



# SHGS

## PERSPECTIVES

The Newsletter of the School of Humanities and Global Studies



**Dean Susan Hangen**  
Photo Credit: Carolyn Herring

### Letter from the Dean

by Susan Hangen

Looking back on the past academic year, I am once again impressed by the achievements of our faculty and students, all the more remarkable because of the difficulties we've encountered. The sudden arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic to our part of the world in March 2020 presented a host of challenges during the Spring semester. Our faculty worked to quickly convert their classes to a virtual format and provided students with the best possible learning experience in these circumstances. Many of the significant scholarly accomplishments of our faculty are listed later in this newsletter.

While Spring is a time in which we celebrate the achievements of our continuing and graduating students, we were sadly unable to hold our usual ceremonies due to COVID-19. We hope that we can find meaningful ways

to conduct these events virtually next year, if necessary. I would like to congratulate the HGS students who received Academic Achievement awards this year, and regret that we were unable to hand them their certificates of achievement in person. The students are:

- Caecilia Altenburg** – Ramapo Book Prize
- Katie Barrales-Cortes** – Faculty-Student Research
- Steven Buckenberger** – Spanish Language Studies
- Selina Coban** – American Studies
- Caleb Herbst** – Political Science
- Charlie Leppert** – English & Literary Studies
- Leah Lindstrom** – History
- Gabriela Ulloa** – International Studies
- Zurine Cadena-Jimenez** – Lee Sennish Award

Some of the highlights of the past year include the alumni engagement events we sponsored. In October 2019, Gabriella Borovsky '10 delivered a presentation on campus on "Working for Gender Equality Across the Globe," about her work as a Political Participation Policy Specialist at UN Women. She majored in Political Science at Ramapo College and held an internship during college at the National Democratic Institute. This parlayed into a full-time job for her, and eventually she earned an M.Sc. in Development Studies from the London School of Economics. Gabriella talked about how her faculty mentors at Ramapo made a positive difference in her education and later career.

Our annual Alumni Student Networking Roundtable was held on February 20 and was more successful than ever. Forty-three students had the opportunity to meet with twelve alumni who graduated from various majors in our school. These alumni are employed in fields such as law, public policy, digital marketing, publishing,

*(continues on page 2)*

SHGS Perspectives	Spring 2020
<b>In this Issue</b>	
Letter from the Dean.....	1
AHTP .....	3
Gross Center Meets Challenges.....	4
DIVERSITY in Health Care Conference.....	5
Faculty News.....	6
Student Engagement News.....	9
African Studies Major and Minor .....	10
Black Lives Matter at Ramapo College .....	11

## Letter from the Dean

(continued from cover)

communications, and museums, and spoke with students about navigating the transition from college to the work world. The achievements of these alumni illustrate the value of our academic programs in successfully preparing students for careers in many fields.

Our initiative to incorporate Digital Humanities into the curriculum in HGS moved forward this year. The

goal of the initiative is to integrate digital humanities (DH) in the curriculum, so that more students obtain highly-sought digital skills and digital literacy. We received external grants from two foundations, Bringing Theory to Practice and Booth Ferris, awarded jointly with Seton Hall, to support monthly workshops for faculty. Cathy Hajo, Director of the Jane Addams Papers Project, and Sarah Koenig, Assistant Professor of History, played a key role in orchestrating these grant-funded activities.

Funding supported training and workshops for eleven Ramapo faculty members, who subsequently incorporated DH assignments in their courses. Assignments included a digital map of hip hop around the world, videos promoting literary genres, a "correspondence network" of President James Polk, an oral history of a local native American tribe and other digital projects (details on the projects: <http://dh-wordpress.ramapo.edu/current-projects/>). The training has inspired faculty to begin thinking more creatively about how to use digital technology. For example, faculty quickly created a digital archive related to the coronavirus, the [Human Side of a Pandemic](#), in which students uploaded oral history interviews and reflections. We also started a Digital Humanities Committee, chaired by Sarah Koenig, Assistant Professor of History, to chart our plans for further establishing Digital Humanities as a central part of our curriculum in HGS. By 2022, we aim to ensure that students in all humanities majors take courses that include DH assignments, so that all students graduate with transferable skills that will enhance the versatility of humanities majors as they begin their careers.



**Fulbright Day September 18, 2019; left to right: Sarra Safhi, Roberta Berlingo and Yolanda Hsieh**

HGS was lucky to be awarded three Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants (FLTAs) this past year. We hosted Sarra Safhi from Morocco who taught Arabic, Yu-chien (aka Yolanda) Hsieh from Taiwan, who taught Chinese, and Roberta Berlingo from Italy, who taught Italian. In addition to delivering language courses and tutoring students in the language lab, Sarra, Yolanda and

Roberta enriched our community by making presentations in classes and on diversity day events, and by hosting many fun cultural events such as game nights and a presentation on holidays in their home countries. We are grateful to have had the opportunity to learn from them and for all of their contributions to Ramapo over the year. Thanks to Rosetta D'Angelo for her tireless work to ensure that the three FLTAs were comfortable on our campus, familiar with

our curriculum and had the opportunity to experience cultural events.

