

SSHGS CURRENTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SALAMENO SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND GLOBAL STUDIES



Dean Stephen Rice
photo: Carolyn Herring

Letter from the Dean

by Stephen Rice

Greetings from the end of a very busy fall semester. There is much that is exciting to report, starting with the change of the school's name. At its December 9 meeting, the Board of Trustees approved a resolution changing the name of the Salameño School of American and International Studies to the Salameño School of Humanities and Global Studies. This resolution was the culmination of a discussion among the school's faculty who were concerned that "American and International Studies"—designated as the school's name in 1979—failed to express our full range of programs.

With the new name, Ramapo will now have a clear school of humanities, one that is distinctive in its commitment to the growing field of global studies. This is an important development for us, because the new name is much clearer about the kind of work we do across all our programs, and about the direction in which we see ourselves heading. We're grateful to the President and Provost, and to the members of the Board of Trustees, for supporting the change. At the start of the spring semester I will be convening a committee that will begin planning a range of activities to help inaugurate the newly-named school over the course of the 2014-2015 academic year.

The school name change comes in the midst of the renovations that are underway in the A and B wings of the main academic buildings, thanks to the generous gift from Lawrence and Theresa Salameño. Work on the second floor of the A wing was completed this past summer, with our new classrooms and office space now being fully utilized. Also renovated—with new paving, benches, and plantings—was the area outside the entrance to the B wing. Next summer, the second floor of the B wing will be redone, so that by the start of the fall 2014 semester we will have a newly-renovated school to go with our new name.

Meanwhile, our students continue to distinguish themselves for their scholarly accomplishments in all kinds of ways. Two, for instance, presented their research at the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC) Northeast Regional Undergraduate Research Conference in North Adams, Massachusetts in late October. Laura Sancic, a senior Liberal Studies major, presented a paper titled "Assimilation and Acculturation Among Ghanaians in Urban Areas," which was

based on a paper she wrote for Professor Susan Hangen. Also presenting was Emily Moore, a senior American Studies major whose paper "The Great Depression Visual Expression" was based on a paper she wrote in an independent study she completed with me last spring.

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Salameño School of Humanities and Global Studies Sweeps the Bischoff Excellence in Teaching Awards

Professors **Jeremy Teigen** (Political Science) and **James Hoch** (Literature) were the two winners of the Henry Bischoff Award for Excellence in Teaching this year. The Bischoff Excellence in Teaching Award is given annually to Ramapo College professors who have



Prof. Jeremy Teigen and James Hoch win Henry Bischoff Awards for Excellence in Teaching. photo: Carolyn Herring

displayed an exemplary passion and skill in teaching their subject matter. Further, it awards professors who leave a lasting impact on their students' lives by stressing a focus on learning inside and outside of the classroom. Winners are selected by a committee of professors and college faculty through the Office of the Provost. SSHGS is proud of Professors Teigen and Hoch and their commitment to teaching. Past winners of the Henry Bischoff Award include SSHGS Professors Anthony Padovano (2000), Ira Spar (2002), Carter Jones Meyer (2009) and Paula D. Straile-Costa (2010).

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FALL 2013

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Letter from the Dean

(continued from cover)

We are happy to welcome a new full-time faculty member who is joining us this year, the fiction writer Hugh Sheehy. Professor Sheehy will be teaching a variety of courses serving our growing Creative Writing program offered by the Literature faculty. He has an M.F.A. from the University of Alabama and is a highly accomplished writer, having won the prestigious Flannery O'Connor Award for Short Fiction for his collection of short stories titled *The Invisibles*, published by the University of Georgia Press in 2012.

Finally, I want to note that we have an active and engaged Alumni Advisory Board, now under the leadership of Carla Pastore (a 2007 graduate in Literature). Members of the board have been wonderfully supportive of our current and future students, and together we are planning a new mentoring program that will help students make the transition from college to work or graduate school. I expect to have more to say about that in the spring.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and learning about all the activities we've been engaged in over the last months. If you are a graduate of one of our programs and would like to reconnect with Ramapo, please send me an e-mail at srice@ramapo.edu.

