A program in interdisciplinary cross-area graduate training that prepares students for research at the intersection of two or more cultures.

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Crossing Borders Seminar (Fall 2002) Historical Relations of Coastal Africa and India: Society, Empire and Environment 1600-2000

The course co-offered by Professors Paul Greenough and James Gilkin introduces current scholarly work and controversies in the social, political, economic and environmental history of East Africa and Western India. These regions are normally approached separately, but a new literature is emerging that links them through the exploitation of webs of trade, empire and diaspora. The seminar focuses on the colonial and post-colonial periods (1600-2000), but issues arising from archeology and environmental science deepen the chronology and promise to disrupt familiar political narratives. A key feature of the seminar is the participation of scholars from India and Africa who share their recent work during the semester, not only in the seminar but also in public lectures.

Guest Speakers

for the seminar have included:

Dr. Niel Ayers, Department of World Cultures, UCLA
Dr. Claude Markovits, Centre d'Etudes de l'Ouest et de Non du Sud, CNRS, Paris
Dr. Suparta Bose, Department of History, Harvard University
Dr. Helene Baw, Institut für Ethnologie, Berlin
Beherurur Shoffit, Asian-American Studies, University of California, Irvine
Dr. Benigna Zimba, Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo, Mozambique.

Beyond Durban Symposium

CASTE AND RACE DIALOGUES

The Beyond Durban Symposium, held at an unusually stimulating Symposium October 4-6, 2002 entitled "Beyond Durban: Caste and Race Dialogues," the symposium brought together scholars of South Asian studies and African-American studies to explore the complexities of caste and race. The origin of the symposium was the turbulent World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance that took place in Durban, South Africa in August-September, 2001. While the connection has often been made between social injustice and violence exemplified by racism in the USA and by caste in India, it is still uncommon to bring together scholars who study these issues. The symposium was intensively collaborative and interest was high at this diverse kind of scholars reviewed key questions of multiculturalism, affirmative action, democracy and human rights.

The symposium featured two keynote speakers, Gerald Berman, professor emeritus of anthropology, University of California, Berkeley, who spoke October 5 on “Caste and Race” —so look for it in Indian cinemas less than four weeks—it was ridiculous. The film wasn’t finished and there were already trailers and billboards and the whole promotional deal out already! — we could be in for an extra long night. But on the plus side, we would be remunerated with Rs. 600 (about $12 — about $1.50 an hour), which is actually a lot, especially seeing as how the Indian crew, in 1930s’ discrimination colonial style, would only be paid half as much. I’d have easily done it for free. And what actually did we do for this cash? After our initial shooting, a whole lot of waiting around. They were filming one of Bollywood’s traditional dance scenes, so most of the time was spent with the dancers doing endless rounds of practice and continuous retakes. Some of them were bloody from hitting the floor so many times, or were shuffling off other injuries to joints or whatever. They were about 40 men dressed up as Punjabi-face beards and turbans and everything.

It was spectacular to watch, and to learn that those five-minute dance sequences are actually shot one move at a time —maybe 10-20 seconds at a time—and are then spliced together into a seemingly free-flowing entire scene. Overall, it was a brilliant evening. We did get into another scene at the end of the night’s shooting —so at 2 a.m., I had to pick up my walking stick, cock my hat sided ways on my head, and once again play in a Hindi film the tough and demanding role of a man dressed up as Punjabi-face beards and turbans and everything.

Courses for Crossing Borders fellows, 2003

Upcoming Spring Crossing Borders Seminar Crossing Borders Seminar 3, Salem (Same as 01H:247, 008:231, 016:247, 030:242, 044:286, 046:285, 048:247, 113:247, 129:231), Global Issues in Visual Culture, "Instructors: Julie Hochstrasser (Art & Art History) and Sarah Adams (Art & Art History). The visual arts cross borders all the time, bearing the traces of an infinitely restless and complex process of exchange between cultures. "We propose to explore the history of this exchange in visual culture—Caste and Race Dialogues—drawing on case studies ranging from seventeenth-century trade connections to postcolonial issues still addressed in the visual arts of the present day." Time and location: 3:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m., T, W, 34A AB.

Dr. Sugata Bose will teach "Africa since 1880" (10W:121), a survey of modern history in sub-Saharan Africa.

