



SSHGS

PERSPECTIVES

The Newsletter of the Salameno School of Humanities and Global Studies

Letter from the Dean

By Stephen Rice



Dean Stephen Rice
Photo: Carolyn Herring

Ramapo College continues to be a vibrant and dynamic place to study and work, and once again there are exciting new developments to share from the Salameno School of Humanities and Global Studies. First, I am very happy to report that the Africana Studies program—which offers both a major and a minor—has moved from the School of Social Science and Human Services to SSHGS.

This is exciting because it broadens the school's offerings in global studies and in American history and culture, it helps us to more fully engage with some of the most pressing issues of our time, and it brings to SSHGS two faculty members whom we've known and worked closely with for years, Professors David Colman and Karl Johnson. We're thrilled to have them join us, and we look forward to helping the program grow and prosper.

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Teach-In Brings Ramapo Community Together to Learn About the Migration Crisis

On October 23, The Gross Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies and the School of Social Science and Human Service sponsored a teach-in, "The Human Dimension of the Migration Crisis." It was intended to help students, faculty and staff put a human face on the current wave of migration into Europe brought about by turmoil in the Middle East and Africa.

Moderator Michael A. Riff, director of the Gross Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, introduced the program by thanking the ad hoc coalition of students, faculty and staff called into being by Professors Scheckner and Keeton for their efforts to raise the consciousness of the campus about the migration issue. Professor Riff emphasized that, as the son of parents who were forced to flee their native Czechoslovakia after German forces overran the country on the eve of World War II, he very much identified with the migrants of today. Like them, all his parents wanted, back in 1939, was to find a place where they could live in safety and have the hope of a better life.

Behzad Yaghmaian, professor of Political Economy at Ramapo College, provided an overview of the migration issue that emphasized its global and multifaceted nature. While the main reason for migrants currently rushing to get into Europe was the turmoil in Syria and Iraq, economic dysfunction as well political implosion were dual motivators for people around the world to flee their homes in search of the basics of life somewhere else.

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Professor Behzad Yaghmaian (Economics) provides the audience with an overview of the Syrian refugee crisis.
Photo: Michael Riff

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SPRING 2016

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Letter from the Dean

by Stephen Rice

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We also now have with us in SSHGS one of the great and longstanding historical papers publication initiatives, the Jane Addams Papers Project (JAPP). Jane Addams was a leading social reformer and peace activist from the late nineteenth century through the first few decades of the twentieth century. Her letters, speeches, and other writings are being collected and published in a multi-volume series that for many years was affiliated with Duke University.

With a significant grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, the project moved to Ramapo in September under the direction of Dr. Cathy Hajo, a Ramapo graduate who has worked with many of our students over the years as the Associate Director of the Margaret Sanger

Papers Project at NYU. The JAPP at Ramapo is giving students real hands-on experience with all aspects of a document editing and publication project, which includes publication in digital form and the creation of an exciting new digital humanities project. The Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation is also supporting this project with a generous grant.

In my last note I discussed our new Archaeology Field School Preparation Program and our plan to send two students to work on archaeological digs over the summer of 2015. It is gratifying to report that the program has been a great success. Two of our History majors, Samantha Sproviero and Meg Szydlak, traveled to Virginia (Samantha, to the Archaeology Field School at James Madison's Montpelier) and North Carolina (Meg, to the William Peace University Archaeological Field School at Fort Caswell) to learn the techniques of archaeology, and to turn up and begin investigating historical

artifacts. After returning to campus Samantha and Meg gave informative public presentations on their experiences, and with continued funding we will be sending another student to a field school next summer.

Finally, I'd like to highlight the wonderful contributions of our Readings at Ramapo Visiting Writers series. This continues to be such an important part of the College's ongoing cultural programming, and a focal point for our Literature and Creative Writing programs. In September and October we had Jim Haba, Cate Marvin, David Means, and Dani Shapiro on campus. The semester ended with the poet Mark Doty—winner of the National Book Award for Poetry in 2008—reading to a packed room in the Pavilion.

We're all looking forward to a great spring semester, and once again, please stop by if you're on campus.

SSHGS NEWS & UPDATES

On November 18, Professor of Literature **Patricia Ard**, spoke on the topic of "Orphans in Fairy Tales and Literature" at the invitation of Dumbledore's Army, the student Harry Potter club. The event was titled "Bring Out the Light," and sought to bring attention to British author J. K. Rowling's Lumos charity, established to aid orphans and neglected children in developing countries. Lumos specifically seeks to provide aid to remove children from institutional settings and place them in family settings. Rowling's motto for Lumos is "Isn't it time we left orphanages to fairy tales?"

Professor Ard was joined by **Associate Professor Nicholas Salter**, who presented, along with students, on the issue of LGBT young adults who are displaced from their families due to prejudice.



Todd Barnes
Photo: Carolyn Herring

in *Julius Caesar*." The essay will be published in 2016 in a collection of essays on Shakespeare's *Julius*

Caesar titled *Julius Caesar: A Critical Reader*, edited by A.J. Hartley as part of the Arden Shakespeare Early Modern Drama Guides series. By examining Plutarch's *Lives* and Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, the essay traces how three technologies—monetary, political, and dramatic—emerged from the ancient world, were radically redefined during the early modern period, and again underwent change in the twentieth century.