HGS is committed to supporting the goals of the Black Lives Matter movement and to providing students opportunities to learn more about the roots of systemic racism in our society and about efforts to end this form of injustice. In addition to maintaining the courses offered through our Africana Studies major and minor, we have hired a new tenure-track faculty member in the field of African American Literature. In September 2020, Indya Jackson will join the English and Literary Studies convening group as Assistant Professor in African American Literature. Jackson received her Ph.D. in May 2020 from Ohio State University. We are excited about the new energy that she will contribute to the English and Literary Studies and Africana Studies programs.

Now more than ever, it is evident that the humanities are relevant to understanding and solving major social crises. The School of Humanities and Global Studies has a key role to play in ensuring that our students are prepared to contribute to creating greater equality in our society. I look forward to returning to campus as soon as it is safe to do so and to working with faculty and students in person again.

# American History Textbook Project (AHTP)

by Professor Stephen Rice



**Prof. Stephen Rice**

Ramapo College's American History Textbook Project (AHTP) reached a milestone in fall 2019 as it marked its 10-year anniversary. This collection of American history textbooks dating back to the 1820s is housed as a special collection in the Potter Library and now contains several hundred books. Textbooks such as *A School History of the United States* (1871), *Our United States: A History* (1919), and *The American Pageant: A History of the Republic* (1966) were used in classrooms around the country and together reveal how the story of American history as taught in schools has changed over time. Christina Connor, the project coordinator, works closely with faculty and students interested in using the collection. During the past year this included nearly a dozen classes and several hundred students, even with the campus's closure in March because of the pandemic. Teachers and researchers from off campus have also made use of the collection.

In addition, two students--with the support of Dean Susan Hangen and the Student/Faculty Research Fund--worked closely with the collection under the supervision of Stephen Rice, Professor of American Studies in HGS and one of the project's founders.

Danielle Deangelis, a journalism major from Glendora, N.J., served her second year as a collection researcher, focusing on establishing a social media presence for the project. In collaboration with the Office of Marketing and Communications she launched an AHTP Instagram account and began posting items from the collection. She also researched organizations with allied interests and worked to establish an AHTP profile in an Instagram network of libraries, museums, and professional societies. Please take a look at the account @textbookprojectrcnj and follow it if you'd like to keep up on the project's activities.

This coming year Danielle will be using the collection for her senior Honors thesis project, focusing in particular on the textbook illustrations. "I have been inspired by the beautiful artwork represented in multiple time periods of American history textbooks," she notes. "I will be analyzing the progression of art in textbooks, patterns in the imagery, and discussing noteworthy artists through multiple eras of our history."

Also working with the collection was Caecilia Altenburg, a junior from Middletown, N.J., majoring in American Studies with a minor in Museum and Exhibition Studies. As a researcher she worked to identify additional books to acquire for the collection. Guiding her work was an article published in the *New York Times* showing that American history textbooks are sometimes modified for use in a particular state, and that the changes can result in very different accounts of the nation's past.

Using this information, Caecilia turned to Worldcat--an online database of library holdings--and was able to identify dozens of state specific textbooks published over the last decade. She then looked on Abebooks, a consortium of online books dealers, and found that used copies of many of those books were available for purchase. Thanks to her work, the AHTP now includes state-specific textbooks for Florida, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, New Jersey, and other states. She also located older books to add to the collection, including *A Pictorial History of the United States* published in 1870. "In researching for the Textbook Project, for the first time in my life I feel like I'm conducting actual historic research," Caecilia reports. "This hands-on work is one of my favorite parts of attending Ramapo, and I'm very grateful to have the opportunity to work with the Project."

Access to the collection will continue through the fall even though campus activity will remain limited. The Potter Library is setting up a web guide with links to digitized textbooks available through the Internet Archive and will also be posting digitized excerpts--arranged by theme--from books in the collection. Christina Connor ([cconnor@ramapo.edu](mailto:cconnor@ramapo.edu)) will also offer remote library sessions on request.

