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Graduate School of Arts and Sciences—Yale University

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Spring Teaching Forum: Lectures

In light of the fact that more than half of Yale’s under-graduates are enrolled in lecture-based classes each semester, it was fitting that the organizers of the Spring Teaching Forum selected “Let’s Talk Lecture!” as this year’s theme.

Recent educational research has established that interactive learning is far more effective than passive listening. Does that mean lecture courses should be abolished? On the contrary, lectures, when properly managed, can promote active student engagement and serve students’ needs very well.

Speakers at the thirteenth-annual forum held on April 1 presented the history of the lecture at Yale, discussed administrative reasons why lectures are widespread throughout the curriculum, and suggested strategies that instructors and students might use to maximize the effectiveness of lecture courses. Graduate students, faculty members, and administrators from across campus and from area colleges packed into 311 to learn about and analyze the genre of lecture.

According to Penelope Laurans, special assistant to the president, master of Jonathan Edwards College, and longtime lecturer in the English department, “Yale has a great tradition of lecturing.” Although in its earliest days, students gave “recitations,” translating aloud or repeating material they had memorized, the Yale faculty has been graced with notable lecturers ever since enrollments increased during the mid-nineteenth century. Laurans noted the distinguished scientist Benjamin Silliman and the imposing social scientist William Graham Sumner from that early era, citing historical works that reference their rhetorical and oratorical capabilities. Laurans pointed to the influence of mesmerizing lecturers like Professor Chauncey Brewster Tinker, who is credited with inspiring Paul Mellon (b.a. 1929) to fund Yale’s Center for British Art and other major gifts to the University, and Vincent Scully, whose lecturing produced several generations of great architects and architectural historians. Memorable lecturing—while

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The Gradu ate Student Assembly has named three faculty members as outstanding mentors who guide, encourage, and inspire their students.

The winners of this year’s Graduate Mentor Awards are Julia Adams, professor and chair of the Department of Sociology and co-director of the Center for Comparative Research; Langdon Hammer, professor of English and American Studies; and Jordan Peccia, associate professor of Chemical and Environmental Engineering.

Established in 2000, the Graduate Mentor Award honors faculty members...
Stephen Chester (Anthropology) recently received eight separate grants totaling approximately $575,000 in support of his dissertation research. The granting agencies include the National Science Foundation and Ledyard Foundation, as well as Sigma Xi, the American Society of Ichneumonidologists, the University of California, the University of Wisconsin, the American Museum of Natural History, and the American Museum of Natural History. Stephen’s dissertation is focused on the origin and early evolutionary history of primates, particularly fossil primates from the Paleocene epoch (between 60 and 55 million years ago). The funding will allow him to travel to various museums to collect data and to use microCT scanning to study the skeletons of fossil and living mammals. He seeks to clarify which anatomical features separate primates from other early mammals and to elucidate the ways in which these modern primate features evolved. Stephen earned his bachelor’s degree from the University of Florida.


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“Keep students engaged in meaningful action. Lectures aren’t meant to be passive,” said Stephen Chester. “The history of an institution creates a culture,” noted William Rando, director of the Graduate Teaching Center. “Administrative realities change how we teach.” At a workshop Rando offered for all new instructors at Yale last fall, he asked participants to consider how they wanted the course they were about to teach to change their students and then urged them to find ways to accomplish those changes. Each lecture should have a clear purpose that students understand, he said. “Give your students a map showing them where we are, where we’re going, and how far we’ve come” so they have evidence that learning is happening and goals are being met. Tell students what to listen for and “keep students engaged in meaningful action. Lectures aren’t meant to be passive.”

Dean Thomas Pollard spoke at the forum about a cell biology lecture course that he has team-taught since 1973, which students regularly evaluate as one of their most challenging and satisfying classes. He and his co-instructors attend each other’s lectures so they can cross-reference material presented by their colleagues. They distribute illustrated lecture handouts both on paper and online so students can absorb the lecture as a whole instead of struggling to write down every last detail.

The handouts include behavioral objectives that specify the skills and concepts students are expected to master. Review questions that parallel the behavioral objectives allow the students to determine if they’ve learned what is expected. Some review questions are assigned for discussion sections led by teaching fellows and others are used by informal groups of students to teach one another. Handouts include a list of key terms, which Pollard described as “the working vocabulary for the course.” He explained that “These terms are useful for students to check if they are on top of the vocabulary. Even more important: it limits their jeopardy, since a typical science course has thousands of new terms. Having a list of the most important terms saves students from worrying about the less important ones or wasting a long time memorizing terms that they are sure to forget.”