Student News

During the last days of the fall semester, **Professor Iraidia Lopez's** "Foundations of Spanish II" students visited other Spanish classes to share the Hispanic tradition of "villancicos." As the lyrics were projected in the blackboard, all students joined and sang along, giving students an opportunity to learn new Spanish vocabulary and discuss the cultural background of the tradition.



Professor Iraidia Lopez's "Foundations of Spanish II" students sing villancicos. photo: Catalina Kane

Congressman **Scott Garrett** (R-NJ) visited the College on September 24 this semester; it was his first official visit. He took questions and spoke about the federal government shutdown and the Affordable Care Act. He's photographed here (right) with the College Republicans President Christopher Gabbett and College President Peter P. Mercer.



The **Philosophy Club** met three times this semester. The club regularly meets on the first Tuesday of the month, 1-2 p.m. in A-101. The dates and topics were: 10/1 The Ethics of the Television Show *Breaking Bad*; 11/5 Election Day Special: US and World Cops?; and 12/3 Food, Ethics and the Environment. The club collected canned goods for donation at the December meeting.

On Saturday, 23 November, Professors **Yvette Kisor**, **Tae Kwak**, and **Michael Unger** accompanied their First-Year Seminar class to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. For more than half of their students, this was their first trip to the museum. Along with exploring the museum on their own, they were able to take a guided tour of the new Islamic wing of the museum, and compare the Islamic art they saw with the Orientalist art they viewed in class as part of their consideration of Edward Said's concept of Orientalism. The theme of the course is "Encounters with the Other," and this class trip allowed them to understand the theme in a deeper way, both through the art they saw and the experience they had.



SSHGS First Year Seminar students visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art. photos: Dana Decarlo

On Tuesday, November 19, **Dumbledore's Army** and the **Salameno Center for British Studies** co-sponsored a screening of an episode of *Doctor Who* ("The Name of the Doctor") in the Laurel Hall Screening Room. The screening was well attended. We hope this event is the first of many collaborations between the two groups.

College Republicans President Christopher Gabbett, President Peter P. Mercer and Congressman Scott Garrett (R-NJ). photo: Carolyn Herring

Faculty Updates

Professor **Roark Atkinson**'s (History) article, "Satan in the Pulpit: Popular Christianity during the Scottish Great Awakening, 1680–1750," was published in the Winter 2013 issue of *The Journal of Social History*. Also, his review of Warren R. Hofstra, ed., *Ulster to America: The Scots-Irish Migration Experience, 1680-1830*, was published in the May 2013 issue of the *Journal of Southern History*.

Professor **Todd Barnes** finished work on his essay, "*The Tempest*'s 'Standing Water': Recycling Early Modern Cosmographies in *Lost*," his contribution to *Shakespearean Echoes*, edited by Kevin Wetmore, Jr. (Loyola Marymount University) and Adam Hansen (Northumbria University); the volume, which looks at Shakespeare, adaptation, and ecological criticism, is forthcoming by Palgrave Macmillan. He also shared his essay, "Obama's 'Hamlet-like Indecision'" with other scholars in the Shakespearean Performance Research Group Seminar at the American Society for Theatre Research Conference in Dallas.

Professor **Rosetta D'Angelo** (Literature/Italian Studies) presented a scholarly paper titled "Diasporic Somali Women: Voices in Contemporary Italy," at the ASWAD (Association on the African Diaspora) International Convention in Santo Domingo. Professor D'Angelo also attended the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) conference, in Orlando, Florida. She participated in a Round Table discussion on Italian TA/Fulbright training and expectations.

Professor **Yvette Kisor**'s (Literature) essay "Incorporeality and Transformation in *The Lord of the Rings*" appeared in the volume *The Body in Tolkien's Legendarium: Essays on Middle-earth Corporeality*, edited by Christopher Vaccaro (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2013), 20-38. In October, she moderated the session "Modernizing the Medieval" at the 28th Annual Conference of the International Society for the Study of Medievalism at St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wisconsin. Finally, the roundtable she is organizing, "*New Readings on Women in Old English Literature Revisited: A Roundtable*," has been accepted to the Forty-Ninth International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University for May 2014.

