



Needless to say, American Studies students participated in a wide range of departmentsponsored activities this year. In October, we asked Career Services to do a workshop for AM majors and minors to help them formulate their post

hosted our annual AM cookout to celebrate our senior majors and minors.

The department was also pleased to grant Zangrando Opportunity Fund of four AM majors to earn departmental honors. The other three are Etise Rotella and Hogshead-Makar (who is an Olympic gold medal-winning swimmer) visited American Studies courses³ Senior Seminar and American Sport/American Culture, respectively³ to the great benefit of our students. Historian Virginia lecture on the women Thomas Jefferson loved was terrific, well attended, and organized by our History Department colleague, Professor Eric Morser.

American Studies also sponsored or co-sponsored a wide range of artists, such as writer (and Skidmore alum) Neela Vaswani; an evening of poetry with South Asian

smoothly. Sue had (and has) the tough task of juggling multiple responsibilities but does so with aplomb, professionalism, and good cheer. We are fortunate to work with her.

The unexpected twist is that our highly respected colleague Winston Grady leave of absence and has accepted a position at Metropolitan State College of Denver. Obviously we wish Winston and his family the best; at the same time, his departure is a huge loss to the department, the college, and, most of all, to our students. In countless ways, he has enriched this school and community. So I remain hopeful that perhaps he will return to Skidmore. As he himself has said, stranger things have happened.

As ever, we look forward to hearing from our alums. Just this week, I

At this time year, of course, we are focused on our soon-to-be graduates, for you.

Chair, American Studies Department

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Study Abroad Experiences

Eliza Straim

I went on IHP's Health and Community track which took me to South Africa, Vietnam, and Brazil.

While in each country I studied globalization, public health, conducted case studies, and went on site visits to hospitals, health

clinics, and culturally significant locations. By having an urban and rural home-stay in each country, I received multiple perspectives on my families health practices. My experiences abroad impacted me so deeply that I was inspired to write my America Studies honor's thesis on sexual assault in the U.S. and at Skidmore.

Winston Grady-Willis

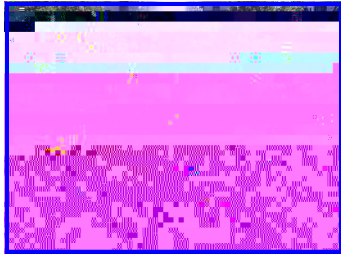
for the series to a packed house in the Arthur Zankel Music Center, an event made possible with support from the President's Office. Yet again, the Department was well represented in the series by **Visiting Assistant**

The Seniors

Lavere Foster, (Major)

What are your future plans?

Seniors



can identities. Soon, I'll be moving to Chicago

to pursue a brief stint of unemployment before I get a job in a field related to my course of study.

Brooke Williams, (Major) I'm from the very small town of Eagle, Wisconsin. My hobbies are many, but include baking, reading, cooking, knitting, eating, sewing and going to farmers' markets. My senior thesis is about the role of food in American cultural history and identity, which means that I spent most of this past semester cooking, or at least thinking about food. (That's kind of why I picked the topic.) This summer, I'm working at the Lucy Scribner Library and living in downtown Saratoga, and next year I'll be doing a year of service through AmeriCorps. My ultimate plan is to become a librarian--the cool kind, like Beverley Cleary or Nancy Pearl. I studied in London last spring, and this is a picture of me with my mom at Trafalgar Square. I'm from the very small town of Eagle, Wisconsin. My hobbies are many, but include baking, reading, cooking, knitting, eating, sewing and going to farmers' markets. My senior thesis is about the role of food in American cultural history and identity, which means that I spent most of this past semester cooking, or at least thinking about food. (That's kind of why I picked the topic.) This summer, I'm working at the Lucy Scribner Library and living in downtown Saratoga, and next year I'll be doing a year of service through AmeriCorps. My ultimate plan is to become a librarian--the cool kind, like



Beverley Cleary or Nancy Pearl. I studied in London last spring, and this is a picture of me with my mom at Trafalgar Square.

Karen Granados, (Minor)

I chose the American Studies minor as my Education Studies concentration. I felt that it would be complementary for me to understand the ways how America's history can be studied in order to enhance my teaching. After Skidmore, I hope to obtain a job as an elementary school teacher back home in Queens, New York City. My hobbies involve: exercising, listening to music, spending time with family and friends, and reading books. Within my family, my experience at Skidmore is a special one. My story is one of the first stories that serve as an example that graduating from college is possible for my immediate and extended family. My three brothers and I have completed college as a first generation family, born in New York City with parents from Guatemala. I did not know what to expect in college. Therefore, my experience at Skidmore was like being thrown into the sea with only a life jacket. Even though I did have support from some departments and professors, I was still on my own. I had to deal with the struggles of managing academic work, reaching out to classmates, seeking true friendships, and maintaining a positive and a healthy lifestyle. I leave Skidmore with a wider perspective of cultures and a greater understanding of self.