On June 26, **Barnes** also presented his essay, "The White Christian Shakespeare Complex," on a panel at the London Conference in Critical Thought at University College, London. His presentation traced the rise of "the neoliberal arts" as curated and fostered by for-profit EMOs, Educational Management Organizations. These EMOs and their authors explicitly claim their mission to spread what they call "the new paternalism" and prepare working-class youth of color for the service and care industries. While his project specifically focused on the neoliberal performing arts curriculum and the for-profit privatization of public secondary education (through charter schools), its conclusions touched directly on the future of postsecondary arts and humanities

education. Vice-Provost **Eric Daffron** also presented at the conference and helped organize the panel, which focused on "Theorizing the Classroom."



Lisa Cassidy
Photo: Carolyn Herring

Cyborgs" in *The Ultimate Star Trek and Philosophy*, edited by Kevin Decker and Jason Eberl, Blackwell Press (forthcoming April 2016) as part of the SSHGS Colloquium Series on November 11 from 2-3 in A221.

In other philosophy news, Liberal Studies student **Sean Dabney**, who is studying philosophy and gerontology, is doing research on Nietzsche's beliefs on shame to assist Associate Professor Cassidy's upcoming publication on the topic. **Thomas Harden**, former student in Bioethics class, was selected to present a poster at the 2015 COPLAC conference, which Ramapo hosted in October. His paper was titled "The Immorality of Wrongful Life Litigation."

Neriko Doerr's article (Do "Global Citizens" Need the Parochial Cultural Other?: Discourses of Study Abroad and Learning by Doing. *Compare* 43(2): 224-243) became the "Most Read Article throughout 2014" of the journal, *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*. **Doerr** was the keynote speaker at the NAFSA Association for International Educators Strategic Retreat for Education Abroad Leaders (July 16-17) in Washington, D.C. Her article "Volunteering as Othering: Understanding A Paradox of Social Distance, Obligation, and Reciprocity," appeared in the *Partnerships: A Journal of Service-Learning and Civic Engagement* 6(2): 36-57. She presented a paper, "Eat, Talk, Love: Post-Global Subjects and Regimes of Mobility," with a former student, Richard Suarez (he presents in absentia), at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Denver, Colorado, on November 19, where **Doerr** also acted as a discussant in a different session called "The National as Global, the Global as National: Citizenship Education in the Context of Migration and Globalization."

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Carolee Klimchuck, Susan Hangen, Rebecca Root, John Gronbeck-Tedesco, Todd Barnes, Steve Rice, and Stacie Taranto celebrate the publication of Professor Gronbeck-Tedesco's book.

Photo: Stacie Taranto

In November, several SSHGS colleagues and Dean **Steve Rice** joined Associate Professor of American Studies **John Gronbeck-Tedesco** to celebrate the recent release of his first book, *Cuba, the United States, and Cultures of the Transnational Left, 1930-1975*, at a launch party in Manhattan. The book is out now from Cambridge University Press and examines how Cuba's revolutions of 1933 and 1959 became, as its back cover states, "touchstones for border-crossing endeavors of radical politics and cultural experimentation over the mid-twentieth century." SSHGS applauds John in this impressive interdisciplinary effort and looks forward to reading the book.

Associate Professor of Spanish **Natalia Santamaría-Laorden's** article "A Regenerative Decadence or a Decadent Regeneration: Challenges to Darwinian Determinism by French, Spanish and Latin American Writers in the Fin de Siècle," represented Spanish literature in the collective volume *Decadence, Degeneration and the End: Studies in the*

European Fin de Siècle (Palgrave MacMillan: New York, 2014). Her translation of Judith A. Carney's article, a follow-up to the author's work, *The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas*, was published by *Asclepio*, the journal of the Spanish National Research Council,

titled: "El Origen Africano del cultivo del arroz en las Américas." *Asclepio* 67-1. (2015) <http://dx.doi.org/10.3989/asclepio.2015.03>. During her sabbatical, Associate Professor **Laorden** had the opportunity to finish her book proposal and submitted it to the founding editor of the publishing house *Iberoamericana*, who accepted it. The tentative title of the book is "Visiones transatlánticas regeneracionistas: Posibilidades y (des)encuentros discursivos en la España finisecular en torno a lengua, agencia e imperio." It challenges the Castilian-centric view that has been imposed on Spanish literary historiography from the turn of the century.



Iraida López (University Press of Florida) was released in September 2015. She presented several papers derived from the book at

Professor of Spanish **Iraida H. López's** new book, *Impossible Returns: Narratives of the Cuban Diaspora*

various venues: at a congress of the Association of German Hispanists in Mannheim this past August; at a tribute to Ana Mendieta sponsored by the Latin American Roundtable in New York in September; and at a colloquium in Havana's Casa de las Américas in October, where she also presented her book.

