

LIBERAL STUDIES MA PROGRAM

University at Albany State University of New York

The Liberal Studies Program at the University at Albany is an exciting new interdisciplinary MA program that allows students to design their own degrees, taking classes across all departments in the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences. The program is open and flexible, and is mainly designed for students working in contemporary social thought, but it allows students to work across a variety of areas, from literary and cultural studies to philosophy and political theory. It is especially designed for students with strong academic backgrounds who intend to pursue a Ph.D., but who wish to develop their knowledge and academic credentials in preparation for doctoral work. The program has particular strength in English, History, Philosophy and Political Science, and allows students to work across these and other departments. It especially supports students who are interested in contemporary cultural theory and interdisciplinary areas such as American Studies, human rights, feminist theory, globalization, critical social thought, post-colonial studies, aesthetics and cultural production, and related areas of research.

The program is hospitable to foreign students who intend to pursue an American doctoral degree, but who wish to advance their knowledge and academic credentials before applying to doctoral programs. The program provides foreign students with intensive immersion in English, and with experience of the culture of the American university, which are expected to help foreign students improve their GRE and TOEFL scores. The current program includes strong students from China, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, some of whom have already moved successfully to doctoral programs on completing their degrees.

For all students pursuing advanced work in any of the participating departments, the program advances research skills, and develops the historical and theoretical background of students, while providing them

with a thesis written in English, which will enhance future applications to doctoral study.

The degree requires 30 credits (typically 7 classes plus a 4-credit thesis). Students can request to have up to 8 credits of graduate-level work, completed at other universities, count toward the Liberal Studies degree. For students who have done graduate-level work elsewhere, the program can therefore be finished more efficiently. SUNY – Albany is comparatively affordable in relation to other state universities in the United States, and the Graduate Admissions Office is available to help with visas and other required documents (contact is Erin Barrett). NOTE: The application deadline is flexible. We accept applications through June 30.

For further information, including material on our most recent conference, please see the websites below:

<http://affinities.weebly.com/>

[http://www.albany.edu/graduatebulletin/
liberal_studies_graduate_program_curriculum.htm](http://www.albany.edu/graduatebulletin/liberal_studies_graduate_program_curriculum.htm)

For questions please contact:

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Liberal Studies Program Director



Charles Shepherdson (Ph.D. Vanderbilt University) is Professor of English and Director of the Liberal Studies Program at the University at Albany (SUNY). He works at the intersections of literature, philosophy and psychoanalysis. Trained in British Romanticism and the history of British poetry, he has also published extensively in continental philosophy and contemporary cultural theory, with particular interests in gender, feminist theory, and the history of subjectivity. He is the author of Vital Signs: Nature, Culture, Psychoanalysis (Routledge), Lacan and the Limits of Language (Fordham), The Ethics of Female Love (Zenske Studije, Belgrade), and co-editor of The Couch: East Asian Perspectives on Psychoanalysis (Concentric, Taiwan). He is editor of Insinuations, a book series at SUNY Press that has produced more than 20 volumes. He has received support from the Henry A. Luce Foundation, the Andrew Mellon Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Woodrow Wilson Foundation. He has been a Fulbright Senior Specialist (2006-11), a National Science Council Professor in Taiwan, and Aristotelian Chair in the Liberal Arts at Saint Thomas Aquinas College. He has held fellowships at the Commonwealth Center at the University of Virginia, the Humanities Center at Vanderbilt University, the Claremont Graduate School, and the Pembroke Center at Brown University. He was also a Member in the School of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton.

We hear constantly about the decline of interest in the humanities in recent years, as we witness increasing support and development, in universities across the United States, of areas that are said to be more practical and more likely to end in employment . . . and, one presumes, a good life. Henry David Thoreau is as relevant as ever when he writes:

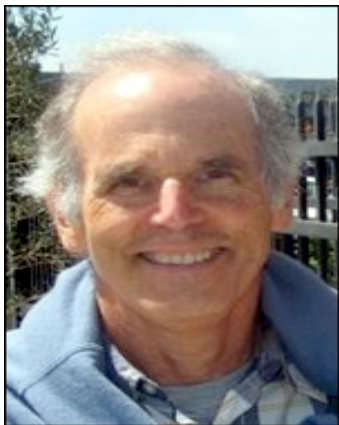
“We seem to have forgotten that the expression ‘a liberal education’ originally meant among the Romans one worthy of free men; while the learning of trades and professions by which to get your livelihood merely, was considered worthy of slaves only.”

