Engaged Learning Through Choreographic Practices
Submitted by Sherrie Barr

There is always some sort of translation process unfolding between a choreographer and her dancers. This notion holds poignancy; particularly for humanities students studying dance. Many times how something is seen or heard is not what was intended. Allowing the transformation of meaning to intertwine body, mind, and spirit, students develop ways of making meaning while also coming to a place of self-awareness. It is for such reasons that the practice of choreography opens possibilities to engage in the choreographic practice as the intersection of theory and practice.

This project will provide a framework to examine how choreographic intent can emerge through the different ways a dancer is engaged in the rehearsal process. Students will critically consider, as either practitioner or observer, how rehearsals are conducted, language used to teach movement, relationships amongst dancers and between dancers and choreographer. Through sharing the two perspectives, students can begin to recognize what was intended and what was perceived. To engage in dance making as a place to allow ideas to take form rather than to control or dictate is a way for the choreographic practice to facilitate intersection of critical reflection and problem solving. It can also be a place for transformative learning.

Arts Administration Undergraduate Experience
Research Assistant: Paul Deckard
Research Faculty: Alison Dobbins

This pilot project for an arts administration undergraduate experience is designed to create a community-based laboratory for experimenting with theatre and technology. The goal is to provide local artists with an introduction to cutting edge media technology, as well as to provide economic stimulus through theater-associated enterprises. Undergraduates involved with the project will have an opportunity to apply what they have learned in their theatre courses and participate in theatre as an engine for economic growth. Research assistant Paul Deckard will be responsible for testing the project’s viability and for examining its benefits to both the University and the community.

The research assistant will produce a play, within a specific budget, which combines both media technology and traditional theatre methods. The production personnel will consist of community members and students with the final play will take place at Riverwalk Theatre. Once the production is complete, the research assistant will evaluate the project’s success to determine potential applications of this program.
The goal of this project is to define the way in which digital media and theatre can be combined, and to establish the conventions of a new unified art form. As separate genres, both digital media and theatre have established independent mechanics of storytelling. However, when these two art forms are combined, their existing conventions compete for attention at the expense of the overall performance or production. They do not unite to make a third art form, they stand independently, each format jockeying for dominance. With the assistance of undergraduate researcher PJ Veltri, I wish to explore how the history of digital performance and the knowledge of the limitations and capabilities of technology can be understood to create a set of rules for a new art form— that of digital mediated theatre.

Performance and audience tests will be done in non-traditional theatre spaces in downtown Lansing. This community-based model will combine the resources of the community and the University to allow for real-world scenarios rather than simulations. A community-based experimental model is necessary for both the space required and the access to audience and participants.

In phase one of this research, the research assistant will interview practitioners and search literature to determine the current state of digital media use in theatre. Phase two will consist of developing and testing a method of evaluation for determining audience response to mediated-theatre. In phase three, the research assistant will design media elements for a digital mediated theatre performance in downtown Lansing. This performance will serve as a workshop for testing the results of phase one and two of this research and will also provide a showcase to display the students’ work to the benefit of their artistic portfolios.

This research project will explore the unique characteristics attributed to the comic book/graphic novel medium and its similarities to both modern and historical theatrical presentations. The research assistant has a dual interest in Theatre and the study of comic books/graphic novels. This duality will be served in the research and creation of a staged theatrical comic book adaptation.

The research assistant will analyze modern and historical theatrical productions (e.g. Vaudeville, Storytelling, etc.) as well as modern and historical graphic texts from early comic magazines to modern graphic novels in order to create a unique
production through consultation with professors and students in the Department of Theatre, the Department of Art and Art History, and the Department of English.

The student will ultimately catalogue and record data pertaining to the research, write a translation incorporating the stories related to the research of comic books/graphic novels, ultimately creating/performing a workable stage production.

CAL URI 2010-2011 Abstract

*Exploring Male Feminism*
Ryan Cantrell (Student); Kristie Dotson (Faculty Advisor)

Our research will focus on attempting to explore the idea of male feminism. Specifically, a local group of Black feminist intellectuals, called “Blackwomen in Babel”, have begun to explore and probe a growing trend in Africana Studies of some male scholars to claim the identity of ‘Black Male Feminist’, by men sympathetic and, at times, sensitive to “women’s” issues. This trend has led to a groundbreaking public conversation at the Brecht Forum entitled, “Black Male Privilege,” which is equal parts problematic and exciting. In response to this provocative conversation, Blackwomen in Babel, are in the process of preparing a collection of papers for publication that include interrogating the idea of a “black male feminist” in conjunction with the existence or non-existence of “black male privilege”.