In student news, **Sarah Dowman** (double major in Spanish and Communications Arts) presented a paper at the Latin American Studies Association congress in San Juan, Puerto Rico, this past May. The title of her presentation was "Punk Ass Queers: Sounds of the Underground in the Works of Martín Sorrondeguy." Sarah is pursuing her Ph.D. in Spanish at the University of Maryland after obtaining an M.A. in Spanish from Bowling Green State University.

Cuban writer and journalist **María Elena Llana** visited Ramapo on October 26 when she gave a talk in Spanish titled "Those that Neither Left nor Stayed Behind: Life in Revolutionary Cuba." Her talk illuminated areas of social action that have been neglected by binary approaches to the study of Cuban society since the 1960s. Llana also discussed her short stories with the students, which draw from the fantastic.

Professor of Literature **Yvette Kisor's** review of Deborah Higgins' *Anglo-Saxon Community in Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings* appears in *Mythlore* 34.1 (2015): 163-5. In addition, her book on *Beowulf* and *Lexomics* (computer-assisted analysis of patterns in

vocabulary distribution), co-authored with Professor Michael Drout, is under contract at Palgrave.



Susan Hangen
Photo: Carolyn Herring

Professor of Anthropology **Susan Hangen** and Professor of Communication Arts from CA, **Ruma Sen**, wrote an article titled "Negotiating Time and Space on a Study Abroad Program in South India," based on ethnographic research they conducted on the India semester program. The article will appear in the *Journal of Cultural Geography* in 2016.

Professor of Political Science **Jeremy Teigen** was selected to be part of U.S. Senator Cory Booker's selection committee this year that evaluates applicants seeking nomination to United States service academies. These include the United States Military Academy at West Point, the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, and the United States Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs.

In October, **Priscilla Tovey** and **Ramon Reyes**, both with the Reading and Writing Center, presented at a workshop at the International Writing Center Association National Conference (IWCA) in Pittsburgh. IWCA is the largest professional organization for writing center professionals. The workshop was titled *How Writing Center Pedagogy Transforms Developmental Writing and First-Year Writing Courses*.



Professor Sam Mustafa Receives Henry Bischoff Award for Excellence in Teaching

by James Hoch and Hugh Sheehy

Sam Mustafa discusses his teaching at the Bischoff Teaching Awards Ceremony.

Photo: Gordon Bear

Recipients are selected by a committee of former award winners from the faculty through the Office of the Provost. Past recipients include James

On October 14, Professor of History, **Sam Mustafa**, received the Henry Bischoff Award for Excellence in Teaching. Mustafa, who has taught at Ramapo for fourteen years, is the seventh currently serving faculty member from the Salameno School of Humanities and Global Studies to receive this honor. The Bischoff Excellence in Teaching Award is given annually to Ramapo College professors who have 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.

Hoch and Jeremy Teigen (2013), Paula D. Straille-Costa (2010), Carter Jones Meyer (2009), Ira Spar (2002), and Anthony Padovano (2000).

Mustafa is a military historian by vocation and teaches courses in military history, but the breadth of his intellectual interests have allowed him to teach a wide of courses at the College, including Politics of Europe, German History, and Age of Napoleon, in addition to providing undergraduates with instruction in the German language. At the ceremony, Professors Hoch and Teigen remarked on Mustafa's compelling application, one marked by thorough engagement. His presentation focused on the ways we begin to consider and determine the necessity for military action. It was a wonderful discussion and, at the end, it was clear why Professor Mustafa's years at the College have been so meritorious.



Khalil Gibran Muhammad
Photo: NYPL

Visiting Scholar Frames Social Conflict in Historical Context

by David Colman

On October 21, Schomburg Visiting Scholar, Dr. Khalil Gibran Muhammad spent the day with Ramapo students, faculty and staff. Dr. Muhammad is the Director of the Harlem based Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. The Schomburg Center is the world's leading research center for the study of people of African descent.

Dr. Muhammad, a prominent historian and great grandson of Nation of Islam founder, Elijah Muhammad, has emerged as a leading scholar of race and crime in the United States. Dr. Muhammad is also one of the country's leading public intellectuals commenting on race and crime, police misconduct and #BlackLivesMatter protests. He has appeared widely on various media outlets, including NPR, Pacifica, Radio One, C-Span, PBS and as a regular guest on MSNBC's Melissa Harris Perry's show. His work also appears in print media including the *New Yorker*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Guardian*, and *The Nation*.

Dr. Muhammad had a full and exciting day at Ramapo. In the morning, he addressed Associate Professor of African American Studies Karl Johnson's Social Issues class and spoke to students about the Schomburg Center's history and internship