Mitch Aso (Ph.D. History of Science, University of Wisconsin-Madison)



is an Assistant Professor of History whose research focuses on the Global Environment. Before arriving at the University at Albany, he completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the National University of Singapore. He is currently finishing a book manuscript called Forest without Birds: Rubber and Environmental Crises in Vietnam, 1890-1975, which explores the making of environments, human health, and knowledge through the places and people involved in rubber production. His dissertation on French colonial Vietnam won the 2013 Young Scholar Prize of the International Union of the History and Philosophy of Science. He has recently published articles in *Modern Asian Studies*, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, and *Science, Technology, and Society*. He teaches courses on global environmental history and Asian history.

Peter Breiner (Ph.D. Stanford University)



is Associate Professor of Political Science

at The University at Albany, SUNY. He is the author of *Max Weber and Democratic Politics* (1996) and numerous articles on Weber and thinkers influenced by Weber such as Karl Mannheim, and Hannah Arendt. This work seeks to recover a moment when political theory was combined with political sociology to produce a sociologically informed account of political judgment. He has also written on Machiavelli with a particular focus on how his textual strategy must remain incomplete because the text is completed in political action. His present work has taken two directions. First he is writing on what counts as “political reality” in the debate over ideal and realist political theory. Second, he is working on a book on the ways different contexts of political conflict shape the meaning of political equality and citizenship and in turn how the struggle for political equality and citizenship shapes various contexts of political conflict. A major claim of this book is that the struggle for political equality and citizenship is unfinished and will remain so.

Pedro Cabán (Ph.D. in Political Science, Columbia University)



joined the Department of Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino Studies in 2011. He is Director of Graduate Programs and will be chairperson of the department in Fall 2014. From 2011-2013 he was the elected department senator in the University Senate, and chaired the Committee on Curriculum and Instruction of the Graduate Advisory Council. Cabán served as the Vice Provost for Diversity and Educational Equity of the State University of New York from 2007 to 2011. As Vice Provost, Cabán provided strategic direction to all SUNY campuses in recruiting and retaining faculty, and undergraduate and graduate students from historically underrepresented populations in higher education. Cabán specializes in the development

of race and ethnic studies as academic disciplines, race and U.S. political development, and the political economy of colonialism and imperialism. Cabán directed Latino studies departments and programs at Fordham, Cornell, Rutgers, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. At Illinois he was also a Faculty in Residence at the Center for Democracy in a Multiracial Society; at Rutgers he was a co-director of the Center for Cultural Analysis' interdisciplinary, year-long seminar on the American Century in the Americas. He is the author of *Constructing a Colonial People: Puerto Rico and the United States, 1898-1932*, and has published dozens of articles, book chapters, and review essays.

Richard S. Fogarty (Ph.D. UC-Santa-Barbara)



is an Associate Professor in the History Department. He earned his PhD in History at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and specializes in the history of the French colonial empire, the First World War, and race and racism. His book, *Race and War in France: Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914-1918* (Johns Hopkins UP, 2008), winner of Phi Alpha Theta's Best First Book Prize, examines racial attitudes and colonial and military policies during the First World War. He has published a number of articles, and recently co-edited with Andrew Jarboe *Empires in World War I: Shifting Frontiers and Imperial Dynamics in a Global Conflict* (I.B. Tauris, 2014). He is working on a study of North African prisoners of war during the Great War, with special attention to the place of Islam and Muslims in France, Germany, and beyond, as well as in the wider military and ideological struggle in Europe and the Middle East. His teaching interests and graduate courses include modern French and European history; war, society, and culture; colonialism and imperialism;

Islam and Muslims in Europe; and the histories of race and racism. He is also a recipient of the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Teaching.