Professors **Peter Scheckner** (Literature) and **Patricia Keeton** (CA) recently published their new book, *American War Cinema and Media Since Vietnam* (Palgrave Macmillan). The book explores the media's effect on public consciousness since the war in Vietnam as well as Hollywood depictions of war in the decades following the end of the conflict. Moreover, the book discusses the implications the media's influence has on the American public's perception of war, class, and politics. The book tries to show the collusion among the US government, the Pentagon, the war arms industry, war video games, and the private arms industry. All in 336 pages!

In the fall of 2013, Professor **Stacie Taranto** (History) continued working on her book manuscript project, *Kitchen Table Politics: Conservative Women and Family Values in the Seventies*, which is forthcoming in 2015 from the University of Pennsylvania Press (Politics and Culture in Modern America Series). She also completed work on two articles that will appear in forthcoming anthologies: "Defending 'Women Who Stand by the Sink': Suburban Homemakers and Anti-ERA Activism in New York State, 1974-1975" will appear in *Making Suburbia* (University of Minnesota Press) and "Goodbye to the Party of Rockefeller: How a Decidedly 'Un-Silent Minority' Pushed the GOP to Embrace Anti-Feminism" will appear in *The Silent Majority: A Transatlantic Perspective* (Cambridge University Press). The latter article is an expanded version of a paper that she wrote for the Organization of American Historians' annual conference in the spring of 2013; she was thrilled to workshop the article version at Princeton University's Modern America Workshop in December of 2013, which was sponsored by their History department. In November, Taranto also chaired a panel called "Troubling Bodies: Identity, National (Un)Belonging and Regulatory Campaigns" at the National Women's Studies Association Conference in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Professor **Lisa Williams** (Literature) had her poem "Blue Years" published in the *Pirene Fountain Poetry Journal*, November 2013 (online). Her poem, "At Fourteen," will be published in the *Gargoyle Poetry Journal*, Summer 2014. She was a Quarter Finalist for the Mary Ballard Poetry Chapbook Prize.

Hollywood's Relationship with Nazi Germany Deconstructed

By Michael Riff



Thomas Doherty, Professor of American Studies and Chair of the American Studies Program at Brandeis University. photo: Michael Riff

As Doherty pointed out, the studios' treatment of the Spanish Civil War and of fascist Italy was no less timid.

Doherty emphasized that at the same time the movie capital was also home to the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League (HANL). One of the only organizations in the U.S. to confront the fascist threat, it included among its members such A-list actors, directors and screen writers as Dorothy Parker, Dashiell Hammett, Ernst Lubitsch, Mervyn LeRoy, Sylvia Sidney, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Chico Marx, Benny Goodman, Fred MacMurray, Frederic March, Oscar Hammerstein II, and Eddie Cantor. The HANL alarmed studio heads to the point that they threatened to insert "political clauses" into their contracts forbidding such activity.

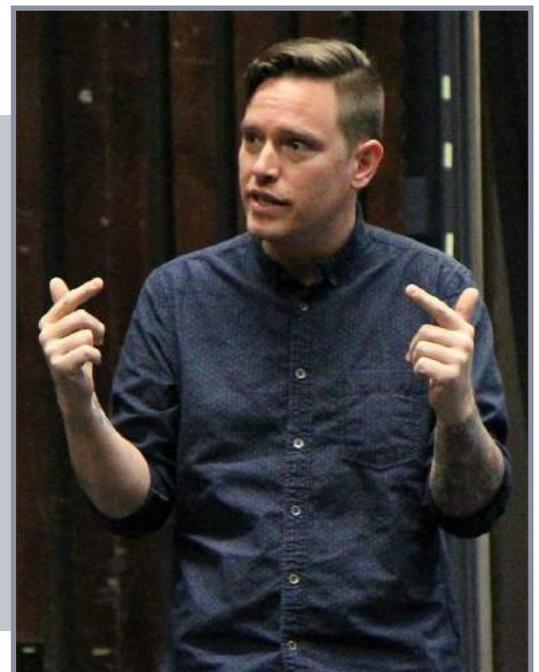
A cultural historian with a special interest in Hollywood cinema, Thomas Doherty is a professor of American Studies and chair of the American Studies Program at Brandeis University. He is an associate editor for the film magazine *Cineaste* and film review editor for the *Journal of American History*. He completed his undergraduate education at Gonzaga University and has M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Iowa.