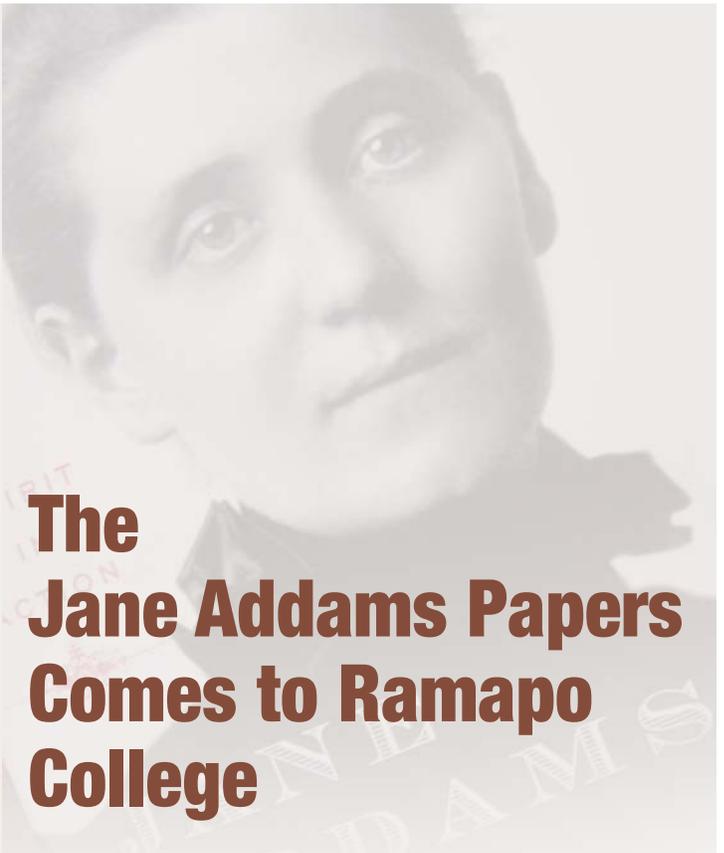
opportunities. At a luncheon with faculty, staff and students, he engaged in a lively exchange about contemporary events, history, and his own scholarship. The luncheon also provided Dr. Muhammad an opportunity to learn about the Africana Studies Program, which recently moved from the School of Social Science and Human Services to the Salameo School for Humanities and Global Studies. Dr. Muhammad learned about the exciting pedagogical innovations and scholarship being produced by the program's faculty, including research on the relationship between race and policing, race and gentrification, the Drug War, and the African presence in Latin America.

In the afternoon, Dr. Muhammad presented a dynamic talk to the Ramapo campus community titled, "Everything Black Scholars Wanted Us to Know about Criminal Justice, but We Were Unwilling to Listen." His talk framed the contemporary controversies around police shootings of unarmed civilians in the larger historical context of race and crime in America. Dr. Muhammad's first book, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America*, addresses this historical context. The book, which won the American Studies Association's John Hope Franklin Prize, examines the growing popular and social scientific association between African Americans and criminality in the late 19th and early 20th century. The emergence of the notion of "black criminality" created a consensus among northern and southern and liberal and conservative whites about the natural "inferiority" of African Americans and helped justify the country's turn toward Jim Crow.





Jane Addams, 1914
Photo: Library of Congress



The Jane Addams Papers Comes to Ramapo College

Assistant Professor of History, Cathy Moran Hajo '86, has brought the Jane Addams Papers Project, one of the first scholarly editing projects to focus on the accomplishments of women, to SSHGS. Hajo, formerly an associate editor at the Margaret Sanger Papers, heads the research project which is designed to produce a web-based digital edition of Jane Addams' correspondence and writings, covering the years 1901-1935, and complete the remaining three volumes of the *Selected Papers of Jane Addams* (University of Illinois Press).

Jane Addams (1860-1935) is a fascinating Progressive Era figure, renowned during her lifetime as a central figure in 19th and 20th century American political and social history. Best known for co-founding Chicago's Hull-House social settlement in 1889, Addams' eloquent arguments for social reform made her one of the most influential women in America and a leader in the Progressive movement. By 1901, Jane Addams was building a national reputation as a speaker on welfare and social work. In the second half of her life, she became an internationally known figure who led fights for child labor reform, woman suffrage, and peace, heading organizations like the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and presiding over the first six International Congresses of Women. Addams' views on peace and her opposition to the United States entry into World War I were unpopular during the war, but by 1931, public sentiment