Susan Gauss (Ph.D. SUNY Stony Brook)



works on nineteenth and twentieth century Latin American history, with a focus on state formation, nation-building, and development in Mexico. As a scholar of social and political history, she explores the history of industry, commodities, consumption, labor, and gender. Her first book, *Made in Mexico: Regions, Nation, and the State in the Rise of Mexican Industrialism* (Penn State UP, 2010), examines the emergence of state-led industrialization in mid-twentieth century Mexico. Currently she is working on a new book that examines the history of Mexican beer from the mid-19th century to the present. Her courses focus on modern Latin America, especially Mexico and South America. She also teaches widely on comparative state-society relations and public policy; on global commodities and consumption; on gender in a global context; on revolutions and social movements in Latin America; and on the U.S. in Latin America.

Glyne A. Griffith (Ph.D. University of the West Indies).



My areas of scholarly expertise are post-colonial literary/cultural theory and criticism and Anglophone Caribbean literature. I attended Harrison College secondary school in Barbados, City University of New York (double major in English and Political Science), and the University of the West Indies (Jamaica Campus). My doctorate was informed by the ways in which Caribbean literature functions ideologically against a historical background of imperialist thought and colonialist practice in the region. One could hardly grow up in the Caribbean and not be intimately aware of the legacies of imperialism and colonialism impacting the archipelago even in the present conjuncture. Therefore, for someone like me, literature has always been a profoundly political enterprise both as a practice of European colonial cultural imposition and as a decidedly anti-colonial resistance act on the part of many Caribbean writers. My published work includes titles such as Deconstruction, Imperialism and the West Indian Novel (1996), and the editions Caribbean Cultural Identities (2001) and Color, Hair and Bone: Race in the 21st Century (2008) co-edited Linden Lewis. More recent scholarly articles maintain this focus with titles such as “The Politics of Fiction: George Lamming’s Critique of Imperialist Discourse” (2011) and “Marxism: Reading Class in Anglophone Caribbean Literature” (2011). I look forward to working with all students in the Liberal Studies program to nurture in them the same excitement for learning that my instructors over the years have inculcated in me.

Mike Hill (Ph.D. SUNY Stony Brook)



is Associate Professor of English at the University at Albany, SUNY, where he recently stepped down as department Chair. Hill has published widely and teaches in eighteenth-century studies, critical race theory, and contemporary cultural studies. His books are: *The Other Adam Smith: Popular Contention, Commercial Society, and the Birth of Necro-politics* (Stanford: 2014, co-authored); *After Whiteness: Unmaking an American Majority* (NYU: 2004); *Masses, Classes, and the Public Sphere* (Verso: 2000, contrib. ed.); and *Whiteness: A Critical Reader* (NYU: 1997, contrib. ed.). He is currently writing a book called *Ecologies of War: Racial Complexity in an Age of Failed States* for the University of Minnesota Press.

Ryan M. Irwin (Ph.D. Ohio State University)



is an assistant professor of history at the University at Albany (SUNY). He is the author of *Gordian Knot: Apartheid and the Unmaking of the Liberal World Order* (Oxford, 2012). Currently, he is writing *Castle of Sand: Liberal Order and Its Afterlives*, drafting a short volume on decolonization, and finishing an edited volume, entitled *American Empire*. His essays have been published in a variety of journals and periodicals, including *Foreign Affairs*, *Diplomatic History*, *International History Review*, *History Compass*, *Passport*, and *Kronos*, and he's won several writing awards, including the Stuart L. Bernath Prize in 2009. He was previously a fellow at Yale University and the associate director of International Security Studies.