As a member of this local group, I felt it to be a wonderful opportunity to involve an undergraduate student interested in further exploring the idea of ‘male feminism’. The plan is that student-researcher, Ryan Cantrell, will shadow this writing group to provide support, by way of generating a transcript of the conversation at the Brecht on black male privilege, and to experience unique engagement with a black feminist scholarly unit interested in examining ‘male feminism’. Ryan will lend us his invaluable perspective as a self-professed male feminist, and he will, in turn, gain rare experience interacting with black feminists actively engaged in identifying ‘male feminism’.

CAL URI 2010-2011 Abstract

*Arbitrary or Imperfect? The Problem of Evil in Leibniz*
Seth Elliot

The Problem of Evil states that the existence of evil in the world is evidence (or proof, depending on whose formulation you consider) that a perfect God does not exist, because a perfect God would want to and be able to eliminate this evil. [1] Since many religions hold that God is perfect in every way, this argument presents a problem for theists.

This problem has prompted sustained scholarly activity for hundreds of years. Proposed solutions date back at least as far as Irenaeus (CE 202), while philosophers and theologians continue to work on the issue. [2] It is considered to
be one of the strongest arguments against the existence of God, [3] and most Christian philosophers have attempted to solve it. [4] Leibniz is no exception. Thought by many to have been the last universal genius, [5] Leibniz offers a novel solution to the problem, arguing that this world contains evil because a world with less evil is impossible. Put a different way, this world is the best of all possible worlds, and so God is not at fault and the existence of evil is not incompatible with the existence of God.

I raise two objections to this approach, arguing that Leibniz’s own argument commits him to an untenable conception of God.

After suggesting some ways in which Leibniz’s solution might be strengthened, I argue that his response, nevertheless, does not succeed in absolving God from moral fault.

Thus, this project has implications that are not limited solely to the study of the history of philosophy, but rather has direct bearing on contemporary discussions concerning the nature of God. And these discussions are not limited to academia; on the contrary, the problem of evil is routinely discussed by religious laypeople [6] and popular work on religion. [7]

It will be completed through continued study of both the primary sources and academic literature (both of which are extensive), accompanied by academic writing on the issue, and discussion with both faculty and peers.

[1] In the words of David Hume: “Is he willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil? Is he neither? Then why call him god?”


[3] It is one of only two objections to the existence of God that Thomas Aquinas considers. See n. 6 for a brief discussion.

[4] In addition to those already mentioned, see Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, CS Lewis, R Swinburne, A Plantinga, W Rowe, R Adams, M Adams, and J Hick for a sampling of various treatments of the issue.


[7] See R Dawkins, S Harris, C Hitchens for arguments supporting the legitimacy and relevance of the problem.
CAL URI 2010-2011 Abstract

*Going Digital: The Archaeology Resource Cataloging System*
Jon M Frey, Assistant Professor of Classical Studies

The written records generated by an archaeological excavation are perhaps its most valued possession. For if, as it is commonly said, archaeological excavation brings about the destruction of its object of study, these accounts are the only way to reconstruct the circumstances surrounding an object or monument’s discovery. With this in mind and in the hope of creating an electronic archive that will both preserve and simplify access to its records, project leaders at the Ohio State University Excavations at Isthmia in Greece have launched an extensive program aimed at digitizing all of the photographs, drawings, field notebooks, and object inventory cards in its archive. Michigan State University and the College of Arts and Letters have already played a key role in this process through the development of a software solution that allows scholars to read each of the excavation’s notebooks over the internet. In an effort to build upon this initial success, I am again working with CAL to create a user interface that will use the digitized notebooks as a way to tie together the other types of information used to record our work and our discoveries at the excavation. With the help of an undergraduate research assistant on this pilot project, we expect to complete a demonstration model of our Archeology Resource Cataloging System (ARCS) by the end of the academic year. This data management solution will then be shared with the international project’s research staff for evaluation and testing over the summer.