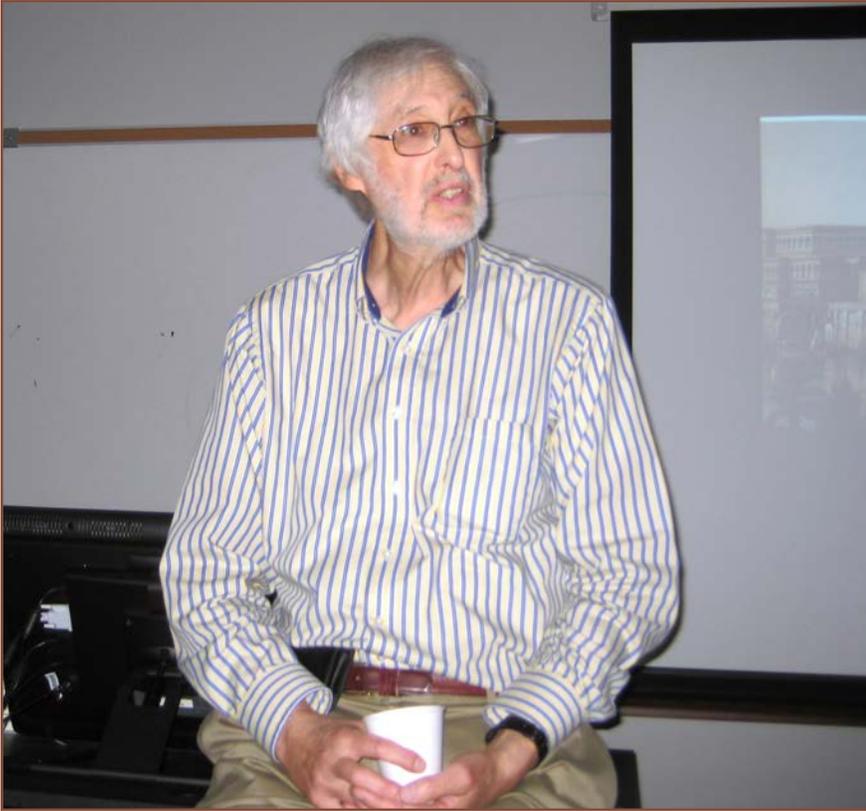


Cathy Hajo '86
Photo: Carolyn Herring

turned and she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931, the first American woman so honored. At her death in 1935, the *New York Times* hailed her as "the world's best-known and best-loved woman." (May 22, 1935).

The Addams Papers goal of providing digital access to these documents will serve scholars, teachers, and students, enabling text searches, in-depth subject searches, and references to names, organizations, events and places in both

Addams' correspondence and her writings. At Ramapo, the project will also serve as a hands-on lab for students, providing jobs, internships, and volunteer opportunities that enable students to work with primary source materials, digital technologies, and gain experience conducting research. Students are digitizing documents, transcribing the difficult-to-read 19th and 20th century handwriting, identifying and researching the people, organizations, events and places discussed and will be writing about the history and their experiences on the project's blog (janeaddams.ramapo.edu). The Jane Addams Papers Project is funded in part by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (National Archives) and by Ramapo College of New Jersey.



Ira Spar
Photo: Niza Fabre

In November, **Lisa Cassidy**, Associate Professor of Philosophy, presented on her recent article, “Resistance is Futile: Star Trek, Cyborgs, and Feminist Values,” which will soon be published in *The Ultimate Star Trek and Philosophy Book* (part of Blackwell’s *Philosophy and Popular Culture Series*). In her article, Cassidy cleverly blends philosophical and gender theories with analysis of the Star Trek franchise.

In December, **Natalia Santamaria-Laorden**, Associate Professor of Spanish, gave a talk, titled “Transatlantic Visions of the Spanish fin-de-siècle Regeneration Movement.” She discussed the book proposal that she worked on last spring during her sabbatical while she was a scholar-in-residence at New York University. The proposal was recently accepted for publication by Iberoamericana, the most prestigious publishing house for academics in Spanish humanities. These events were well attended, and the series plans to put together a similar program in the spring.



Natalia Santamaria-Laorden
Photo: Niza Fabre

Fall 2015 SSHGS Colloquium Series Showcases the Work of Several Scholars

by **Stacie Taranto**

In the fall of 2015, the SSHGS Colloquium Series, coordinated by **Stacie Taranto**, Associate Professor of History at Ramapo, helped highlight the diverse scholarship of our colleagues.

In September, **Ira Spar**, Professor of History and Ancient Studies, discussed his decades-long research and writing, in a talk titled “Discovering the Past: Cuneiform Texts in The Metropolitan Museum of Art.”

Political Science Student Organizes Forum

by Jeremy Teigen

Political Science major **David Ermann**, who is also president of the political science honor association Pi Sigma Alpha, organized a candidate forum two weeks prior to the general election on October 21. Four candidates running for election or reelection visited campus, shared their platforms, and answered questions from Ramapo students. More than fifty attended, and Pi Sigma Alpha hopes to facilitate a similar event in two years for the next cycle.



(L-R): Christine Ordway (D), challenge-seeking N.J. Assembly district 40, RCNJ student David Ermann (President of Pi Sigma Alpha, political science honors group), and Assemblywoman Holly Schapisi (R), incumbent in District 39.

Photo: Carolyn Herring



Michael Sheehan '14, center, with members of the History Club.

Photo: Stacie Taranto

History Club Has Another Busy Semester

by Stacie Taranto

In the fall of 2015, the History Club—led by student officers Joanna Sadej, Francesca Simone, Nicole Picinich, and Ben Olex, and advised by Associate Professor of History **Stacie Taranto**—had another full semester of events. In September, the club invited Dr. Neil J. Young, a historian and author of *We Gather Together: The Religious Right and the Problem of Interfaith Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2015), to campus to discuss his new book. Young, who taught undergraduate writing courses at Princeton University for five years, also spoke about the historical writing and research process, imparting valuable advice for students to apply toward research and senior seminar papers. In October, the club hosted Arthur Kesselhavy, a veteran of the Korean War. Kesselhavy gave an interesting talk greatly enhanced by photographs and other memorabilia that he shared from his military days. In November, the club held its annual advisement event during the registration period, with faculty and students in attendance to discuss the requirements of the history major and minor. In December, the club welcomed Ramapo alumnus and former history major, Michael J.F. Sheehan '14, back to campus to discuss how to use a history degree after college. Sheehan talked at length about his own full-time work at the nearby historic Stony Point Civil War battlesite. The club is excited to put together another full program in the spring—stay tuned!