When the campus fully reopens and the new library and learning commons is completed, the collection will have its own space on the second floor of the new building, with plenty of room for researchers and for expansion. Stephen Rice has big hopes for adding more books to the collection, pointing out that as content for students moves away from print toward being fully electronic, it will become more difficult to see the change over time in how history is taught. "Electronic textbooks will simply be changed, so that what was there before will no longer be available." If you have questions about the collection, or would like to use it or find ways to support it, please contact Stephen Rice at [srice@ramapo.edu](mailto:srice@ramapo.edu)

# Gross Center Meets Challenges



**Dr. Rachel Yehuda**

As with so much else in connection with the Covid-19 pandemic, the Gross Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies had to reconfigure its programming for spring 2020 for virtual delivery. The only exception was Professor **Rachel Yehuda's** lecture, "The Intergenerational Effects of Trauma," that she delivered in person on March 5, a week before Spring Break and Ramapo College's conversion to remote learning. As the title of her talk indicates, Yehuda explored the groundbreaking study of how the trauma of parents can be passed on in some way to their offspring. Her fascinating lecture opened a window into the work that she and other researchers are doing on risk and resilience factors, psychological and biological predictors of treatment response in PTSD, genetic and epigenetic studies of PTSD and the intergenerational transmission of trauma and PTSD. The most important takeaway of her talk was that the transmission of trauma occurs in an exceedingly nuanced way in which predetermined pathways cannot be always discerned.

Dr. Yehuda is Professor of Psychiatry and Neuroscience and the Director of the Traumatic Stress Studies Division at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine which includes the PTSD clinical research program and the Neurochemistry and Neuroendocrinology laboratory at the James J. Peters Veterans Affairs Medical Center. She has an active federally-funded clinical and research program that welcomes local and international students and clinicians. A recognized leader in the field of traumatic stress studies, she has authored more than 250 published papers, chapters, and books in the field of traumatic stress and the neurobiology of PTSD.

Fortunately, the remaining programs were able to be delivered as WebEx meetings. The first was a talk delivered by Professor **Mikhal Dekel** of The City College of New York, who spoke about her recently published book, *Tehran Children: A Holocaust Refugee Odyssey*

(W.W. Norton, 2019), that tells the story of her father having been one of a group of Polish-Jewish children who fled Nazi-occupied Poland via Russia, Uzbekistan, and Iran, ultimately reaching British-controlled Palestine. A recording of both Dekel's talk and the Q&A that followed have been posted on the Center's website (<https://www.ramapo.edu/holocaust/program-videos/>). Growing up in Israel, Dekel knew virtually nothing of her father's past in the Holocaust. He never spoke about his experiences during the war, he had no accent, and no number tattooed on his forearm. Her quest to uncover her father's past began in 2007, when the Iranian author Salar Abdoh sent her an op. ed. from a Persian newspaper "Iran, Jews and the Holocaust" that mentioned "what are called the Tehran Children" that led Dekel to traverse the globe in these refugees' footsteps. Her visits to archives and conversations with people in Uzbekistan, Poland, Russia, Israel and (through a proxy) Iran helped her paint a picture of interlinked and divergent histories, of death and survival, of hospitality and cruelty, and of the politics of twenty-first century memory and historical amnesia.

The second rescheduled talk, again delivered via WebEx, was by Professor **Elissa Bemporad** of Queens College (CUNY) and concerned her book, *Legacy of Blood: Jews, Pogroms, and Ritual Murder in the Lands of the Soviets*, published in December of last year by Oxford University Press. The book traces the legacies of the two most extreme manifestations of tsarist antisemitism-pogroms and blood libels-in the Soviet Union, from 1917 to the early 1960s. Closely intertwined in history and memory, pogroms and blood libels were and are considered central to the Jewish experience in late Tsarist Russia, the only country on earth with large scale anti-

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**Mikhal Dekel**



**Prof. Elissa Bemporad**

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# Gross Center

(continued)

Jewish violence in the early twentieth century. But their persistence and memory under the Bolsheviks—a chapter that is largely overlooked by the existing scholarship—significantly shaped the Soviet Jewish experience.

The Jerry and William Ungar Chair in East European Jewish History and the Holocaust and an associate professor of history at Queens College and the CUNY Graduate Center of the City University of New York, Bemporad grew up in Modena, Italy. She studied Russian language and History at the University of Bologna and earned her doctoral degree from Stanford University. Her highly acclaimed first book, *Becoming Soviet Jews: The Bolshevik Experiment in Minsk* was published by Indiana University Press in 2013 and was based on a year's worth of archival research that she conducted in the fabled Belorussian capital. Bemporad made clear the extent to which, especially in the borderland republics like Ukraine, the pre-war Soviet authorities took pains to counteract or prevent anti-Jewish activity. The situation, Bemporad pointed out, stood in sharp contrast to the pogroms

and devastation of the years after the First World War. Bemporad's talk, including the Q&A, are likewise to be found at <https://www.ramapo.edu/holocaust/program-videos/>

