Next Sidore Series to Focus on the Ocean

Until quite recently, people have imagined the ocean as timeless, unchanging, and apart from human society. Now we know that the future of the planet is linked to the health of the living ocean, which covers 70% of the globe, drives our climate and exists in an ever-changing dynamic with human history.

The collapse of the North Atlantic cod fishery in the 1990s had warning signs that could have alerted scientists and fishers if they had had more knowledge about the past. Historical records and long-lost stories indicate that overfishing is anything but a brand new problem. In fact, complaints about overfishing can be found in handwritten medieval tomes.

The 2010-2011 Saul O Sidore Memorial Lecture Series will examine how past ocean narratives can inform future ecological decisions. *Sea Stories of the Future: Interdisciplinary Conversations on Historic Oceans and Contemporary Marine Science* will bring researchers from several disciplines to UNH. These scholars approach ocean study with the understanding that nature and science are not realms separate from the study of history.

The upcoming Sidore Series will feature historians, marine scientists, and statistical modelers who are working together to understand how past oceans can address some of the most pressing problems of the oceans today. One project, for example, takes historical data recorded with quill pens on water-stained paper and builds statistical models that can yield important biological indicators.

W. Jeffrey Bolster, Associate Professor of History and Sidore series organizer, says, “This pioneering, collaborative research combines historical, ecological, and mathematical methods that far exceed boundaries of traditional academic disciplines.” Speakers will be drawn from national and international marine experts. Karen Alexander of the UNH Ocean Process Analysis Lab is co-organizer for the series. A schedule for the 2010-2011 series will be available in the fall.
2010-2011 Faculty Fellows Named

Each academic year, the Center for the Humanities provides an opportunity for junior and senior faculty members to spend a semester away from teaching responsibilities and devote themselves full-time to humanities research. The 2010-2011 Faculty Fellows represent a cross-section of the wide-ranging humanities scholarship at the University of New Hampshire.

Profiles compiled by Shannon Potts
Photos by UNH Photo Services

Dennis Britton
Assistant Professor of English
JUNIOR FELLOW

“Although much as been written about the political and cultural implications of romance in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, little has been said about its religious dimensions, especially its preoccupations with religious conversion and baptism,” says Dennis Britton. His book-length project, Race, Romance and Protestant Theology in Early Modern English Literature, explores important and unexamined ideas of race as it relates to baptism and conversion. Britton seeks to build upon modern scholarship about the history of European encounters with non-European peoples through study of the Italian romances Orlando Furioso and Gerusalemme Liberata.

Reflecting on his work so far, Britton says, “To my surprise, 16th-century English Protestant theological writings are quite lively. I originally starting looking into these writings to help establish religious and historical context for my project, but I found that these writings are often very funny, and sometimes just plain salacious.”

Sarah Stitzlein
Assistant Professor of Education
JUNIOR FELLOW

During her fellowship, Sarah Stitzlein will investigate the historical and philosophical foundations of dissent in early American history. Stitzlein will explore ways to bridge the gap between the current cultural presence of dissent and its absence in the K-12 curriculum. She anticipates a book that “philosophically defends the role of dissent in a healthy democracy, and reveals how current educational philosophies and practices hinder the practice of dissent.” Ultimately, Stitzlein’s goal is “to offer a humanities-based educational philosophy for protecting and promoting dissent in schools.”

Stitzlein says, “With tea parties filling our streets, I’m excited to explore how students should be learning to politically dissent within school walls. Hopefully, we can use the current moment of renewed interest in public dissent to cultivate a new generation of informed and skilled dissidents.”

Marla Brettschneider
Professor of Political Science
Coordinator of Women’s Studies
SENIOR FELLOW

Marla Brettschneider’s research will fill a gap in how scholars look at the work of Jewish intellectuals. Brettschneider says, “While Jewish intellectuals have made distinct contributions to political thinking and revolutionary study, almost no systematic study of these contributions exists.” Aiming to address this oversight, Brettschneider will write a book examining the legacy of Jewish feminist thinking.

Engaging with the works of Frida Kahlo, Jamaica Kincaid, Gertrude Stein, Emma Goldman, Hannah Arendt, and Judith Butler, Brettschneider’s work is a revolutionary re-envisioning of the Jewish presence in political thought. The project will also “assist various modes of critical inquiry across disciplines doing so through the nexus of feminist, critical race, queer, class, transnational, and Diaspora studies and theories.”
Based in her contextual work about difference and conflict, Sheila McNamee will use her fellowship to complete a book-length project entitled, *Coordinating Conflict: Dialogic Potentials*. She says her work is “a significant philosophical and practical shift in how we think about and approach out interactions with others.”

McNamee states, “We should be asking ourselves what kinds of situations we want to create that will invite conflicting parties to make use of alternative available voices.” Using the Bereaved Families Forum in Israel as an example, McNamee’s work explores “new ways of going on together.”

McNamee continues, “The time is ripe to talk about how we might bridge completely disparate world views and explore ways of living together in a complex world. From our personal relations to global politics, this is a topic that confronts us all and need be less daunting than imagined.”