A Full Dance Card: Readings at Ramapo, Fall 2015

by Hugh Sheehy

Full 2015 was an excellent semester for Readings at Ramapo. Visiting authors in our series included the fiction writer David Means and the poets Cate Marvin and Mark Doty. It is difficult not to overstate the good fortune we had in being able to bring such wonderful artists to campus. Such a series would not be possible without the



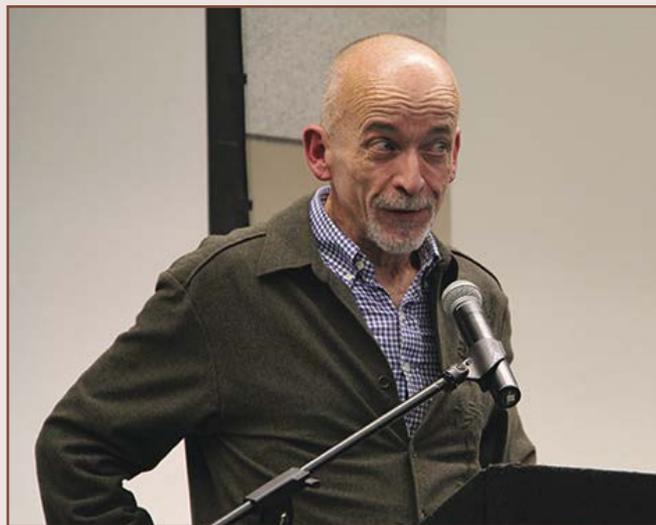
David Means discusses his fiction in the Spiritual Center.

Photo: Jeff Chimenti

support of Dean Rice and Provost Barnett. Means, a frequent contributor to *Harper's*, whose fiction has also appeared in *The New Yorker* and *The Best American Short Stories* anthologies, is the author of three highly acclaimed short story collections and has a novel coming out this spring. Marvin is a very well-regarded poet with several collections to her name. She is also a founding member of VIDA, a literary organization that has been instrumental in recent years in promoting literature authored by women. Doty is widely considered one of the leading living American poets, has written a number of books (both poetry and memoir), and has won, among many other awards, the National Book Award in Poetry. All three authors work and teach creative writing in the greater New York City area. While on campus, they visited with students at speaking events and receptions as well as giving readings, and many of our creative writers were able to ask them questions about the trajectories of their careers, their writing processes, and the politics of writing.



Cate Marvin
Photo: Cate Marvin



Mark Doty takes questions from the audience in the Trustees Pavilion.
Photo: Giancarlo Sepulveda

Two other noteworthy literary events included a joint reading by the poet Cheryl Boyce-Taylor and the painter and poet Jim Haba, who performed in the Kresge Gallery on campus, and a visit from celebrated novelist and memoirist Dani Shapiro, in the Trustees Pavilion. Boyce-Taylor and Haba gave a collaborative reading, with Boyce reading from her poetry while Haba accompanied with a selection from TS Eliot's "Four Quartets." Shapiro, whose appearance was largely made possible by the Krame Center for Contemplative Studies and Mindful Living, gave a reading and led a writing workshop focused on the place of contemplation in writing.

It also was a great semester for student readings. In late October, student fiction writer Brian Rocha read alongside poets Becca Galarza and Misha Choudhry in the Salameo Spiritual Center.

At the end of the semester, my Creative Writing Capstone students and James Hoch's Poetry Workshop students gave separate readings in celebration of their hard work and accomplishments. These events are especially sweet for faculty and students—some of whom are, each year, inevitably, soon to graduate—and they were as packed with interested students as the readings given by the visiting professional authors—which is to say, standing room only.

Gumpert Teachers' Workshop: Genocide, Crimes Against Humanity and Mass Atrocity: Definitions, Politics and the Quest for Justice

by Michael Riff

On November 18, The Gross Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies in cooperation with, and funding from the New Jersey State Commission on Holocaust Education sponsored a Gumpert Teachers' Workshop, "Genocide, Crimes Against Humanity and Mass Atrocity: Definitions, Politics and the Quest for Justice." Held at the College, it was attended by 60 educators from all over New Jersey.

As noted in Center Director Michael Riff's welcoming remarks, the workshop was intended to help teachers comprehend the evolving nomenclature and legal concepts surrounding genocide, to become better able to edify their students.

Speaking on behalf of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education, Associate Director Dr. Joan Rivitz took the matter further by indicating how discussing the experiences of children and teenagers in the Holocaust could help educators to confront issues beyond genocide, including bullying and human rights with their students.



Dr. Joan Rivitz
Photo: Michael Riff

Author and scholar Mark Lewis, associate professor of History at the City University of New York's College of Staten Island in his keynote lecture took participants on a journey, beginning with the establishment of the International Court of Justice in the Hague. He concluded with recent work of the International Criminal Court that also has its seat in the same Dutch city that was called into being by the Rome Statute of 1998. Lewis was at pains to point out how far the international legal community has come in moving away from the once-inviolable principle of national sovereignty.