CAL URI 2010-2011 Abstract

*The Problem of Suffering in the Christian New Testament*
Faculty Member: Dr. Chris Frilingos, Department of Religious Studies
Undergraduate Researcher: Ms. Laura Evangelista (REL minor)

This project, the final chapter in a book-length manuscript on violence and identity among ancient Jews and Christians, involves the study of theodicy, which can be glossed as an attempt to explain the existence of evil and suffering in a world created by a benevolent deity. Students of biblical literature are familiar with the great wisdom books of the Hebrew Bible – Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes – as a context for thinking about this problem. There have not been many attempts, however, to pursue this same topic in the context of the Christian New Testament. I propose to explore this topic as it relates to five books of the Christian New Testament: the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and the Book of Revelation. All of these books were written in the wake of the Roman destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 C.E., and all allude (sometimes obliquely) to this tragedy. For many ancient Jews, the destruction of the Temple raised profound questions about evil and the goodness of God. I suggest that the same doubts were raised in the minds of some early Christians and expressed in Christian books composed long after the actual building lay in ruins.
Islam, Muslims and Journalism Education
Faculty: Salah Hassan

Islam, Muslims and Journalism Education (imaje.msu.edu) is a project of Michigan State University’s Muslim Studies program in collaboration with the School of Journalism with the support of the African Studies Center, Asian Studies Center, and the Center for Advanced Study of International Development/Women and International Development (CASID/WID). It has been funded through a grant from the Social Science Research Council (SSRC).

The goal of the IMAJE project is to develop a nuanced perspective on Islam, Muslims, and Muslim societies that will generate more informed understanding of the religion. It is not intended as an exhaustive resource on Islam and Muslims. Rather, this website is an instructional resource for professors, teachers, and students who seek materials related to Muslims in the mainstream media. In addition to providing instructors with readily accessible materials, the website also seeks to encourage MSU Muslim Studies faculty to engage the media’s treatment of Islam. To this end, the website includes video interviews with MSU faculty whose expertise ranges from Islam in Indonesia and West Africa to political Islam in a global context.

Organized around a series of core topics, the website includes short essays, teaching materials, short interviews with scholars, journalists and media producers, and lists of resources. These materials are designed specifically for teaching purposes. They are short and focused treatment of particular topics and make reference to media coverage. The essays and the videos can serve to start a class discussion or as point of departure for a research exercise.

The website also includes a news section with commentaries on recent news coverage of Islam and Muslims. The CAL student assistant working on this project in 2010-2011 will be involved directly in maintaining and developing the site beyond its current form, with particular emphasis on recent news coverage of Islam and Muslims.

2010-2011 CAL-URI Abstract
Cataloging and preserving vintage clothing collection; Determining past usage and provenance
Faculty member: Karen Kangas-Preston

Last spring the Department of Theatre costume shop received a large donation (almost 40 boxes and suitcases) of vintage clothing dating from the 1860's through 1930's from a single donor. While much of the clothing is in good shape, preservation needs to happen to ensure its longevity. Along with the donation we were given a program from the Owaissa Kensington Ladies Club detailing a selection of the garments’ usage in a fashion show from the 1930’s.
With the assistance of Kaitlyn Osborn, I would like to catalog the garments in comparison to the program we were given, preserve the clothing and textiles to prevent further deterioration, and attempt to document a brief history of the Ladies Club and their activities. Preliminary research has not been successful; however we plan to speak with Ms. Jean Terrell, the donor and a distant relation to the original owner of the clothing, to determine provenance of the garments and a history of their usage. In addition to cataloging the garments, we will prepare a pictorial history to showcase with the fashion show program. With luck we will find original sources in news media regarding the other activities of the Owaissa Kensington Ladies Club. The catalog and clothing items will then be used by the department as a teaching tool as examples of historical fabrics used in garment construction and vintage clothing construction.

CAL URI 2010-2011 Abstract

**Designing and creating video tutorials of hand and machine stitch samples**

Faculty member: Karen Kangas-Preston

Since participating in Scott Schopieray’s CAL Blended Teaching Community in Spring 2009, I have wrestled with a way to incorporate an online component into what I consider to be hands on material. With the assistance of Sarah DeBoer, I will create video tutorials that can be posted on ANGEL that demonstrate many of the sewing techniques that I show in class. This will allow the students to work independently on one of the major projects required for the course (a stitch sampler portfolio comprised of more than 50 various sewing techniques) while still being able to get my exact directions for each stitch. The videos will not only allow them to work at their own pace it will give them the close up and personal view that I am unable to achieve in the classroom setting while demonstrating to 15-20 individuals at one time.