Happily, with our partners at the USC Shoah Foundation - The Institute for Visual History and Education, we were also able to reconfigure for remote delivery our May 20<sup>th</sup> teachers' workshop, *Film with Testimony: Using Primary and Secondary Sources to Teach about Genocide*. The workshop guided participants through multiple effective strategies for teaching the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust with film and testimony. They were presented with a suite of ready-to-use testimony-based activities on USC Shoah Foundation's education platform, iWitness based on *The Promise*, which premiered in 2017 and *Schindler's List* that first appeared in 1993. The workshop's activities and resources are designed to function equally well face-to-face or in today's virtual classroom and will extend students' historical thinking, critical thinking and social-emotional aptitudes.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### DIVERSITY in Health Care Conference

**N**atalia Santamaria-Laorden, Associate Professor of Spanish and Project Investigator of the Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language (UISFL) grant from the U.S. Department of Education, organized the second symposium on Diversity in Health Care and Human Services on October 21, 2019 at Ramapo College. Professor of Africana Studies and Director of the Program on Race, Science and Society at University of Pennsylvania, Dorothy Roberts delivered the keynote speech entitled "Race, Medicine and Justice" and discussed ways in which the medical and pharmaceutical discourse is still informed by constructions of race even today. Professor of Management Oscar Holmes IV from Rutgers University, Alison Banks-Moore, CDO at Horizon BCBSNJ and Quincy Bloxom, Director of Operations at the Anti-Poverty Network of NJ, analyzed the economic impact of a diversity approach to Health Care.



**Dorothy Roberts,**  
Diversity in Health Care Conference

In the last panel of the day, Edgar Rivera Colón, Lecturer and Medical Anthropologist at Columbia University, Carmen King Ramirez, Assistant Professor of Spanish of Arizona University, and Daisy Rodríguez, Associate Director of Counselling, Health and Wellness at William Paterson University reflected on the political and social dimension of addressing the bilingual needs of the Latinx population in the USA. The event was a success, both in terms of the quality of the lectures and attendance, since 300 people, including students from 11 classes, joined and benefitted from panels and discussions with the speakers.

The symposium also showcased the work of Ramapo students in the certificate of Spanish for Health Care and Human Services who translated leaflets as part of their summer internship in the Adler Aphasia Center in the summer of 2019.

## Faculty News



**Natalia Santamaria Laorden**

interpreter for Spanish-speaking patients.

In order to share all the ways in which the UISFL federal grant contributed to the development of the certificate at Ramapo College, Prof. Santamaria participated in the *5th International Symposium on Languages for Specific Purposes* (ISLSP) held in University of North Carolina (Charlotte) at the beginning of March. Her presentation was entitled "Teaching Spanish for Health Care and Human Services: Questioning Epistemologies and Power Dynamics." Since late May, Santamaria Laorden is also the chair of the "Medical Humanities, Social Services and Intercultural Competency" in the Spanish Medical Taskforce, that brings together medical and language educators to assess best practices and to test pedagogical innovations in the teaching of Medical Spanish nationwide.

**Iraida H. López** spent four months in Chile on a Fulbright in fall 2019. She taught a post-graduate course on Caribbean literature offered jointly by the Catholic University and the University of Chile in Santiago, in addition to lecturing and conducting research for a new project. Written after her return from abroad, her piece, "Creativity at the Service of Social Mobilization in Chile," came out in *NACLA* in December, <https://nacla.org/news/2019/12/08/chile-anti-rape-protest-tijoux>. The essay addresses the surge of creativity she witnessed after the onset of the street protests across the nation.



**Prof. Iraida López and colleagues in Chile**

In the Spring of 2020, **Natalia Santamaria Laorden** began supervising students' work in a new internship with the Bergen Volunteer Medical Initiative (Hackensack, N.J.). A double major in Biology and Spanish, as well as a student in the Spanish for Health Care and Human Services Certificate, Risoneide Zegarra Solano was praised by the institution for her work as an

Lopez's anthology, *Let's Hear Their Voices: Cuban American Writers of the Second Generation* (SUNY Press), co-edited with Eliana Rivero, was released in November 2019. Along with five of the ten authors featured in the anthology, including President Obama's inaugural poet Richard Blanco, she presented *Let's Hear Their Voices* at Books & Books in Coral Gables in January. Last, her article on affect in Cuban American narratives, "Privada de símbolos patrios: la memoria afectiva en textos cubanoamericanos posnacionales," appeared in *Identidad y postnacionalismo en la cultura cubana* in Spain in 2019.