Dean Pollard and other speakers recommended frequent, short quizzes to provide both students and faculty with feedback on which topics have been mastered or need clarification. The questions should be thought-provoking, not tests of memorized facts, he advised. To provide instant feedback, he distributes written sample answers at the time quizzes are collected. This approach encourages students to keep up, gives them exercise in thinking, and reinforces new concepts and information. Mark Schenker, associate dean of Yale College, described the periodic workshops focused on listening and note-taking skills that he offers to undergraduates to help maximize their learning in lecture courses. In those workshops, he urges the students to listen actively, experiment with different ways of taking notes, review the previous class’s notes before the next lecture, and annotate their notes afterward. Notes, Schenker argued, “are not a transcription of what the lecturer said. They are the record of the transaction that occurs in the lecture hall” between the teacher and the student.

Getting students to listen actively may involve having them respond in class to questions using an electronic poll-taking “clicker,” an approach strongly advocated by John Harris, professor of physics, who used colored flash cards before clickers were available to elicit quick feedback from his students. He said he finds it useful to teach difficult topics in ten-minute modules followed by clicker-based feedback. Tori Brescill, assistant professor at the School of Management, described the web surveys she assigns to her students before a lecture, which she credits with eliciting engagement from quieter students. She also advocated for the use of media clips to enliven a long lecture class and urged banning the use of laptops during lectures to eliminate web surfing.

Speaking in defense of the traditional, no-clicker, no-PowerPoint, words-only lecture, Steven Smith, the Alfred Cowles Professor of Political Science and master of Branford College, admitted that he “likes a good lecture.” He regards the long introductory lecture course as an excellent teaching tool in which “you can make the case for your field, expose students to great texts, and share your enthusiasm for the subject.” A lively, well-organized lecture is an excellent way to “draw students in,” Smith suggested. “Focus on what’s important, even though you know much more than you can talk about in 50 minutes,” he advised, and “never condescend to your students.”

The forum’s organizing committee included Rando; Jennifer Frederic, associate director of the Graduate Teaching Center and the Center for Scientific Teaching at Yale; Marie Bragg (Psychology); Paul Lagunes (Political Science); Kristin Rudenga (Neuroscience); and postdoctoral fellow Samuel Schaffer (Ph.D. 2012, History).

Reflecting on the event afterward, Marie said, “The forum touched on a number of issues that are relevant to graduate students, post-docs, and professors. It struck a great balance, providing attendees with concrete, practical tools and tips for improving their lectures, as well as some philosophical and theoretical ideas to process as they go through their careers.”

“A good lecture can make the case for your field, expose students to great texts, and share your enthusiasm for the subject. It is an excellent way to draw students in.”
“Mentoring is the foundation of a great education in graduate school. Our award recipients have made an exemplary contribution to the core mission of our school.”

The importance of the advisor cannot be overstated,” says Paul Pearlman (Engineering and Applied Science), chair of the gsa. “Because graduate education is an apprenticeship, quality mentoring is essential for the success and well-being of Ph.D. students.”

Paul adds, “Positive encouragement goes a long way, but all three recipients of the Mentoring Award this year take their roles a great deal further than that. It was clear from the letters sent by her students that Julia Adams is a singularly empathetic mentor who understands the needs and characteristics of her advisees and provides them with the attention they deserve. Langdon Hammer emerged as a very kind soul who takes his responsibilities as an advisor seriously. Students described numerous small acts of kindness and encouragement that he paired with strong guidance. Jordan Peccia notes, “Every person is different and needs to be treated differently by their mentor. While the path will be different for each one, the important thing to me is that my students leave Yale as fundamentally sound engineers, independent thinkers, and good writers.”

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“Mentoring is teaching. But it’s teaching that tends to go on outside the classroom — and it continues to evolve over the years, with plenty of challenges, and the growth and benefits going both ways. And for that reason, it may very well be the most satisfying kind of teaching.”

Peccia says, “Every day I’m impressed with my students’ abilities and potential. As a faculty member, the most effective way for me to make an impact on the world is through helping and encouraging these talented people. I’ve been lucky enough to have several good mentors. They were kind people, they took a personal interest in me, and they gave me intellectual space.”

 Asked how he mentors his students, Peccia notes, “Every person is different and needs to be treated differently by their mentor. While the path will be different for each one, the important thing to me is that my students leave Yale as fundamentally sound engineers, independent thinkers, and good writers.”