Ika Kressner (Ph.D. University of Virginia)



teaches in Languages, Literatures and Cultures. Focusing on 20th century to contemporary Spanish American literature and film, her research interests include intermediality (relations between text, image, and sound) and conceptions of space in literature (encompassing the related topics of repression and claustrophobia, vertigo, free fall, and velocity). Her scholarship and teaching examine Spanish American literatures and art from a variety of cultural and national contexts, often from a comparative perspective. Her articles have appeared in the *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, *Iberoamericana*, *Hispanic Journal*, *Revista Chilena de Literatura*, *MELUS* and *Hispanófila*. Her monograph *Sites of Disquiet: The Non-Space in Spanish American Short Narratives and their Cinematic Transformations* was published with Purdue UP (2013).

Kir Kuiken (Ph.D. University of California – Irvine)



is assistant professor of English. He is the author of *Imagined Sovereignities: Toward a New Political Romanticism* (Fordham University Press, 2014), a book which argues that Romantic era authors reconceived not just the nature of the aesthetic imagination, but also the conditions in which a specific form of political sovereignty could be realized through it. He has published articles on critical theory, including essays on Deleuze, Derrida, Heidegger, Benjamin and Nancy, as well as essays on Romantic era authors such as Wordsworth, Shelley and Goethe. He is currently working on two new book projects. The first deals with the question of how Romanticism becomes a crucial resource for contemporary political and critical theories that attempt to rethink political ontology. The second, co-authored with Branka Arsic, explores representations of the Haitian Revolution of 1804 from the nineteenth century to the present, focusing on how these representations challenged European conceptions of the sovereign subject.

Johana Londoño (Ph.D. NYU)



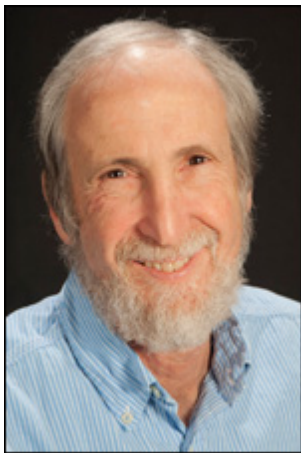
is Assistant Professor in the Dept. of Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino Studies. She received her PhD and MPhil from the American Studies Program in the Department of Social and Cultural Analysis at New York University, and a BFA from the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art. Her research has appeared in *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, *Antipode Foundation: A Radical Geography Community*, and in the edited volume, *Latino Urbanism: The Politics of Planning, Policy and Redevelopment*. Interested in the intersections among cultural studies, urban studies, and Latina/o studies, she is currently at work on a manuscript titled *Barrio Abstractions: The Latinization of Cities, Urban Design, and Representations of Poverty*. Her main teaching interests include Latinos in contemporary cities and Latino cultural studies.

Jon Mandle (Ph.D. University of Pittsburgh)



is a Professor in the Philosophy Department. His research and teaching is mainly in the areas of political philosophy and ethics, and their histories, with special emphasis on the work of John Rawls and Immanuel Kant. He is the author of three books, including *Global Justice* (Polity, 2006), and *Rawls's 'A Theory of Justice': An Introduction* (Cambridge, 2009), as well as the co-editor of *A Companion to Rawls* (Routledge, 2014), and the forthcoming *The Cambridge Rawls Lexicon*.

Bruce Miroff (Ph.D. University of California – Berkeley)



joined the Department of Political Science at

Albany in 1978. He has also taught at the University of Texas, Austin, the University of California at Davis, and Williams College. Miroff teaches and writes on the American Presidency, American Political Development, American Political Theory, and Political Leadership. He has received the Excellence in Teaching Award and is a Collins Fellow at the University at Albany. Along with numerous articles and book chapters, he has authored or co-authored five books: *Pragmatic Illusions: The Presidential Politics of John F. Kennedy* (1976), *Icons of Democracy: American Leaders as Heroes, Aristocrats, Dissenters, and Democrats* (1993), *The Liberals' Moment: The McGovern Insurgency and the Identity Crisis of the Democratic Party* (2007), *Debating Democracy: A Reader in American Politics*, Sixth Edition (2009), and *The Democratic Debate: American Politics in an Age of Change*, Fifth Edition (2010). He has delivered guest lectures at a number of American universities, and in the summer of 2009 he was a State Department lecturer in Brazil.