**Ed Shannon** has been awarded a 2020 Quarry Farm Fellowship by the Center for Mark Twain Studies in Elmira, N.Y. for summer 2020. The fellowship includes a grant and a two-week residency at the Center in Elmira. See: <https://marktwainstudies.com/about/quarry-farm/> for more info. His recent publication: "Good grief, Comrade Brown! Woody Guthrie, Charles Schulz and the little cartoon book that was a big lie" *Studies in Comics* focuses on American folksinger Woody Guthrie's unpublished and little-known response to anticommunist propaganda comic book *Is This Tomorrow: America Under Communism* (1947). Largely forgotten today, *Is This Tomorrow* was hugely successful, with millions of copies in circulation. Its tangled history reveals ideological conflicts with its publisher's advocacy of comic book censorship. *Is This Tomorrow* also features early comics work by cartoonist Charles Schulz (years before beginning his comic strip *Peanuts*). By happenstance, Guthrie's only substantial comment on comic books is also his only (albeit unknowing) comment on fellow iconic popular artist Schulz. Additionally, he presented "'I ain't a-going to tell all': Huck Finn's (Missing) Sex Life" at the Clemens Conference, Mark Twain Circle/Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum. July 24-27, 2019. Hannibal, MO.

**Yvette Kisor's** paper, "Romance and Sexuality in *Tolkien's Lost Chaucer*," was accepted for delivery at the 55<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan in May 2020.

After years of hard work, **Lisa Williams'** novel, *Forget Russia*, was accepted for publication by Tailwinds Press. It is forthcoming in 2020. She also published the poems, "Tokyo," "Kyoto," and an elegy, "For Jacqueline," in the fall issue of *The Santa Barbara Literary Journal*.

You thought Goth was over? No way. **Eric Daffron's** essay entitled "Transatlantic Terror: James Hammond's Circulating Library and the Minerva Press Gothic Novel," an article based on research on turn-of-the-nineteenth-century British gothic novels archived at the New York

## Faculty News

Society Library, is scheduled to be published by *Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1789-1840* later this summer.

Can't get enough Shakespeare? **Todd Barnes** recently published his essay, "Aesthetic Borderlands" in Peter Greenaway's *Prospero's Books* in a special issue of *Symbolism: An International Annual of Critical Aesthetics*. He also completed his first monograph, *Shakespearean Charity and the Perils of Redemptive Performance*, which will be published by Cambridge University Press in early 2020. Barnes has been working with Peter Locharenrkul, an interactive developer with the RLab XR program in Brooklyn, and Asha Veeraswamy, an MA student in NYU's Interactive Telecommunications Program. Locharenrkul and Veeraswamy contacted Barnes to discuss a new app they're developing, which uses Augmented Reality to create a pedagogical tool for students of Shakespeare's plays. Locharenrkul observed Barnes' Shakespeare's Plays course and interviewed him, along with student volunteers, in the course of researching the project, which was presented at NYU in December 2019.



**Todd Barnes**



**James Hoch**

After a very long wait, **James Hoch** has a new book of poems forthcoming: *Last Pawn Shop in New Jersey* (LSU Press, 2022). That's more waiting, but luckily Hoch's individual poems will appear in *Image*, *New England Review*, and *Agni*.

In the midst of the pandemic, several History faculty--**Cathy Hajo**, **David Colman**, **Sarah Koenig**,

and **Stacie Taranto**--along with colleague **Neriko Doerr**, and the help and support of **Dean Hangen**, teamed up to create a database to capture these historic times. Hajo built the database, entitled "The Human Side of a Pandemic: A Ramapo College Digital Humanities Project," which is a depository open to the public to share oral histories, first-person accounts, and the stuff of our everyday lives (our "new normal") as we navigate our way through a historic pandemic. The database currently contains more than two dozen items, many of which were contributed from students in history courses this past spring. We encourage our colleagues to contribute to the database; please contact Stacie Taranto if interested: [staranto@ramapo.edu](mailto:staranto@ramapo.edu)

Two History faculty have forthcoming books. **Stacie Taranto** is co-editor with Leandra Zarnow of a forthcoming collection, titled *Suffrage at 100: Women in American Politics Since 1920*, which will be out soon from Johns Hopkins Press. The book's release is timed with the centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment, which enshrined women's suffrage as a Constitutional protection. The book features over twenty contributors, who assess women's progress in American politics over the past century.



**Stacie Taranto**



**Sarah Koenig**

**Sarah Koenig's** *Providence and the Invention of American History* is set for a Spring 2021 release with Yale University Press. Koenig traces the rise and fall of a nineteenth-century Western legend about a missionary who saved Oregon from Great Britain. The legend's peculiar history serves as a window for understanding how Protestant concepts of divine providence shaped the American historical profession in the early decades of its formation.