Dr. Kristine Fish will teach "Introduction to Qualitative and Ethnographic Research Methods" (36R:506).

Dr. Virginia Dominguez will teach a course entitled "Proseminar: Contemporary Rhetorical Studies," (36G:325).

Dr. Benigna Zimba, Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo, Mozambique.

Do You Have News?

If you have news or updates on your area of research or involvement and would like to share it?

Please e-mail Crossing Border Editor Jihong Wan at: jihong-wan@uiowa.edu for the next publication.

Crossing Borders Program Newsletter Newsletter Editor: Jihong Wan

Graphic designer: Sarah McCoy

An airline advertisement promoting Indian travel to Africa, relatable of stereotypes and mediated hopes and fears. © 1999.
This is the story of how I got to be an extra in a Hindi film! It was all chance - we'd seen a poster that somehow came to our notice. I was walking down the street, in the shadow of the massive Gateway to India and Bombay's poet, when a woman stopped me and asked, "Do you know that I would like to be in a Bollywood film?"

I basically got so excited that I didn't ask her any kind of questions at all - who's in the film, where's the shoot, are you really a terrorist trying to kidnap me? - and just agreed on the spot. Then I nervously showed up at the agreed meeting time (6:30 a.m.), and waited along with a handful of other white guys who would be my colleagues in acting (extra-ing)! as "Bhritishers" (as they call them here) in a period piece about an Indian anti-colonial revolutionary. Shabed Bhagat Singh, who went to the gallows in 1931 for his political activities. However, things are looking up for him and his wife, who are both American, the group included faculty and students from two Tanzanian universities, the University of Dar es Salaam and Tumaini University. The project was funded by an NIH Collaborative Research Grant. His recent publications include: "Passages in a Struggle Over the Past: Stories of Majimaji in Njombe, Tanzania," in Toyn Falola (ed.), African Historical Research: Sources and Methods (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, forthcoming).


Virginia R. Dominguez (Professor, Anthropology)

Professor Dominguez delivered one of the two keynote addresses at the "Beyond Borders: Case and Race Dialogues" conference (see above, page 2). Her keynote address on October 6, 2002 was entitled "Experiencing Racism, Dismissing Racism, Inspiring Racism: Visions of Victim in World(s) of Jeepney:"

It analyzed a public discourse on racism in Israel—including its judicial and legislative variations—in order to address more generally the frequent assumption that calling a phenomenon "racism" is always part of a progressive, transformative political movement. Professor Dominguez continues to work on her book for Beacon Press tentatively entitled "Tanzania's Jeepney: When the Enemy Is Unknown." She presented part of a chapter at the November 2002 American Anthropological Association meetings under the title of "Shaping and Racializing the Region." Her keynote address on October 6, 2002 was entitled "Passages in a Struggle Over the Past: Stories of Majimaji in Njombe, Tanzania," in Toyn Falola (ed.), African Historical Research: Sources and Methods (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, forthcoming).


Kristine Fitch (Associate Professor, Communication Studies)

Professor Fitch conducts research in areas of culture, persuasion, and personal relationships. Her current work centers on questions of how ideology shapes discourse, both public and private. Her recent publications include:


It argues for a rethinking of the relation (or in opposition) to it.


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Žimbabwe and Mozambique

**The Save River valley of Zimbabwe and Mozambique**

Richard Mtisi  
[Ph.D. student, History and CB Fellow] traveled to Zimbabwe and Mozambique, summer 2002. The trip laid the groundwork for his Ph.D. research on the Save River valley of Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

In Zimbabwe, I visited the National Archives of Zimbabwe, where I found a large number of documents that deal with people-environment relationships in the Save River Valley in Zimbabwe during the colonial period. These documents highlight the environmental problems in the region and conservation measures the colonial administrations in Zimbabwe used to remediate the situation. I established contacts with important environmental organizations like International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and ZERO. My trip also took me to several areas along the valley where there are major irrigation schemes.

On the Mozambican side, I visited the Arquivo Historico de Mocambique (Historical Archive of Mozambique) and the University of Eduards Mondlane in Maputo. I met several scholars including Professor Benigna Zimba, chairman of the history department, Professor Arlindo Chilundo, chairman of the Land Studies Center, and Professor David Hedges, who has been in Mozambique and conservation measures the colonial administrations in Zimbabwe used to remediate the situation. I established contacts with important environmental organizations like International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and ZERO. My trip also took me to several areas along the valley where there are major irrigation schemes.