Distinguished Professor **John Monfasani** (Ph.D. Columbia University)



is an historian specializing in Renaissance Europe, with a special interest in humanism, philosophy, and theology. For fifteen years the Executive Director of the Renaissance Society of America, he has written over fifteen books and eighty articles. He is presently working on a multi-volume study of the Plato-Aristotle controversy of the fifteenth century.

Julie Novkov (Ph.D. University of Michigan)



is Professor of Political Science and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the University at Albany, SUNY and chairs the Department of Political Science. Her research and teaching address the intersections of law, history, US political development, and subordinated identity. Her books are *The Supreme Court and the Presidency* (CQ Press 2013), *Racial Union: Law, Intimacy, and the White State in Alabama 1865-1954* (Michigan 2008), co-recipient of APSA's Ralph Bunche Award, and *Constituting Workers, Protecting Women* (Michigan 2001). She co-edited *Statebuilding from the Margins* (with Carol Nackenoff), *Race and American Political Development* (with Joseph Lowndes and Dorian Warren), and *Security Disarmed* (with Barbara Sutton and Sandra Morgen). She is writing a new book on citizenship and civic membership in the context of military service.

Morton Schoolman (Ph.D. Brown University)



Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Political Science at the University at Albany (SUNY). He is a political theorist specializing in modern and contemporary European and American Political Thought and has published widely in both areas of specialization. His published works include *The Imaginary Witness: The Critical Theory of Herbert Marcuse; Reason and Horror: Critical Theory, Democracy, and Aesthetic Individuality*; and he is coeditor of *Modernity and Political Thought*, a book series in contemporary political theory about to publish its 17th volume. He is currently at work on a new book entitled *Democratic Enlightenment: The Reconciliation Image and the Emancipation of Perception*, which explores the ways in which cinema teaches lessons about the constitution of a highly developed democratic society, in particular lessons about the ideal of reconciliation between national, group, and personal identities and diverse forms of social difference.

Torrey Shanks (Ph.D. Northwestern University)



is Assistant Professor of Political Science in the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy. She works in the area of political theory, with an emphasis on democratic theory, rhetoric and politics, feminist theory, and the history of political thought. She has published work on rhetoric and political critique in early modern political thought, on new materialism, and on consent. Her current projects focus on political judgment, toleration, posthumanism, and "The Racial Contract." She is the author of *Authority Figures: Rhetoric and Experience in John Locke's Political Thought* (Penn State UP, 2014).



works in Critical Race Studies in a transnational and global context, African American poetry, American popular culture, and relations between esthetic movements and radical Black politics in America. Originally from the Caribbean, and having completed his BA in English Literature at the University of Michigan before moving to Northwestern, he has also taught in Dubai (UAE) and Oman, before moving to the Department of English. He has also taught in the Bard Prison Initiative. He is currently completing *Love's Lonely Offices*, a book on Robert Hayden and the Black Arts Movement.

Derik Smith (Ph.D. Northwestern University)

Meredith L. Weiss (PhD, Yale University)



is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University at Albany, SUNY. She has held visiting fellowships or professorships also at universities and institutes in Australia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore, as well as the US, most recently as Visiting Associate Professor in Southeast Asia Studies at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (2013-14). Weiss is the author of *Student Activism in Malaysia: Crucible, Mirror, Sideshow* (Cornell SEAP/NUS Press, 2011) and *Protest and Possibilities: Civil Society and Coalitions for Political Change in Malaysia* (Stanford, 2006), as well as numerous journal articles and book chapters. She has edited or co-edited six books—most recently, *The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Malaysia* (forthcoming), *Electoral Dynamics in Malaysia: Findings from the Grassroots* (ISEAS/SIRD, 2013) and *Global Homophobia: States, Movements, and the Politics of Oppression* (Illinois, 2013). Her research addresses political mobilization and contention, the politics of development, civil society, nationalism and ethnicity, and electoral change in Southeast Asia. Weiss has previously served as chair of the Southeast Asia Council of the Association for Asian Studies and has served in several positions in the American Political Science Association (APSA) and component sections.