboring states suppresses voting in some contexts. The other, "Probing the Reds and Blues: Sectionalism and Voter Location in the 2000 and 2004 US Presidential Election" (with Seth McKee at U South Florida) in *Political Geography* empirically estimates the influence of population density and region on voting habits nationwide. Teigen also presented papers at two conferences, the Inter-University Seminar on the Study of the Armed Forces and Society Biannual Conference and the Northeastern Political Science Association Conference. His op-ed piece on voter turnout in the 2009 New Jersey gubernatorial election was published in the *Bergen Record*.

Lisa Williams' article, "Steinem at Baruch," will be published in the forthcoming issue of the Flora Nwapa Society Newsletter. "1925," an excerpt from her book, *Forget Russia*, was published in *The Mom Egg Journal* (online). The children's play, "Goofball Galaxy," co-written by Professor Williams and her son was performed at the NJ Meadowlands Environmental Center during December. □