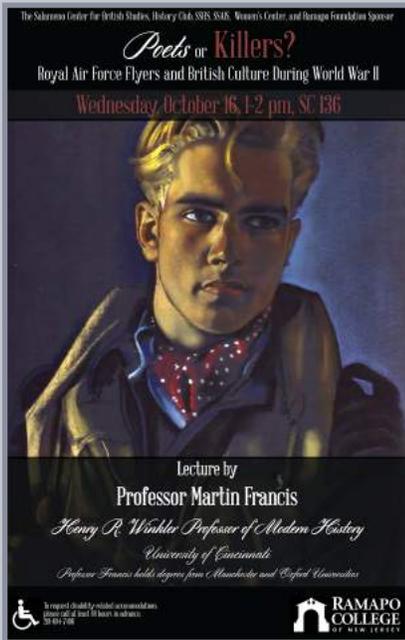
His recently published book, *Hollywood and Hitler, 1933-1939* (Columbia Press University, 2013), was the topic of a talk given by Brandeis University Professor **Thomas Doherty** on October 15. Co-sponsored by the **Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies** and the Communications major's Cinematheque Series, the program included clips from a number of relevant films, including several that had only recently been rediscovered.

At least until the outbreak of war in 1939, as Doherty pointed out, with the exception of Warner Brothers, the predominant attitude in Hollywood towards fascism was essentially one of denial and pragmatism. There was a belief that movie-going audiences would be turned off by politics. As Joseph I. Breen, the industry's all-powerful lead censor put it: "the purpose of the screen is to entertain and not to propagandize." The studios had to contend, as well, with the German consul in Los Angeles, Georg Gysssling, the U.S. State Department and Breen, who instilled the fear that offending the Third Reich would lead to exclusion from the hitherto lucrative German market.

On November 21, 2013, Professor **Todd Barnes** (Literature) gave a public talk entitled "*The Tempest* and Its Discontents." This talk, sponsored by the Salameno Center for British Studies, was scheduled to coincide with the current campus production of *The Tempest*. In his talk, Professor Barnes discussed the history of the play's reception. He discussed, in particular, the play's role in larger debates concerning early modern and contemporary ways of thinking about colonialism, patriarchy, globalization, geography, and of course, theatre and performance studies. The talk was well attended by students and faculty from across the campus, and it was followed by a lively discussion.

Professor Barnes discusses "*The Tempest* and Its Discontents"
photo: Eric Vitale





Salameno Center for British Studies Events

On October 16, 2013 **Martin Francis**, Henry R. Winkler Professor of Modern History at the University of Cincinnati, gave a public talk to the College community. The talk was provocatively titled “Poets or Killers?: Royal Air Force Flyers and British Culture During WWII,” and concerned the complex public identity of the pilots; they were indeed national heroes but the death rate among them was forty percent! The talk was sponsored by the British Studies Center, a campus organization established to foster the study and discussion of all things British, as well as by the History Club.

Martin Francis, Henry R. Winkler Professor of Modern History at the University of Cincinnati, was invited to speak by the Salameno Center for British Studies and the History Club.

SSHGS Colloquium Series

This fall, the Salameno School of Humanities and Global Studies was proud to offer a series of engaging readings and lectures by faculty in Literature and History. On September 26, Visiting Assistant Professor of Literature and award-winning fiction writer **Hugh Sheehy** and poet **Suzanne Parker**, author of *Viral*, poems responding to the death of Tyler Clementi, read from their work in the Salameno Spiritual Center, which was packed with students and faculty. The event was co-sponsored by the Readings at Ramapo Visiting Writers Series. On October 9, **Mark Newell**, Instructor of History, gave a talk on “A Brief History of Newark’s Forest Hill District.” On October 30, **Emily Marlowe**, Instructor of History, delivered her paper “A Fast Ride into the Depths of the Earth’: Integrating Natural and Technological Wonders at Carlsbad Caverns Natural Park.” As the final colloquium event of the semester, on November 13, **Alan Baxter**, Instructor of Critical Reading and Writing and NYC director and playwright, talked to students and faculty about “Religious Existentialism in the Later Plays of Tennessee Williams.”