Koenig also was awarded a Digital Humanities Seed Grant, one of ten grants funded by the Bringing Theory to Practice foundation and the Booth Ferris Foundation. This grant will facilitate the implementation of digital technologies in Koenig's Spring 2020 class, *The American West*. Koenig presented a paper entitled "Whitman's Bones: Martyrs, Monuments, and Contested Spaces in the Pacific Northwest" at the Western History Association Annual Meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada. The paper was part of a panel examining how religion has shaped historical memory, and particularly the memorialization or erasure of historic sites, in the American West.

**David Colman** has been invited to the dedication of the Horace L Sheffield Jr. Civic, Labor, and Civil Rights Archival Research Center at the Wayne County Community College District Downtown Campus. Colman will participate in a panel discussion about the digitization of Horace L Sheffield Jr's archives and the important role Sheffield played in connecting the Labor and Civil Rights Movement. Other panelists include former Detroit City Council Member, Joann Watson, former Legal Council for the Detroit Branch of the NAACP, Bruce Miller, noted labor historian Dr. Joseph Wilson, and the legendary Civil Rights Movement activist, Dr. Bernard Lafayette.

## Faculty News

The March 2020 opening of the archives is sponsored by the Detroit Association of Black Organizations and is part of its annual "State of the Race" conference.

Colman has also launched a digital humanities project titled "Mapping Global Hip Hop." With the help of students in his Hip Hop and Society class, Colman will begin creating an interactive map that will allow users to explore the various dimensions of hip hop around the world. The map will allow users to discover various rap groups, graffiti artists, break dancers, DJs, and hip-hop fashion designers in any part of the world. Students will work on translations of rap lyrics into English, identify key controversies and themes in a region's hip hop history, explore the relationship between a particular country's government and its rap scene, discuss the role of class, racial, and ethnic conflict in a region's Hip Hop culture, locate key nightclubs, recording studios and other spaces, and explain how American and local and regional cultural influences interact to create unique and new forms of hip hop culture. In the spring 2020, semester students will focus on "Caucasian" Hip Hop in the Caucasus Mountain states between the Black and Caspian seas and the Uighur Hip Hop scene in Xinjiang province in China.



**Jeremy Teigen, Washington D.C. 2019**

In Political Science, **Jeremy Teigen** was invited as a panelist at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington D.C. in November 2019 to discuss the state of civil-military relations in the Trump era and the continuing salience of military service experience among electoral candidates and policy makers. The panel was entitled "Blurring the line: Politics and the military in a post-9/11 America," and featured other experts on defense policy and politics.

### **Other History highlights:**

**Karl Johnson** was interviewed by Jim Beckerman in NorthJersey.com (The Record newspaper) on the historical implications of the making of the movie "Gone with the Wind."

**Ira Spar's** "Prudence Oliver Harper," with C.Y. Wilder in J. Lerner et al eds. *Essays in Honor of Prudence O. Harper*. "The Hearing Hand: Scribes & Seal Cutters in Ancient

Mesopotamia," with Antonietta Catanzariti, in L. Shelley ed. *Antiquities Smuggling in the Real and Virtual World*, Routledge. Review of Margaret L. Steiner, *Inhabiting the Promised Land: Exploring the Complex Relationship between Archaeology and Ancient Israel as Depicted in the Bible*, *History, Reviews of New Books*. All are forthcoming.



**Neriko Doerr**

**Neriko Doerr** had a string of publications this year. "Subversive Service Learning: Shifting the Locus of the Problem" appeared in *the Journal of Community Engagement and Higher Education* 11(2). She co-authored (with Kiri Lee) a book chapter in Japanese entitled "Diversification of the Learner Needs at Japanese Language Schools in North America" in an edited volume called *Heritage Language Education Connecting Generations* edited by K. Kondo-Brown, M. Sakamoto, and T. Nishikawa (publisher: Kuroshio Shuppan). Additionally, she gave two invited guest lectures at Smith College, Northampton, Mass., in October 2019. The titles of the lectures were: "Beyond Globalism: Study Abroad Students, Immigrants, and Refugees in the Era of Global" and "Risks and Hopes of Community Engagement and Service Learning at the Global Level."

Doerr also organized a session titled "Self-Transformation as Game Changer: Narratives of Self and Social Climate Change" and presented a paper on it titled "Narrative Politics of Self-Transformation: Analyzing Study Abroad Testimonials for Social Change" at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Vancouver, Canada in November 2019. She also was a Visiting Scholar at Doshisha University, Kyoto, Japan, in June-July 2019. She has carried out fieldwork on self-identification practices at the English-medium program at Doshisha University.