Earlier in the semester, Professor Lewis visited Ramapo College to speak about his recently published and award-winning Oxford University Press study, *The Birth of the New Justice: The Internationalization of Crime and Punishment, 1919-1950*. In that work, he showed that the actions of European jurists were variously motivated.



Mark Lewis
Photo: Michael Riff

Along with legal organizations not merely interested in ensuring that the guilty were punished or that international peace was assured, they also hoped to instill particular moral values, represent the interests of certain social groups, and even pursue national agendas.

Using an interactive presentation, Colleen Tambuscio, a Social Studies and Special Education teacher at New Milford High School and a member of the Gross Center Advisory Board, showed how the development of the issues discussed by Lewis could be brought home for students. For example, she showed how an abridged version of the recently released feature documentary, *Watchers of the Sky*, that depicts how five remarkable people, starting with Raphael Lemkin who coined the word "genocide," essentially wrote and lobbied for the 1948 U.N. Convention Genocide, and have devoted their lives to trying to punish the crimes listed in the latter so as to prevent them from occurring in the future. Among other materials, Tambuscio recommended to teachers for classroom use was the resource pack of the *Exploring Humanitarian Law* curriculum available online, prepared by the International Committee of the Red Cross in association with the Education Development Center, Inc. Workshop participants, grouped by table, themselves contributed to the presentation enormously in response to a list of essential questions from which they were asked to derive objectives, activities, and assessment criteria.



Colleen Tambuscio
Photo: Michael Riff

Culminating the program was a talk by Gross Center Advisory Board chair Peter Safirstein, the managing partner of Morgan & Morgan's New York-based Securities and Antitrust Practice Group, on "the Application of U.S. Tort Law to International Human Rights." He outlined how, until the Supreme Court's 9-0 ruling of April 2013 in *Kiobel v. Royal Dutch Petroleum*, foreigners could bring suits in U.S. courts against other foreigners and corporations for human rights violations in foreign countries under the U.S. Alien Tort of 1789.

In particular, Safirstein referenced a 1996 case against Pfizer Pharmaceutical brought by a group of parents from Kano, Nigeria for giving their children reduced doses of the legacy antibiotic in order to skew a drug trial during a meningitis outbreak for a new antibiotic it had developed. Five children who were given that drug died, as did six of those given the legacy antibiotic. Moreover, the families alleged that they had not given their consent for the trial.

Pfizer subsequently settled the case out of court with a \$75 million settlement that was subject to a confidentiality clause after, in January 2009, the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit ruled that the Nigerian victims and their families were entitled to bring suit against Pfizer in the United States under the Alien Tort Statute. The nub of the case was that the families of the children in the trial were not told that they were part of a trial and that Doctors Without Borders (*Médecins Sans Frontières*) was offering the standard treatment in another part of the same building.

While Safirstein saw little immediate hope of changing the Supreme Court's *Kiobel* decision, he did see some hope in using other, more specific statutes, to redress wrongs committed against U.S. nationals overseas. He cited the case of Frank

Pescatore, a U.S. mining engineer, who had been kidnapped and killed in Colombia by the FARC guerrilla group. In 2010, his family brought a suit, under the Alien Tort Statute and other laws against Chiquita Brands International Inc., because it "knowingly provided currency or monetary instruments, weapons (including arms and ammunition), and other forms of material support and resources and transport of munitions, to the FARC, a foreign terrorist organization that has killed, maimed, injured, kidnapped and held hostage thousands of civilians, including many U.S. citizens." The case is still being adjudicated with Chiquita having, so far, made no attempt to settle.

Another suit mentioned by Safirstein was one brought under the U.S. Anti-Terrorism Act that permits U.S. citizens to pursue claims arising from international terrorism. The plaintiffs in that case accused Arab Bank, PLC, of facilitating militant attacks in Israel by Hamas and other groups by knowingly acting as a conduit of funds to the families of suicide bombers and perpetrators injured in terrorist attacks in Israel in the post-2000 Intifada. Just last year, after the jury in the trial found for the plaintiffs, Arab Bank decided to settle the case for terms that were not disclosed.



Peter Safirstein
Photo: Michael Riff

As has been the case for some time, evaluations completed by participants revealed the workshop to have been enormously successful. They found all the presentations to have expanded their knowledge and felt that the information and techniques imparted would be of benefit in the classroom. Quite a number of the teachers in attendance indicated that they are eagerly awaiting the announcement of our spring workshop.



Louis Di Paolo '14
Photo: Jeremy Teigen

Louis Di Paolo (B.A. '14) Nabs Seat on Town Council in Bergen County

by Stephanie Flores '16

On May 16, 2014, Louis Di Paolo sat in the IZOD Center for Ramapo College of New Jersey commencement, listening to Senator Cory Booker as keynote speaker. What the then-newly

graduated political science major did not realize was that in a year, he would be compared to Senator Booker in many ways. After graduation from Ramapo College, like any other college graduate, Di Paolo started to look into jumping into the world that his major prepared him for. Throughout college he was known for working on electoral campaigns and working behind the scenes of Bergen County politics. Going along with his experiences, he started to work as a legislative aide of State Senator Bob Gordon. However, when Di Paolo decided that the only way to change the problems in his hometown Dumont was do it himself, he decided that it was time for him to step out of the background and run for Town Council. On November 3, 2015, Louis Di Paolo, 23 years old, became one the of youngest candidates to run a successful campaign in