Considering recent developments in family formation in Western democracies, Charlotte Witt will examine concepts of the family during her fellowship. Witt’s book project, *Family Resemblances: Kinship, Kinds and the Family*, will explore the common view of the family and how it strengthens philosophical theories of universals. It will also explore the “crucial position of the family in relation to political theory.”

Witt says, “Ultimately, in this book, I am interested in exploring the question of how our thinking about kinds (or universals) and our thinking about the difference between social and natural kinds might share certain assumptions concerning family and kinship relations. *Family Resemblances: Kinship, Kinds and the Family* is a project that originated in my reflections on what a family is, and then developed into a project on the ways in which the notion of the family is used in philosophical writing.”

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has announced the annual competition for its 2011 Summer Stipends. These $6,000 awards support two consecutive months of research.

**Application Deadline:** AUGUST 3, 2010

For more information visit: www.unh.edu/humanities-center
The 2010 Saul O Sidore Memorial Lecture Series Explored
The Ghana Connection

This year’s Sidore lectures featured speakers from the University of Ghana and a performance by a Ghanaian drum and dance troupe. The series, which took place in early April 2010, helped to inform the university community and the public about UNH’s growing ties with the University of Ghana. Those connections include the ongoing development of a study-abroad program at the University of Ghana and faculty collaboration between the two universities.

Eric Danquah, Professor of Plant Molecular Genetics at the University of Ghana, spoke on Developing New Crop Varieties for a Hungry World: Promises and Challenges in Ghana. Takyiwaa Manuh, Professor and former Director of the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana spoke on Conceptualizing Women’s Empowerment in West Africa. A performance by the Akwaaba Traditional Drum and Dance Ensemble featured musicians and drummers, who originally hail from Ghana, but who now reside in New England.
Our State, Our Stories Interviews Newcomers; First DVD in the Works

Our State, Our Stories, the Center's oral history project which tells the stories of New Hampshire's most recent immigrants and refugees, is compiling a collection of video oral history interviews conducted over the past year. The first set of interviews focused on refugees, interviewing New Hampshire residents from Bhutan, Somalia, Bosnia, and Iraq. The next set of interviews will also include the stories of second and third generation immigrants, with completion expected by the end of the summer. A DVD featuring the refugee experiences of five of the interviewees is currently being produced by Atlantic Media Productions and will debut this coming fall. Anthropologist Sara Withers is the project manager and interviewer. Funding for the project is provided by grants from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and the New Hampshire Humanities Council.

Semester Abroad at University of Ghana Approved; First UNH Student Attends Summer Session at UG

The Center for the Humanities nears completion on a project funded by the Department of State to develop and implement a study-abroad program for UNH students at the University of Ghana (UG). The University Committee on Study Abroad recently approved a proposal for a UNH-managed program, developed by Center for the Humanities director Burt Feintuch. Two site visits to that university, in Legon, near Accra, enabled UNH faculty to plan the program. In addition to study-abroad opportunities, we are working to encourage collaborative relationships linking UNH faculty with colleagues at the University of Ghana. The Center expects to send students to UG beginning in spring 2011. In the meantime, one UNH student, Michaela Christensen, a journalism major with a minor in Africana and African American Studies, will be attending a summer program at UG especially designed for international students.

The Center is planning a third site visit to Ghana in the fall to finalize details of the program and to help in the creation of a pre-departure orientation program. This semester, John Nimmo, Associate Professor of Family Studies at UNH, spent part of his sabbatical leave at the University of Ghana. He has chronicled his experiences and impressions as a resource for UNH students who are interested in participating in the program. His blog can be found at www.jwnghana.wordpress.com

UNH is also hosting visits by UG scholars. These have included the Sidore 2010 speakers and Vera Arhin, a UG researcher and former director of their Language Centre, who gave a lecture, visited the UNH Writing Center, and met UNH faculty and graduate students involved in our writing programs.
Twelve Students Graduate with Interdisciplinary Minors

The Three Minors coordinator and the Advisory Board would like to acknowledge graduating seniors from the 2009-2010 academic year. Graduates in the Africana & African American Studies program include: Shannon Potts, who completed her B.A. in English Teaching in December of 2009 and is now a graduate student working towards her Masters in Education; Melissa-Leigh Gore in English Literature; and Erin Patterson in English and Political Science. Graduates in the American Studies program include: Kyle Dancause in English Teaching and Political Science; Ryan Neelon in English; and Shelby Whittet in English and European Cultural Studies. Graduates in the Race, Culture & Power program include: Sarah Bessem Bate who completed her B.A. in December of 2009 in Political Science and Women’s Studies; William Brehm in Sociology; Gregg Coulter in English; Josh Crary in Sociology and Women’s Studies; Heather Froehlich in English and Linguistics; and Erik Pajer-Rogers in Anthropology. We offer our congratulations and best wishes for the future to all of our impressive graduates.

Call For Papers

The Politics of Race: Movements, Protests, Leaders, and Representation

2010 Black New England Conference
Thursday, October 14th - Saturday, October 16th 2010
Holloway Commons, UNH Durham

The 2010 conference will cover the history of cultural, social, and political movements in New England from the 1700s to the present. As the word ‘representation’ indicates, the conference will include presentations on the politics concerning and the forms of representing such events and people of African descent in New England.

For Information Please Contact:
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Deadline for Submissions:
June 1, 2010