Suzanne Finkel, (Major)

In terms of the immediate future, I will be spending the summer in Saratoga Springs assisting Professor Kristie Ford conduct research for the Intergroup Relations program. I will then be moving back home to NYC, where I hope to get a job with a public interest organization, perhaps in legal or consulting field. I eventually want to go to graduate school, BUT in the meantime I need to narrow down some of my interests through work experience. As for hobbies I love being outside (when it's warm and sunny) and I enjoy running and biking. When it's cold, though, my favorite hobbies are cooking and baking.

My hometown: New York City

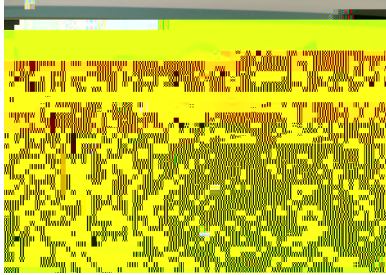
Why AM studies:

I came to Skidmore with no plans for my course of study, and soon found a home in the AM studies department. I quickly found the discipline to be the perfect fuse of historical and contemporary study, varied perspectives, critical analysis, and multi-medium learning. I was particularly attracted to the major because of its interdisciplinary focus-- I have been fortunate to have "multiple majors" in one. AM studies courses and faculty have allowed me to bridge my cross-disciplinary interests of social identity, systems of power and privilege, and social justice in interesting and challenging ways. I feel fortunate to have simultaneously been able to study these topics in my immediate environment/community, as well as on larger scale (across the nation, and in the world).

Senior Thesis:

I wrote my senior seminar paper in the fall on the dominant discourse of "diversity" in the corporate sector. I then went on to complete an Honors Thesis this spring, on the discourse of "diversity" in higher education, with a particular focus on Skidmore College.

Seniors cont.d



Brian Connor, Major is a golf enthusiast and Senior American Studies major from Brooklyn, NY. He arrived at the Skidmore College four years ago brandishing a thirst for knowledge but handicapped by an inability to

determine an academic path. After a protracted bout of pussyfooting, his mind was made up while taking an introductory course with Professor Pfitzer in the Spring of his first year. Originally thinking himself an English or History student, Connor was thrilled to find that he could apply his love of writing to subjects and topics that overlap and fall outside the boundaries of traditional disciplines. He could not be more pleased with the academic path he took, or with the culmination of that effort, his Senior Seminar

paper on the Symbolism of Cocktails in American Culture. Connor intends to draw from his experiences with the American Studies department at Skidmore, and from his extensive work as an editor and columnist on the Skidmore News, to continue blazing intellectual trails well into the future.

Gregory Pfitzer

It has been an enjoyable 2010-2011 academic year for me as I taught a full roster of classes, including AM 103: Myth and Symbol in American Culture; AM 201L: American Identities; AM 221: Methods and Approaches; AM 360C: The Sixties; and AM 374: Senior Seminar. That latter course, AM 374, was particularly fulfilling as I was able to help sixteen senior majors through the challenging process of producing a 35-40 page scholarly paper on individual topics of their choosing. Throughout the semester, students in AM 374 develop or sharpen various skills, including: how to locate primary and secondary sources; how to generate reliable and useful bibliographies; how to evaluate historical evi-

weeks of the course are given over to group exercises in selecting appropriate research topics and locating relevant historical materials. In each of the remaining weeks selected students present their findings in written formats to the seminar at least three times--once in the form of a prospectus; a second time in a more detailed rough draft format; and a third time in a formalized short draft. These "works-in-progress" reports are then evaluated by classmates using a peer critiquing system. Small study groups are created at the beginning of the term, and evaluation teams are assigned for the purposes of critiquing the formal presentations. Needless to say, there is a good deal of bonding that occurs

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Pfizer cont.d

ary during a blizzard--classes were eventually canceled that day but not before we had headed out into the fray--but we made it on one piece and had a wonderful time touring FDR's boyhood home and doing archival work in the Presidential library (see picture below). A lowlight of the

Mary C. Lynn

**AM 103 Natural and Unnatural Disasters**

Lynn | W/F, 10:10-11:30 | TLC 307

An interdisciplinary analysis of American's natural and unnatural disasters, this course will examine floods, fires, earthquakes, epidemics, and other disasters to explore the development of American culture. The course will emphasize writing and research, reading critically, thinking historically, practicing interdisciplinary, acknowledging diversity, and making connections. The class will study the Chicago Fire, the 1910 Big Burn Forest Fire, the San Francisco

Earthquake, the 1918 influenza epidemic, the 1927 Mississippi Flood, the Great Boston Molasses Flood of 1919, and the New England Hurricane of 1938. Fulfills expository writing requirement.

AM 250A: Regional Culture:**The Hudson River (4)**

Pfitzer | MWF, 10:10-11:05 | TLC 303

An introduction to the history, literature, and art of the Hudson River Valley. The Hudson River is considered as an environmental entity, an economic and political

FALL COURSES 2011

AM 250C: REGIONAL CULTURE:

The South

TBA| W,F 12:20-1:40 | TLC 301

Seniors continued





MacMurray, and Madame Sul-Te-Wan (a well-known African American actress whose other films included *Birth of a Nation*, *Intolerance*, and *King Kong*.) We need to think about the reasons for Tituba's shifting ethnic identity, which most scholars now believe

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