The award winners will be honored at the Graduate School’s Commencement Convocation in May.

Paola Montero Llopis

Paula Montero Llopis (MCDB) is one of twelve graduate students worldwide to receive a 2011 Harold M. Weintraub Graduate Student Award sponsored by the Basic Sciences division of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. The winners, selected on the basis of the quality, originality and significance of their work, will present their research at a scientific symposium in May at the Hutchinson Center in Seattle. Paula’s research explores how bacterial cells are able to organize the flow of genetic information despite lacking internal compartments. Her advisor is Christine Jacobs-Wagner. She completed her undergraduate degree at Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain.

Andre Redwood

Andre Redwood (Music) has been awarded a 2011–2012 Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship by the American Council of Learned Societies. The fellowship will fund the final year of work on his dissertation, “The Elusive Science of Music: Marin Mersenne’s Uses of Rhetoric in the Harmonie Universelle (1636).”

Mersenne, a clergyman and scientist whose extensive writings touched on topics ranging from theology, philosophy, and mathematics to mechanics, optics, and acoustics, is a significant figure in the history of music theory, owing to his experimental approach to the study of sound and, by extension, to the study of music. Andre’s dissertation advisor is Patrick McCreless. More than one thousand applicants nationwide competed for this grant, and only 70 were awarded. Andre earned his bachelor’s degree from the University of Rochester’s Eastman School of Music.
Notes from the Yale Graduate School Alumni Association

Commencement is just around the corner, bringing both anxiety and excitement to this year’s graduates. Recently, with the downturn in the economy, what life after graduation will entail is no longer straightforward.

“As a recent graduate, I know first-hand the worries and the optimism that attend this phase of life,” says Bobbi Sutherland (Ph.D. 2009, Medieval Studies), assistant professor of history at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa. “Many students worry that a professorship or post-doctoral fellowship are their only options or that their training suits them only for very specialized academic research. Others think that they might not find satisfaction in a career outside academia. In general, this is not the case!”

For many years, scientists have chosen to work for industry or government and many humanities scholars have gone to law school. But these paths do not begin to convey the myriad opportunities available to people with Ph.D.s or master’s degrees.

Graduates of GSAS have elected to apply their training toward careers as research librarians, high school teachers, business consultants, and translators. One recent graduate is working for the CIA, another for the State Department.

According to Sutherland, acquaintances from Yale who have opted for non-academic careers “report satisfaction from their jobs and consider their Yale education invaluable in their work.” She notes, “Graduate students often fail to see the many skills they have regarding technical processes and equipment, writing, research, languages, and analytical thinking. All of these skills can be translated to many different careers.”

A faculty position is very much an option, especially if the applicant will consider campuses outside the U.S., or at newer universities. Marie-Rose Logan (Ph.D. 1974, French), for example, became professor of European and comparative literature at Soka University in California in 2005, having spent a number of years on the faculty of Columbia University. Soka first opened its doors in 2000 and is now fully accredited. “Since I have been here,” Logan remarks, “we have made several excellent appointments in all fields, including in many areas of the humanities. As the University expands, it will undoubtedly hire more professors at all levels.”

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The GSA in the process of restructuring Monitoring Weekend to better reflect student concerns. Rather than hold general sessions for the entire student body, the GSA would like to encourage department-specific events that foster betterment and professional development for students in those departments.

Another GSA initiative involves improving the quality of the annual Dissertation Progress Report. The GSA is currently gathering feedback on the format, accuracy, and comprehensiveness of the forms. If you have not already completed the survey, please consider sharing your experiences and suggestions at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WLZ9MN

GSA representatives have been active all year in issues related to transit, security, library policies, facilities, and healthcare. In addition to addressing cycling and pedestrian infrastructure and the campus shuttle bus service, the Transit and Security Committee has engaged in conversations about future city-wide changes, including plans to reconstruct Route 34.

The GSA continues to engage concerns related to the Payne Whitney Gymnasium. If you would like to report problems related to the gym, please contact Luke Thompson (luca.thompson@yale.edu).

Looking ahead, the GSA is excited to launch a new Sustainability Committee that will work with the Office of Sustainability. The GSA also aims to launch a Peer Advisory Program next year to help guide graduate students who are having personal or academic problems to find the best method for resolving their concerns. If you would like to be part of the committee in charge of implementing the pilot program on the fall, or if you are interested in being a peer advisor, please contact Sigma Colón (sigma.colon@yale.edu).