Sarah will be responsible for discovering the best way to shoot each stitch demonstration (we aim to complete 10-15 videos during the fall semester), set up of equipment (two camera angles, lights, microphone), and will operate the cameras. She will also be in charge of editing the video to incorporate the best viewpoints and to prepare them for posting to ANGEL. It is my intention that this project produces the first set of tutorials that ultimately will include the full range of techniques I require the class to learn.

CAL URI 2010-2011 Abstract

**In Splendid Solidarity: The Political Culture of Common Differences**

David D. Kim

Core Faculty of Global Studies in the Arts and Humanities

What is solidarity? Is it an invisible energy fuelling the transformative encounter between likeminded individuals or is it manifest in the synchronized movement of communal bodies eager to demonstrate their disapproval of injustice? Does solidarity depend on social agents who feel the same way or does it thrive on
difference? And where does solidarity come from, how does it proceed, what are its ends? This research project shall be examining solidarity as a collective movement in which disparate individuals and distant communities enter into an equivalent affiliation because what binds them together are relatable differences in oppression and suffering. As similar others with pertinent causes, then, they form an intricate web of impassioned linkages and objective partnerships. This affective infrastructure is then used to summon courage against those who threaten their survival both directly and indirectly.

CAL URI 2010-2011 Abstract
*Philosophical Traditions*
McClendon – African and African Experience into Conventional (Western)
Research Abstract
College of Arts and Letters Undergraduate Research Initiative

Proposal Objective:
The development of a text for the introduction of philosophy by means of the integration of the African and African American experience into conventional (western) philosophical traditions.

Collaborative Project:
This project is undertaken in collaboration with my colleague Dr. Stephen Ferguson at North Carolina A & T. Dr. Ferguson and I have worked together on a number of projects, and he is the co-editor of the soon to be released, Oxford University Handbook of World Philosophy.

I am currently teaching one of the sections for the introduction to philosophy. In preparation for teaching the course and thus reviewing various textbooks for an introductory class, it was quite apparent that there are no introductory texts that incorporated the African and African American experience. While there are texts that are designed to exclusively introduce African and African American philosophy, completely absent are any works that integrate African and African American philosophers and philosophical traditions within the framework of conventional (western) introductory texts. I think that the history of philosophy is a great way to introduce philosophy and that the African and African American experiences greatly enhance our students' understanding of the history of philosophical problems and questions.

Method of Research
The method of research for this project will involve several aspects, which includes the student doing library research primary and secondary sources. Library research will entail not only doing research at Michigan State University libraries but also consulting with research librarians and archivists around the country. Given that this project involves doing research in the history of philosophy, I will be responsible for training the student in both philosophical and historical research. Lastly, given that this is a collaborative project the student will also consult with Dr. Ferguson and we will have regular teleconferencing to coordinate our research efforts.
**Maximality, Focus and Domain Restriction in Child Language**
Faculty: Alan Munn

Part of the meaning of the definite article in English is that it must pick out a unique individual or maximal set of individuals in the discourse. For example, in the context of three spoons and a fork, the phrase referring to *the spoon* is infelicitous, and referring to *the spoons* necessarily picks out all three spoons, not just two of them. Young children are known to behave differently from adults in their use of the definite article, but the source of this difference is the source of some debate (Wexler, 2010; Ko et al., 2009; Yang et al., 2009; Munn et al., 2006, 2009). In this project we investigate the role of prosodic information in the calculation of the domain over which uniqueness (or maximality) is calculated. The project will involve two parts: one part will develop new materials based on Miller et al.'s (2005) study of the use of focus to calculate scalar implicatures, and the second will extend Munn et al.'s (2009) study on domain restriction to include focus as a means of manipulating the maximality domain.