**Paul Elovitz's** string of psychohistorical hits keep on coming. He has a chapter in "Probing Trump's Disruptive, Narcissistic Personality," in Michael Maccoby and Ken Fuchsman, eds., *Psychoanalytic and Historical Perspectives on Donald Trump's Leadership: Narcissism and Marketing in an Age of Anxiety and Distrust* (Routledge, 2020). A Presidential Psychobiographer's Reflections on the 2020 Election" *Psychohistory News*, Winter 2020), 6,231 words in this digital publication, no pagination. Among the handful of publications that appear in *Clio's Psyche* is an interview about Finnish Psychohistorian: Juhani Ihanus," Check it out: *Clio's Psyche* Vol. 27, No. 3 (Spring 2020): 328-340



## Faculty News

**Marta Vides** received an invitation to make a presentation as part of a project, *Catholicism and the Common Good*, funded by the Henry Luce Foundation through Duquesne University. Her topic: Catholic Thinking about Jurisprudence, and the Reality of Moral Diversity. The panel focus was on Direct and Sustained Ways to Engage in a Morally Diverse World.

**John Gronbeck-Tedesco** took his Honors section of Studies in Arts and Humanities to Broadway to see Tennessee Williams's rapturous *The Rose Tattoo*, starring

Marisa Tomei as Serafina Delle Rose and Emun Elliott as Alvaro Mangiacavallo. Students examined the play in terms of the twin displacements of love and immigration in the American Gulf Coast.

Additionally, he published the article "Of Violence and Mourning: Sovereignty, Containment, and Modern Governmentality" in the *Journal of Social Philosophy* and completed a draft of his next manuscript tentatively titled *Operation Pedro Pan and the Production of Cuban America*.

## Student Engagement News

**Neriko Doerr, Susan Hangen, Ben Levy and Rebecca Root** received the Capacity Building Program for U.S. Study Abroad Small Grant from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs for 2019-2020. A presentation titled "Global Field Experiences: Towards Meaningful learning Experiences" was offered at the Global Field Experience Workshop for faculty members in September 2019.

**Ed Shannon** and **Lisa Cassidy** took students in his HNRS 101 *First Year Seminar: American Crime Fiction* (Shannon) and HNRS 420 *Honors Interdisciplinary Capstone Seminar* (Cassidy) to Eastern State Penitentiary as an Honors field trip. Also accompanying the classes were our visiting Fulbright scholars, **Sarra Safhi, Yu-Chien (Yolanda) Hsieh, Roberta Berlingo**. Eastern State is the world's first penitentiary and is now a museum featuring a powerful exhibit about mass incarceration in the United States. Before the trip, students in HNRS 101 read Charles Dickens' "Philadelphia, and its Solitary Prison" (from *American Notes*, 1842). Dickens famously visited the prison and harshly critiqued the solitary confinement that was the norm at Eastern State. Students also watched and discussed Ava DuVernay's documentary on mass incarceration *13th*. This is the second year the Honors program chose Eastern State as a field location.

Thanks to Platinum Funding, **Ed Shannon** took students in his LITR 220 *Survey of American Literature* course to Mystic Seaport, where they walked the deck of the *Charles W. Morgan* the last of an American whaling fleet that sailed for more than 200 years and numbered more than 2,700 vessels. The visit added to students' reading experience of the novel *Moby Dick*. Mystic Seaport also featured an exhibit of J.M.W. Turner watercolors.

Philosophy students shined this year. **Megan Rose '21** was selected to represent HGS as the Scholars Day. Her presentation *A Phenomenological Approach to*



Dean Susan Hangen meets with HGS students

*Transgender Erasure in the United States* may be found here: <https://www.ramapo.edu/scholarsday/>

Three Philosophy students—**Eric Cook, Phillip Pillari** and **Megan Rose**—were invited to submit papers for presentation at the 25th Annual Undergraduate Philosophy Conference that was scheduled for April at SUNY Oneonta. When plans for the in-person conference changed, their work was presented in the current volume of the Undergraduate Philosophy Journal of SUNY Oneontaonline *Archipelago*, found here: [https://www.archipelago-philosophy-journal.org/p/current-volume\\_16.html](https://www.archipelago-philosophy-journal.org/p/current-volume_16.html)

Alumna **Sarah Dowman** (Spanish Language Studies and Visual Arts, 2009) completed her Ph.D. at the University of Maryland in 2019. The title of her dissertation is "Change is Sound: Resistance and Activism in Queer Latinx Punk Rock." Sarah is currently searching for a tenure-track position in higher education.

There is plenty of graduate news out there, but the pandemic has cut short a lot of communications. However, a few highlights include: Fulbright scholar **Christina Dwyer** is keeping a blog of her experiences in South Korea. <https://koreateacheschristina.home.blog/>

English and Literary Studies graduate **Carlie Hoffman** has had her second book of poems accepted by the highly-esteemed Four Way Books.