Contributed by Sigma Colón
(American Studies)
One panel addressed the current economic climate, including the housing bubble, the meltdown of financial institutions, and the recession. “Yale Economists and the Crisis,” moderated by Ben Polak, featured four alumni: John Geanakoplos (B.A. 1975), the James Tobin Professor of Economics; Jeffrey Alan Goldstein (Ph.D. 1983), under-secretary, U.S. Department of the Treasury; David Swensen (Ph.D. 1980), Yale’s chief investment officer; and Janet Yellen (Ph.D. 1971), vice chair of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors.

Geanakoplos placed the blame for the crisis on too much leverage and said the government needs to monitor and regulate collateral rates or leverage, just as it does interest rates. Goldstein suggested that the Treasury and the federal government needed to cooperate across party lines. “TARP,” he said, “has been an enormous success and not sufficiently understood and appreciated.”

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Robert Shiller, the Arthur M. Okun Professor of Economics, gave an overview of “The Yale Tradition in Macroeconomics,” a field for which the University is well known. He pointed out that although Yale was established in 1701, the first economics course, “Political Economy,” wasn’t offered until 1824. Even then, there were no economics professors until 1873, when Francis Amasa Walker joined the faculty. Shiller noted that economists have held major positions in Yale’s administration over the years, right up to today. The first president of the university who wasn’t a clergyman was an economist: Arthur Twining Hadley, who took office in 1899. Economist Edgar Stevenson Furniss became dean of the Graduate School in 1934 and the University’s provost in 1946. Yale awarded its first Ph.D. in economics to Irving Fisher in 1891. He went on to have a prestigious, but controversial, academic career at Yale and an interesting life. He was a devotee of physical exercise, an anti-smoking crusader, an inventor (of the folding chair, price level mechanism, wooden clock, and more), and a prolific author of books about monetary policy. In 1937, the Sheffield Scientific School merged with Yale College into a single Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and the Department of Economics was officially established. Since then, it has produced many outstanding alumni and served as the academic home to a distinguished faculty, including Alfred Cowles, Arthur Okun, James Tobin, and Richard C. Levin, Yale’s current president.
Understanding War through Film and Text

“...first love and intrigue that I felt during my first visit to Spain ten years ago,” says Nicole Mombell (Spanish).

Nicole says that her Cuban heritage, and Asturian and Basque lineage led her to Spain, and the result was a fascination with Spanish culture and history that became a serious intellectual pursuit.

Nicole has written her dissertation on the cultural manifestations of a turbulent period in Spain’s history: the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) and the repressive regime that followed, during which Francisco Franco ruled the country from 1939 until his death in 1975. In particular, she examines the literary and cinematic representations of the experience of Spanish soldiers during World War II.

“...the Spanish Civil War is, without question, the most significant Spanish conflict of the 20th century,” she says. “Many Spaniards, however, did not stop fighting in April 1939 and remained engaged in armed conflict in Spain and abroad during the 1940s and later. While the Spanish Civil War has received much attention as the subject of cultural production and academic inquiry, the continued involvement of Spaniards in other local and international conflicts during the World War II period has not. My research seeks to extend this frame and contribute to a new critical examination of this part of Spanish history,” she explains.

Nicole’s dissertation, advised by Noël Valis, is titled “Reading War: Soldiers’ Experience in Contemporary Spanish Literature and Film.” In her project, Nicole discusses how “ideas about war and the past are shaped by texts and film” and explores how Spaniards have “attempted to negotiate their relationship to the present by turning to narratives of history and memory of war.” Using fiction, poetry, oral history, and film, Nicole demonstrates that “the traumatic consequences of war and its aftermath are actively evolving in today’s political, historical, cultural, and artistic scene in Spain.” In fact, she regards the repercussions of Spain’s militant past as “omnipresent in cultural life” and persisting within “the Spanish psyche and society.”

Among the materials Nicole analyzes for her dissertation are Guillermo del Toro’s and filmmakers seek “to vindicate the historical experiences of soldiers and ex-combatants that have previously been shut out of the public sphere.” She uses a theoretical framework that considers culture and history “as intersecting discursive practices” and traces out “the ways in which Spanish intellectual, political, biographical, and national history is re-inscribed and worked over by texts and films that offer articulations of new perspectives.”