**Testing Grammatical vs. Pragmatic Accounts of Scalar Implicatures**
Faculty: Alan Munn

The literal meaning of a sentence is determined by meaning of the individual words and the way they are combined syntactically. However, sentences are often interpreted as going beyond their literal meaning and are given an enriched meaning, called a scalar implicature. For example, the sentence "John ate some of the cake" is interpreted as saying that John did not eat all of the cake, even though John’s eating some of the cake is compatible with his eating all of it. These types of inferences are traditionally taken to be the result of reasoning about speaker’s intentions in uttering a given sentence. An alternative view holds that scalar implicatures are generated along with the literal semantic interpretation of a sentence and are thus part of the grammar. Evidence for the grammatical view comes from the alleged existence of embedded scalar implicatures. A recent study by Chemla and Spector (2009) using a modified truth-value judgment task seemed to detect embedded scalar implicatures. However, it is possible that the detection of the embedded readings was not a result of a genuine reading of the sentence but rather an artifact of the verification subjects used to complete the task. In this project we further refine their experiment to eliminate this confound and provide either stronger evidence for the grammatical view of scalar implicatures, or further evidence against it.

**Development of Resources for Learning & Measurement of Learning**
Faculty mentor: Debra Nails
Undergraduate research assistant: Seth Elliott
Abstract by Prof. Nails: The objective of this research project is to develop effective means of enabling students to bridge lacunae in their backgrounds in critical thinking and elementary logic, to practice argumentative skills required for academic success in the humanities, and to evaluate their progress. Research to date has shown that students are motivated to take advantage of learning opportunities only when directly related to the particular texts assigned in a course; generic exercises, even those addressing the same skills, fail to hold students' interest as levels of difficulty increase. Online learning exercises and assessment tools specific to texts in two courses (PHL 211 Modern Philosophy: Descartes to Nietzsche; and IAH 221A Athens and Sparta: War and Peace, Justice and Law) will be developed within the wider context of rethinking the pedagogy appropriate to large undergraduate classes. Seth, one of whose majors is philosophy, will be involved in a review of the body of existing tools, the identification of effective methods, their improvement, and their application to other texts in the LON-CAPA environment.

CAL URI 2010-2011 Abstract

**Folk Costumes as a Means to Preserve Cultural Heritage**

Pl: Jodi Ozimek
Department of Theatre
Undergraduate Researchers: Carolyn Rex and Erica Clausen

Since 1927 the city of Holland, Michigan has celebrated the Tulip Time Festival. The festival began as a means to rejoice in, and preserve the Dutch heritage of its inhabitants. Each year over 500,000 attendees from around the world enjoy the millions of tulips that bloom around the city as they are entertained by Klompton Dancers. 2,300 student and alumni Klompton dancers fill the streets and parks around the city throughout the 7-day festival to entertain locals and tourists with their costumes and dancing. Dancers are clad in traditional Dutch folk costumes that represent Dutch provinces in the Netherlands. This project aims to investigate the history of these costumes, their cultural importance and authenticity. It will do so through the use of interviews, historic photos, and video recordings. It will analyze this immigrant community's use of costumes as a means to preserve and celebrate its cultural heritage.

CAL URI 2010-2011 Abstract

**The History in Harriett Lake’s Closet**

Pl: Jodi Ozimek
Undergraduate Researcher: Kaitlyn Osborn
Department of Theatre

Philanthropist Harriett Lake (b. 1922) has a personal clothing collection of over 4,500 hanging items, 1,600 hats and 450 pairs of shoes. Her main closet boasts two commercial dry-cleaning conveyer belts that are 54 feet in circumference with additional hanging racks and shelves surrounding the perimeter. Most clothing collections of this magnitude and importance include pieces from countless donors;
Harriett’s closet is an intact personal wardrobe of post WWII fashions. Harriett’s closet holds fashions designed by icons: Coco Chanel, Christian Dior, Adrienne Landau, Valentino, and Dolce and Gabanna to name only a few. Her deep connection to her clothing, sharp memory and unwillingness to part with items has, created the unique opportunity to research an intact wardrobe from her entire adult life. This project will document an oral history of these artifacts in conjunction with a gallery showing of her clothing. Costume historians typically focus research on the artifact alone without reference to who wore it and why they chose it. I aim to combine the historic significance of the garment with Harriett’s individual reason for purchasing, wearing and, in many cases, altering the garment. This multi-media gallery showing will feature Harriett’s clothing on mannequins, photographs of Harriett in her outfits, as well as recordings of Harriett discussing her life, love of clothing and insight on fashion. The project aims to challenge the viewer to analyze clothing as pieces of artwork as well as a tool for personal expression.