Bergen County. When asked about how Ramapo College helped him in his journey in becoming so successful, he said, "I owe a lot of my success to my tenure at Ramapo College. Through the Division of Student Affairs I was afforded the opportunity to head different student organizations and work towards causes I was passionate about. My involvement in the College Democrats and NORML allowed me to hone my leadership skills as I had to work through the many challenges involved in running an organization. Through these experiences, I learned a great deal about myself, and that an extraordinary effort is necessary if you want extraordinary results. This philosophy guided my campaign for Dumont Council, as I tirelessly pounded the pavement to share my vision to move Dumont forward." Today, Di Paolo is still very much involved in helping some of his former fellow student leaders and is an alumnus that many can look up to for both inspiration and guidance. While he is one of the youngest candidates to run a successful campaign and people are looking to him to run for higher office, Louis Di Paolo says he ran for town council to fix the problems in Dumont and he is "taking it one day at a time."

The Literature Club and Banned Books Week

by Patricia Ard

The American Library Association designated September 27 through October 3 as Banned Books Week in which the Association "promoted awareness of challenges to library materials and celebrated freedom of speech." The ALA seeks to foster the freedom to choose both what one wishes to write and to read.

Ramapo College's Literature Club participated in an awareness-raising activity during Banned Books Week.

Club members placed posters around the College on freedom of expression as well as listing particular banned books and the reasons they were challenged or banned.

The poster shown was one of many displayed across campus. Students were encouraged to participate in the discussion by writing responses directly on the posters.



Photo: Nicole Williams

Teach-In Brings Ramapo Community Together to Learn About the Migration Crisis

(continued from cover)

With that background in mind, Yaghmaian proposed new international arrangements with regard to migration. They would transcend the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees that only provides protection to persons "...who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it." Because dismantling the current convention could lead to the limitation rather than expansion of the criteria for protection, Yaghmaian proposed a parallel convention that would extend protection to persons fleeing states in crisis, but would not endanger the protections afforded by the 1951 convention.

working as a volunteer with refugees on the Greek Island of Lesbos. Watson, who spoke first, emphasized the desperation of the migrants he encountered in refugee camps in Greece and Turkey. Echoing an observation of Yaghmaian, he reiterated that all the young men and families he encountered were the least likely imaginable recruits for ISIS. Most were educated, relatively well-off and desperately in search of safety and a better life. Rather than sympathizing with Islamic extremism, they were escaping it. From his vantage point in Hong Kong, he also pointed to the lesser-known migrant crisis in the Pacific involving the Rohingya Muslim minority of Myanmar, who have fled to Thailand and even as far away as the islands off the mainland of Australia.

Timothy Jay Smith, who has a second home on Lesbos and pitched in on an impromptu basis to help migrants coming ashore on the island, was able to convey how ill-prepared the authorities were to confront a situation, the scale of which nobody had seemingly been able to predict. For example, he described how red tape and lack of preparation prevented the installation of toilets that he donated to alleviate the lack of sanitation at the camp closest to his home. According to Smith, arranging transportation for migrants to the ferry terminal across the island from where they would be transported to the Greek

mainland proved to be a bureaucratic and logistical nightmare. Greek and U.N. officials were, in his view, overwhelmed by and under-resourced for the sheer amount of people who suddenly came ashore on Lesbos and other Greek islands. The



Milagros Cruz
Photo: Michael Riff

situation, according to Smith, was compounded by the arduousness of the migrants' journeys that often resulted in sickness and the loss of family members.

Milagros Cruz, Regional Coordinator of the International Rescue Committee's (IRC) New York regional office, concluded the presentations by providing a window into the resettlement efforts of her organization. In so doing, she provided insight into the exhaustive vetting process that migrants from Syria and Iraq undergo before they reach U.S. soil. Cruz emphasized that the most rewarding part of her work is seeing the success that most refugees experience in the U.S.

In a Q&A session immediately following the presentation, students posed questions on subjects ranging from the daily life of refugees on Lesbos and the vulnerability of women along migration routes to the likelihood of Islamophobia and religious fundamentalism influencing migration policy. In response, Yaghmaian recounted how female migrants traveling alone and aid workers often report incidences of sexual abuse, while Smith continued to emphasize how over-taxed the authorities and volunteers are by the sheer volume of migrants landing on Lesbos. He was, moreover, seriously concerned about the inherent dangers of more turbulent seas and colder temperatures as winter draws closer. Discussion among students and faculty continued beyond the end of the teach-in. Motivated by her passionate remarks, a bevy of students gathered around Milagros Cruz to inquire about internship opportunities at the IRC.



Journalist Ivan Watson and author Timothy Jay Smith discuss their experiences with the migration, inside and outside of Syria.
Photo: Michael Riff

Joining the conversation by Skype were Ivan Watson, CNN's senior international correspondent, who has documented the surge of refugees and reported on ISIS, and Timothy Jay Smith, a France-based American author who has been tirelessly