In the fall, Nicole will begin a tenure-track position in the Department of Modern Languages and Literature at St. Michael’s College in Colchester, Vermont.
Rethinking the Colonial Indian Wars

The Organization of American Historians (OAH) has awarded the 2011 Louis Pelzer Memorial Award, given for the best essay on any topic in American history by a graduate student, to Christine M. DeLucia (American Studies).

The essay will be published in a forthcoming issue of the Journal of American History.

Christine’s prize-winning essay, “The Memory Frontier: Uncommon Pursuits of Historical Consciousness,” explores the remembering, marking, and mapping of the conflict—or struggled to forget it. While standard histories routinely erase native people from New England at that point in history, calling the war the “Indians’ last stand,” tribal communities have used this same conflict to “make visible alternative geography of persistence and recovery,” she says. Christine challenges Yankee narratives about the war and contends that the creation and preservation of what she calls “place-making” can be used to marginalize, but also to promote “resistance, regeneration, and even the spaces where they perform cultural theory a measurement boost that enabled her to demonstrate that “vernacular transmission of historical consciousness has long been a thoroughly multidimensional endeavor for Natives and settlers alike.”

Christine studied archival records of towns and their relationships with the indigenous communities and their neighbors who have maintained, severed, or re-shaped their relationships with a troubling past and its grounds.

To identify some overlooked complexities of the war itself and its aftermath, Christine studied archival records of towns, reservations, and even families to evaluate “local senses of belonging and collective purpose.” Much of the material was available at Yale, especially in the Ezra Stiles manuscripts and New England colonial histories at the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, but she also located important materials in several dozen local and state historical collections and museums across New England, Quebec, and Bermuda. Some of her research was done at the John Carter Brown Library in Providence, Rhode Island, and at the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation Museum & Research Center in Ledyard, Connecticut. Her essay focused on three significant sites: one in Rhode Island, one on the New Hampshire/Maine border, and the third in Bermuda, where there is a community believed to be descended from Native American prisoners of war.

Christine also studied records of oral tradition, performance, material culture, archaeology, and the physical environment where events took place, which enabled her to demonstrate that “vernacular transmission of historical consciousness has long been a thoroughly multidimensional endeavor for Natives and settlers alike.”

Christine won a Council on Library and Information Resources/Mellon Fellowship last year for this research. Additional funding came from the Gilder Lehrman Center and the MacMillan Center. The essay is based on her dissertation, advised by John Mack Fara- gher. She has also worked closely with Yale’s two Native American historians, professors Ned Blackhawk and Alyssa Mt. Pleasant.

Research: Public Health

Measuring Perceived Risks

Can you measure what people worry about and use the results to predict their future behavior?

In the article, the authors outline a ten-item SJT that measures risk perception far better than the conventional approach. Their SJT doesn’t ask participants to rank options from best to worst because, they argue, “It does not serve any purpose to judge which cultural type is superior to another or which course of action is the right one. Instead, these SJTs are meant to measure the cultural biases associated with different risk situations.”

Here is a sample item in their situational judgment test:

Instructions: for each situation described, rank the four options in the order you would most likely take. For example, write “1” for the option that best describes what you would do, “2” inside the option that least describes what you would do. Every statement must have a different rank, no two statements should share the same rank.

To minimize acts of terrorism, airport checks have become more stringent and time-consuming.

(a) I obviously don’t fit a terrorist’s profile. The checks are an unnecessary imposition and a waste of my time.

(b) Such stringent checks infringe upon our liberties and freedom. It is likely to focus on minorities.

(c) These regulations are necessary to ensure better airport security and should be encouraged.

(d) I don’t have much of a choice, other than to accept these measures. If you’re caught in a terrorist attack, it’s just bad luck.

Using a multi-step process, experts interpreting the tests can analyze the choices made by four types of people identified by cultural theory—individualists, egalitarians, hierarchists and fatalists. They can then more reliably predict the future behavior of each personality type.

“We hope that this article has given cultural theory a measurement boost that will raise it to the healthy status that it deserves,” he says.

Reuben earned the M.S.C. degree in management research at Oxford. At Yale, he studies aging under the guidance of Becca Levy. As a Fulbright Scholar, his work is featured at http://scienceandtech.fulbrightonline.org/fellowship/fellow-publications.

Reuben also serves as Graduate Writing Center Fellow.

Above, Mr. Reuben Nig (Public Health) is trying to find out.

He and Steve Rayner of Oxford University have published an article titled “Integrating psychometric and cultural theory approaches to formulate an alternative measure of risk perception” that appeared in the October issue of the journal International: The European Journal of Social Science Research. The paper critiques current methods of measuring risk perception and proposes a novel approach based on recent developments in industrial organizational psychology.