**CAL URI 2010-2011 Abstract**

**When and Why Monotheism Emerges**

Faculty: Pollock

Abraham is known as the “Father of Monotheism”, and the three major religious traditions most frequently identified with monotheism are often designated “Abrahamic religions.” Yet archaeological evidence has brought to light multiple instances of religious monotheism in different historical periods and in different regions of the world (the most commonly-known perhaps being that of 14th-Century BCE Egypt). This project will seek to answer the question of when and why monotheism emerges in different parts of the world. What cultural conditions seem to be a “breeding ground” for monotheism? What political conditions are necessary in order for monotheism to be maintained in society? As we address these questions, we will also explore the “messiness” of monotheism: e.g., the regular celebration of myriad divinities or forms of divinity within what are identified as monotheistic traditions. We’ll question the extent to which “monotheism” as a pure concept might rather be a scholarly construct than an actual, observable phenomenon. Further, we will critique the scholarship around monotheism, looking at the issues that can arise when “Western” monotheism is taken as a standard, according to which all other religious traditions are evaluated and ordered.

**CAL URI 2010-2011 Abstract**

**South Asian Digital Humanities**

Faculty: Pue

This project will support the development and exploration of web resources for South Asian digital humanities, exploring the forms and possibility of Hindi-Urdu language technology for both language acquisition and advanced literary research. The focus will be on developing content for the hindiurdu.net website, hosted by the College of Arts and Letters, and exploring the question of how to make content accessible to readers, scholars, and learners in a non-Roman script. Hindi and Urdu
present a particular conundrum. Because they share the same basic vocabulary and grammar, they are arguably the same language. But they are written in different scripts: Hindi in the left-to-right devanagari script and Urdu in the right-to-left nastaliq. The disparity between spoken and written proficiencies is an enduring challenge to speakers, scholars, and learners alike. The project will collect and develop materials to address this problem. It includes an “environmental scan” of existing and related resources; the exploration and deployment of open-source social networking technologies for developing Hindi-Urdu literary, learning, and teaching communities; and content management systems in support of literary research, public humanities, and language learning and teaching.

CAL URI 2010-2011 Abstract

**What can answers to questions tell us about early detection of disorders?**

Faculty: Cristina Schmitt

It is well known that the early speech of typically developing children contains a fair number of fragments. Recent work has shown that most of children’s fragments reveal a very deep knowledge of the syntax and semantic properties of the language they are acquiring. It is also well known that one of the characteristics of the speech of children with SLI (Specific Language Impairment) is a large number of fragments. In this project we examine speech samples from typically and atypically developing children from 18 to 36 months (Stockman’s longitudinal corpus) in order to determine whether the early fragments used by children to answer questions are linguistically alike in the two populations. The goal is to use sophisticated linguistic tools of analysis (recent models of ellipsis) to determine whether differences in children’s answers to questions (syntactic, semantic and pragmatic) may help early detection of disorders. We hypothesize that not only fragments will be more frequent in the disordered population but will also be less pragmatically and syntactically adequate.

CAL URI 2010-2011 Abstract

**Acquisition of variable input: comparing Spanish dialects**

Faculty: Christina Schmitt

How can a child exposed to a language end up with a system that allows her to produce/understand sentences she has never heard before? The task is hard: the child must analyze the input at different linguistics levels (sentence structure, meaning and sounds), and processes operating on one level mask properties of another level. In this project, we examine parental and child speech from two Spanish dialects and its impact in the acquisition of plural [-s] and 2nd person [-s]. In the Mexico City dialect syllable-final [s] is always produced by the adult, but in the Chilean speech the [s] is sometimes omitted due to a phonological rule, making singular and plural forms and 2nd and 3rd person forms identical, i.e., ambiguous. We hypothesize that the more ambiguity in the input the longer the child will take to converge into the adult language. We ask how much omissions delay the acquisition of these morphemes. The goal is to determine the
frequency of plural and 2nd person singular in particular contexts and its impact in children’s production and comprehension of these morphemes.