Visiting Assistant Professor of Literature Hugh Sheehy and poet Suzanne Parker read their work in the Salameno Spiritual Center. photo: Patricia Ard



The SSHGS Fall Colloquium Series

Activist and Scholar Provides Update on Genocide in Sudan

By Michael Riff

On November 19, the **Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies** hosted a briefing on the evolving genocidal events in the Darfur and Nuba Mountains regions of Sudan by **Ahmed H. Adam**, a Visiting Scholar in the Peace-building and Rights Program of the Institute for the Study of Human Rights (ISHR) at Columbia University.

Adam focused on how the regime of Omar al-Bashir, in the face of eroding support at home, has lashed out at supposed internal enemies, most recently against the Nuba Mountain people of Sudan's South Kordofan State. At the same time, Adam pointed out, attacks against the people of Darfur have gone on unabated, and Bashir has supported opposition elements in South Sudan. In part, according to Adam, indifference, if not support, on the part of diverse segments of the international community, including the Islamic Republic of Iran and the African Union, has encouraged Bashir to pursue such destructive and reckless behavior. The unfolding insurgency in South Sudan bears out Adam's dire warnings.

Ahmed. H. Adam studied law in Khartoum in 1996 and subsequently received an LLM in International law in 1999 from the Westminster University in London. Mr. Adam represents the people of Darfur in peace negotiations with the government of Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir. Mr. Adam is also the official spokesperson of Darfur's armed and political group, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), for whom he manages public relations and media outreach.



*Ahmed H. Adam, a Visiting Scholar in the Peace-building and Rights Program of the Institute for the Study of Human Rights (ISHR) at Columbia University.
photo: Michael Riff*



Remembering John Robert ("Bob") Cassidy

The Salameo School of Humanities and Global Studies fondly remembers Professor Emeritus **John Robert ("Bob") Cassidy**, who passed away in October. In addition to his service as a Professor of Philosophy, Bob was Ramapo's first Vice President for Academic Affairs. His original vision of a public liberal arts college that served all of New Jersey's citizens informs who we are as an institution today. Associate Professor of Philosophy Lisa Cassidy (no relation) recalls: "He was such a gentle person and gifted teacher. At least once or twice a year I hear from one of his former students, who say Bob changed their lives." Professor of Literature Anthony Padovano remembers: "Bob had the challenge of creating a department of philosophy and teaching regularly in it. He also assumed the demanding task of keeping Ramapo College from being excessively ambiguous in its identity and curriculum. Furthermore, he kept the College from becoming so conventional and rigid that it would lose its creative potential." A full obituary can be found online at <http://tinyurl.com/o7szlku>.



Spanish Capstone students and faculty: from left to right, first row: Catalina Kane, Dannielle Gold, Colleen Moran, Emily Gang, Professor Santamaria Laorden, Victoria Grey, Andrea Arias, Professor Straile Costa, Professor Lopez. Second row: Abigail Smith, Martin Salcedo, Josue Castillo. photo: Carolyn Herring

From Che to Fukushima: Challenging National Identities

By Natalia Santamaria-Laorden

On December 11, students from the Spanish Capstone presented their theses publicly. With topics ranging from issues such as the history of drug trafficking in Colombia to women's suffrage in Spain, students also focused on compelling contemporary issues like the dangers immigrants face when crossing the Mexican border or the loss of language in second generation households. The evening was the successful result of a long process of research, rewriting and rehearsing, in which students admirably incorporated the feedback received in this writing intensive course.

The Spanish capstone course is designed to provide students majoring in Spanish with an understanding of the theoretical and historical frames in which the Hispanic tradition has been conceived throughout the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty first century. Texts dealing with this topic are analyzed not only for content, but for their potential as rhetorical, structural and stylistic models. The students also draw from these models to write a research paper on a subject of their choice, that they present publicly at the end of the course. The twofold nature of the course aims to further students' academic and professional competence and prepare them for graduate work and/or the teaching of Spanish and Hispanic culture in American schools. The Spanish faculty congratulates the graduating students for an evening filled with professionalism and camaraderie.