**Visiting that area was particularly useful in that I was able to interact (in Portuguese and Ndau) with people whose livelihoods have depended on the river for centuries.**

**Back from the market**

**Save Bridge, Mozambique**

**From the field (Berlin):**

**Critiquing Colonial Legacies:**

**The Arts, Propaganda, and the Popular Press in Weimar Germany**

Brett Van Hoesen  
[Ph.D. student, Art History and CB Fellow]

Brett is currently in Berlin, Germany, for the 2002/2003 academic year on a DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) fellowship and is applying for additional grants to fund another year abroad. This summer (2002) thanks to Crossing Borders summer research funds, I was able to conduct research at the J. Paul Getty Museum and Research Institute in Los Angeles, CA. I also conducted research at the Robert Gore Rifkind Center for the study of German Expressionism at the LA County Museum of Art. At these centers, I was able to research photomontages by the Hungarian artist, László Moholy-Nagy and various German publications from the 1920s, including the journal “Simplicissimus,” and the “Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung.”

The findings that I made this summer are integral to my dissertation entitled, “Critiquing Colonial Legacies: The Arts, Propaganda and the Popular Press in Weimar Germany,” which posits that there was a cross communication between various visual culture institutions such as the artistic avant-garde working in association with Berlin, the popular press, and ethnographic museums in regard to Germany’s “post-colonial period” following World War I. My project examines the way in which these three institutions, the avant-garde, the press and museums functioned within the complicated discourse of Germany’s colonial and postcolonial period. Thanks to the research opportunities of this past summer, I will be presenting my most recent work at an international, interdisciplinary conference, “Pishing Boundaries: Transformations in Politics, Culture and Society,” to take place in Brussels, Belgium, this December. My paper for this conference seeks to establish the idea of cross communication between specific members of the Berlin avant-garde working in the medium of photomontage, and select publications of the German popular press, which I will argue actively critiqued the grotesque racial stereotypes of French colonial North African troops stationed in the Rhineland during the early 1920s. I am particularly intrigued by how the visual culture and propaganda of the German Rhineland Controversy functioned within Germany’s neocolonialist aims to reinsert itself as a post-WWI colonial power, and the role that these visual tropes, and related discourse, played in human-rights policy making of the 1920s to early 1930s.

**Icelandic Filmmaking**

**Björn Nordfjord**  
[Ph.D. student, Film Studies and CB Fellow]

Björn conducts research on Icelandic filmmaking in relation to the tension between the transnational and the national, the global and the local. The major questions he addresses are: “How are Icelandic film marketized in international and the national, the global and the local. The major questions he addresses are: How are Icelandic film marketized in international markets?” “How do the ever-growing number of international mini-stars and personnel (particularly cinematographers) affect the ‘Icelandic-ness’ of the film?” “Do the films address to a local or a global audience, or both?” “How does a transnational approach affect the audience upon the national in Icelandic filmmaking?” “Do the films address to a local or a global audience, or both?”

My trip to Iceland this past summer was crucial for gathering material ranging from grant applications to various statistics, from promotional advertisements to the films themselves. Perhaps more importantly I got the opportunity to speak to personnel from both the Icelandic Film Institute and the Icelandic Film Corporation. The latter is the production company of Frédrik dó Fríðriksson, Iceland’s most successful and celebrated director. Not coincidentally are his films and business practices central for my project. His career began with a strong national focus, but took a “transnational turn” after the international success of *Bír durin natturinn* (*Children of Nature*) and culminating perhaps with *Á knöldu klóku* (*Cold Fever*) which among other things was decorated with U.S. film stars. I hope to expand this project in the near future to other small national film industries. The focus upon Hollywood and the large European and Asian film industries has given a somewhat distorted view of contemporary filmmaking in a global context. It is my belief that a study of smaller national film industries is particularly useful in that I was able to interact (in Portuguese and Ndau) with people whose livelihoods have depended on the river for centuries.

**From the field:**

**The Save River Valley of Zimbabwe and Mozambique**

**Back from the market**

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