CAL URI 2010-2011 Abstract

*Theatre and Special Needs Students*

Faculty: Joni Starr

Though it demands great personal risk to take the stage, there are benefits to completing a rehearsal and performance process. This is especially true when working with special needs populations. Communication and connection are typically difficult among special needs students, but through dramatic practices can be made more accessible. By writing, rehearsing, and performing a play, students at Heartwood School improve in these areas of self-development and thus find a heightened sense of personal accomplishment.

In the Department of Theatre we have witnessed this accomplishment first hand as our three-year collaboration with Heartwood school has provided much fruition. In the past Heartwood students have attended Department of Theatre productions, participated in pre- and post- show discussions, have toured the building, and joined in on workshops in technical theatre. All of these activities add to the students’ own sense of understanding of the theatrical process, so that they may also produce and perform in their own production at the end of their school year.

CAL URI 2010-2011 Abstract

*Prison Theatre*

Faculty: Joni Starr

Theatre can be a safe and effective way to encourage reflective thought, engaged participation, and positive change in an individual. “This aesthetic and emotional outlet allows for potential catharsis, a safe way for citizens to express their concerns, criticisms and frustration to each other and to society at large.” (Prendergast and Saxton, *Applied Theatre*) This has been made clear in the work conducted through the Department of Theatre’s program at the Bellamy Creek Correctional Facility. Working in the prison allows for experiences afforded by the arts to transform attitudes, imagination, and self-perception in both students and inmates.

As we enter our fourth year of the program, we find it is at a point of growth. Last year, participants reflected a great deal on the informal nature of the program and we all craved more depth of experience. We took first steps to learn more about other prison theatre programs in the nation. We have also begun focused and serious discussions on the lasting impact this program would have on the engaged community of learners.

CAL URI 2010-2011 Abstract

*Audio Book Narration*
Faculty: Christina Traister

I currently teach Voice in the Department of Theatre, and have been employed professionally by Amazon.com as an audio book narrator on over a dozen projects. This is a very rewarding profession both artistically, as well as financially.

I believe that students in our program would greatly benefit from the opportunity to develop this skill. More importantly, obtaining studio experience in recording voiceover projects and audio books that culminate in a physical sample or demo of their work that could then be used upon graduation, would be highly beneficial and provide our graduates with an edge in seeking employment in this profession.

We currently have no means to provide this specialized education for our students in the Department of Theatre. I would like to help provide a current student who has an interest in this field, Caitlyn Knisely, with the opportunity to help me research how to facilitate this advanced training on or near campus in the hopes that her research can be directly used to help provide this training for future students. We would research local studio options, recording equipment needs, directors, engineers, etc; basically everything that is needed technically and artistically for future MSU students’ education in this field.

CAL URI 2010-2011 Abstract

The 1935 Hamtramack Housewives Protest
Research Abstract: White

Research on the 1935 Housewives’ Protest, in which women in the Polish-American working-class city of Hamtramack Michigan picketed neighborhood butcher shops and engaged in meat boycotts, is a case study included in my monograph (in progress). This book project offers a panoramic view of farmers’ and consumers’ struggles to reconcile capitalism with morality during the New Deal-era. In the book, I examine three protests from the perspective of theatre studies in order to elucidate the competing values – property rights, human rights and cultural entitlements – enacted by protesters, authorities, and spectators. The student researcher and I will pursue an unusual archival method of combining both “official” and “unofficial” documents of this protest (e.g. police field reports, media reports, photographs, personal testimonies, private letters, political cartoons, strike poetry, and ephemera), in order to examine the intersections of politics, economics, traditions and material circumstances at that moment in history. Including documents composed in the primary language of these Polish-American women’s community is vital to a nuanced understanding of the cultural and local stakes of the women’s radical actions, and to a comparison of the responses of authorities and the national public.

CAL URI 2010-2011 Abstract

Environmental Justice and Communities of Color
Faculty: Kyle Whyte
The environmental justice movement has had many important policy impacts in the United States, from the formation of the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) to improvements in tribal consultation processes. Yet it is often the case that issues with "environmental" dimensions that affect people of color, from food access to traceability, are not considered to be matters of environmental justice for communities of color. Part of why this is likely to be the case is that "agricultural" and "environmental" are considered to be distinct in ways that belie the social realities of tribal farmers, minority producers, urban local food producers, and others. This study will identify some of the key literature that explores this distinction and its impact on communities of color.