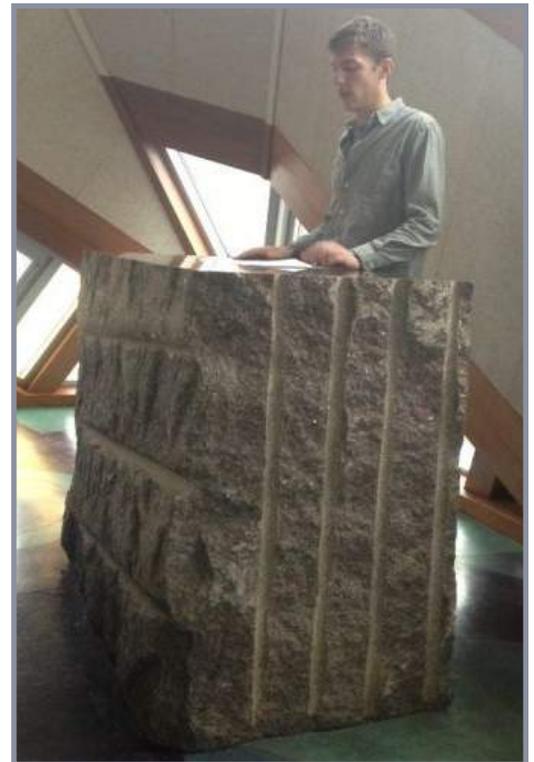
SSHGS Film Series

The SSHGS Film Series offers students, faculty, and staff a chance to come together to watch and discuss films that take up important themes and concerns of the humanities. On September 18, Professor **Tae Kwak** (History) presented *300* (2006), directed by Zack Snyder. On October 7 Professor **Yvette Kisor** (Literature) screened *Thirteen Warrior* (1999) directed by John McTiernan and Michael Crichton. On October 28 Professor **Paula Straile Costa** hosted a screening of *Sleep Dealer* (2008), directed by Alex Rivera. Finally, on December 4, Professor **Michael Unger** (Political Science) presented students with Errol Morris' *Fog of War* (2003).

Creative Writing Capstone Readings

By Hugh Sheehy

On December 9, **Professor James Hoch**'s creative writing students gave readings at two separate events in the Padovano Peace Pavilion at the Salameno Spiritual Center. Students from two of Hoch's Fall semester classes, Creative Writing Capstone and Poetry Writing Workshop, turned out to read selections from the writing they have accomplished over the past few months. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say "the rewriting they have accomplished"; their efforts, and those of Professor Hoch, who has acquired a reputation for guiding his students along the trail of revision, shined through clearly as 26 of Ramapo's creative writers read from original poetry and fiction. The sizable audience sat in the pavilion's gathering warmth and tranquil light, forgetful of the cold and damp outside and the ice melting off their boots, and listened to work that spanned a wide range of genre, form, and stylistic and emotional expression. Afterward, despite the chill of the day and the high-pressure atmosphere of a late-semester Monday afternoon and evening, students and faculty showed a willingness to linger and chat, to hold on to the moment. After the second reading, one student told me and others, with a look of happy surprise on his face, "I think this was actually really good." I think all in attendance were in agreement: it was a good day for reading and writing, for writers and readers, at Ramapo College.



Ryan Dykstra reads his work as part of the Capstone reading at the Salameno Spiritual Center. photo: Patricia Ard



American Studies Club Goes to D.C. for the American Studies Association Conference

By Andrew Guglielmo

From November 22-24, 2013, three members of the **American Studies Club** attended the American Studies Association Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. They included two senior American Studies majors, **Andrew Guglielmo** and **George Brudermann**, and one senior Political Science major, **Christopher Chapman**. The theme of the conference was "Beyond the Logic of Debt, Toward an Ethics of Collective Dissent." The students attended several panels on a variety of topics: Visual Culture, Hip-Hop Education, Humor Studies, and Video Game Culture and History. The three students representing Ramapo College were among some of the only undergraduate attendees. The students reported that being able to attend the conference was a great experience and that it allowed them to meet professionals in the field of American Studies. All of the students enjoyed learning about what is being written and talked about in the American Studies community today through the panels and the expansive selection of new books for sale at the conference. The students found that being able to travel to Washington, D.C. was a great experience in itself, as they were all to visit all of the National Monuments and a few museums that provided for an enjoyable and educational trip.

George Brudermann, Chris Chapman, and Andrew Guglielmo, students from the American Studies Club, visit the National WWII Memorial in Washington, D.C.