The standard approach asks people to consider and rank their sense of risk from various sources, such as terrorism, railroad collisions, pharmaceuticals, or caffeine. “We argue that this approach has two limitations,” Reuben says. “The first is that attitude measurements capture only static thoughts and therefore may not be good predictors of behavior. The second is that certain survey questions used in the psychometric approach primed thoughts of death.”

Previous research has established that thinking about death leads people to be more conservative in their actions and attitudes, influencing the measurements and making the research outcomes inaccurate. “Such unintentional priming evoked defense mechanisms that would subconsciously activate participants’ cultural biases and values when answering some questions but not others,” Reuben says.

Reuben and his colleague propose the use of Situational Judgment Tests (SJT’s) instead of the conventional method- ology. “SJTs solicit anticipated behavior in risky scenarios and measure the dynamic nature of thinking rather than the static attitudes measured using the standard approach.”

SJT’s grew out of studies undertaken by the Aviation Psychology Program of the US Air Force during World War II to aid in the selection and classification of flight crews. SJTs present test-takers with situations that they might encounter, as well as possible responses. Participants are usually asked to choose the best and worst course of action or rank them in order. The answers are scored with reference to an answer key based on the choices that achieved consensus among experts in the field.

Above, Mr. Reuben Nig, third generation of New England Huguenots, at a family reunion in France. 

Above, right: History’s apartment at Northfield, Massachusetts, marking the site of a duel during King Philip’s War.
OUTSTANDING ALUMNI

SARAH HALEY
The Organization of American Historians (OAH) has awarded Sarah Haley (Ph.D. 2010, American Studies and African American Studies) the 2011 Lerner-Scott Prize, given annually for the best doctoral dissertation in U.S. women’s history. Haley’s dissertation, “Engendering Captivity: Black Women and Convict Labor in Georgia, 1865–1938,” explores how gender, race, and class intersected in Georgia’s convict labor system during the Jim Crow era. She demonstrates that black women occupied a position wholly at odds with normative femininity and highlights their efforts for freedom in contexts such as women’s blues productions, imprisoned women’s everyday activities, and the work of the black women’s club movement. Haley’s research identifies the experiences of imprisonment and gendered racial terror as a new way of understanding how gender ideology developed and shaped the South. Her dissertation, advised by Hazel Carby, Glenda Gilmore, and Joanne Meyerowitz, won the Sylvia Ardyn Boone Dissertation Prize from the Graduate School last year. Haley won the Liza Cariaga-Lo Award for Diversity in Scholarship and Service from Yale and was inducted into the Edward A. Bouchet National Graduate Honor Society in 2009.

Haley is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for African American Studies at Princeton University. In September, she will begin an appointment as assistant professor in the Women’s Studies department of the University of California, Los Angeles.

CAITLIN FITZ
Caitlin Fitz (Ph.D. 2010, History) is currently a Barra Postdoctoral Fellow at the McNeil Center for Early American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, where she is writing a book based on her dissertation, “Our Sister Republics: The United States in an Age of American Revolutions.” Her research illuminates the wave of enthusiasm for Latin American independence that engulfed the United States during the early nineteenth century. Drawing on Portuguese, Spanish, French, and English sources as well as archival research from Boston to Buenos Aires, she shows how events elsewhere in the Americas shaped popular understandings of race, revolution, and republicanism in the United States. Her dissertation advisors were John Demos and Joanne Freeman. Following the fellowship year, Fitz will join the faculty of Northwestern University.

CARRIE LANE
Carrie Lane (Ph.D. 2005, American Studies), assistant professor of American Studies at California State University, Fullerton, recently published her first book, A Company of One: Insecurity, Independence, and the New World of White-Collar Unemployment (Cornell University Press, 2011). Based on years of fieldwork among unemployed high-technology workers in the Dallas area, the book explores how frequent layoffs, changes in the job search process, and dual-income marriage have reshaped the way today’s skilled workers view unemployment. “In the American economy’s boom-and-bust business cycle since the 1980s, repeated layoffs have become part of working life,” she says, arguing that people have embraced a new definition of employment in which all jobs are temporary and all workers are, or should be, independent “companies of one.” Although sympathetic to the benefits that this individualistic ideology can offer, Lane also explores how it hides the true costs of an insecure workforce and increases the difficulty of collective and political responses to job loss and downward mobility.

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