# Africana Studies Major and Minor Contribute to Dismantling Systemic Racism

by David Colman, co-convener



**Prof. David Colman**

Chants of “I Can’t Breathe,” “No Justice No Peace,” and “Black Lives Matter” are reverberating around big cities and small towns in the United States and throughout the world as millions of people join marches, rallies and protests against anti-Black racism. The *New York Times* recently declared “Black Lives

Matter May Be the Largest Movement in U.S. History.” Ramapo College’s Africana Studies program in the School of Humanities and Global Studies is uniquely positioned to help students understand and explore the origins and impact of the Black Lives Matter movement, racism in the United States and around the world, and forms of resistance and community building in Africa and the Diaspora.

Africana Studies is an interdisciplinary program that offers courses in a number of disciplines including history, psychology, sociology, political science, theater, music, law, business, literature, nursing and education. All Africana Studies courses place a strong emphasis on developing research, writing, and critical thinking skills. Students can take courses like “Black Experience Through Theater” and “History of Jazz” in the School of Contemporary Arts or “Race, Crime and Justice,” “The Black Family,” and “Multicultural Psychology” in the School of Social Science and Human Services. In the

School of Humanities and Global Studies, students can take a range of Africana Studies courses from “Hip Hop and Society,” to “Black Power Years,” to “African American Literature,” to “African American Social and Political Thought.” Students also have the opportunity for direct experiential learning through the Student Literacy Corp and various study abroad opportunities.

The skills and knowledge students acquire as majors and minors in Africana Studies will be in high demand over the next three decades as employers in a variety of fields seek to find solutions to the problem of racial inequity. The racial disparities of the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, have led public health organizations and health care providers to seek employees who can deliver more equitable health outcomes. Law enforcement agencies, prosecutors’ offices, and public defenders are looking for college graduates who can help implement reforms to ensure equal treatment of all citizens in the criminal justice system. School systems are increasingly in need of teachers and administrators who can help close the race-based education gap. Book publishers need employees who can diversify their catalogs and the finance, banking, and real estate industries need people who can help make home and business ownership accessible to everyone regardless of race or ethnicity. Education has a crucial role to play in creating the changes that can dismantle systemic racism. By offering this academic program, the School of Humanities and Global Studies demonstrates its commitment to contributing to these changes.

# Black Lives Matter at Ramapo College and in the School of Humanities and Global Studies



"Truth be told": the last words in US Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey's "Native Guard" name what we do in the School of Humanities and Global Studies. The humanities can tell truths and reveal little-known stories that help us better understand our world, and give us the tools to change it.

The faculty and staff of the School of Humanities and Global Studies at Ramapo College commit to uncovering, sharing, and honoring these stories as part of our effort to create a more just community, and a more just world. We believe that Black Lives Matter, and we commit to ending systemic and institutional racism, anti-Blackness and all forms of discrimination. As Dr. Martin Luther King declared in his famous Letter from the Birmingham Jail,

"We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." The events of 2020 have made it impossible to ignore this essential truth.

In our current moment, the BLM movement has forced us to reckon with our past, and how that past continues to shape our present. So many of us have been marginalized: by race, by gender, sexual identity, religious practice, class background, and language of the home. This movement asks us to consider how these marginalized identities intersect with race. This work means engaging all members of our school in critically addressing the long-standing inequalities and injustices that the last few months have made ever more clear.

We aspire to create a truly inclusive and caring space for living, learning and working at Ramapo College.

We pledge to listen to and support students, faculty, and staff of color in our collective struggles against racist and anti-Black practices, policies, systems, and structures within and beyond our institution.

James Baldwin reminds us: "The paradox of education is precisely this; that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated."

Therefore, we promise to continually engage in self-reflection as to how our own biases shape our perception of our society and our world.

As educators, scholars, and artists, we recognize both our privilege and our responsibility to use it in that struggle for justice.

We acknowledge the significance of amplifying Black and other marginalized voices, and are committed to helping our students and those who encounter our research to hear, see, and experience the essential value of diversity and the importance of dismantling systemic inequalities in order to create a just and fair world.

We ask that you join us as HGS promises to offer curricula and programs that contribute to an authentic understanding of the lived experiences Black people, Black scholarship, activism, arts and culture as well as systems of racism and segregation. Africa and the African diaspora have indelibly shaped world culture. US history and culture would be unrecognizable without the continuing contributions of people from around the world -- and from the Native peoples whose lands were taken to create this nation.

We are here to grapple with, question, and tell the truth. Our programs and courses demonstrate the value of diversity and can help students understand the roots and persistence of inequality in our society and around the world. We recommit to our major and minor in Africana Studies and to exemplify scholarship and teaching that contributes to social change. We invite you to study and learn with us in courses such as The Black Power Years, African American History and African American Literature, which explore the origins and impact of the Black Lives Matter movement, racism in the United States and around the world, and forms of Black resistance and community building in the United States. Let all the truths be told - and heard.