

FACULTY FELLOWSHIPS
Three Year Award: 2008-2011

Teaching Projects/Curricular Development:

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Scholarly/Creative Projects:

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Combination of Teaching Projects/Curricular Development and Scholarly/Creative Projects:

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Service Projects:

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*Ethics-related awards.

James H. Benedix
Professor of Biology

Behavioral Ecology in the 21st Century

This fellowship will enable me to produce full sets of lecture materials for both a First-Year Seminar on animal behavior and an advanced course BIO 348 Behavioral Ecology, which would serve in place of a text for these courses and also act as a proposal for a textbook on the subject that could be submitted to publishers. Behavioral Ecology is a young and dynamic field of inquiry within the biological sciences that focuses on the ways in which natural selection shapes the behaviors of animals. It deals with all types of behaviors and all types of animals, and many of the general findings in the field are applicable, at least in part, to humans. It is an academic pursuit which is also of interest to the general public, as is demonstrated by the many popular nature documentaries which use as their source material the research findings of behavioral ecologists. The results of this fellowship will be a valuable alternative to the only current textbook for an undergraduate course in this area which came out in its third and apparently final edition in 1993.

Deborah Geis

Associate Professor of English

The Open Table: Developing Courses and Professional Writing in Culinary Literature

This Faculty Fellowship will make it possible for me to create and teach courses in culinary literature, while also writing about the experience and sharing it with others. Culinary literature--which can take forms as diverse as a memoir or an ecological treatise, a novel or a poem, a play or a film--is a rapidly-developing genre that has seen an enormous growth in popularity over the past decade. Writers from Eric Schlosser to Ruth Reichl have discussed the roles that food plays in our political systems, our memories, and of course our bellies. Performance artists and filmmakers have used food's visceral, visual qualities to captivate cross-cultural audiences. In the realm of academia and specifically literary/cultural studies, though, little has been done to theorize this kind of writing—and even less attention has been given to how it might provide wonderful pedagogical opportunities for encouraging strong student writing, critical reading that engages discussion across international boundaries, and genuinely interdisciplinary classroom experiences. Although I have a decent cooking résumé and have taught contemporary literature courses in a variety of genres, exploring this emerging field would be a new academic venture for me.

Brian Howard

Assistant Professor of Computer Science

Exploring Synergies Between Databases and Programming Languages

The goal of the fellowship is to explore the areas of overlap between topics in database systems and programming language design, and to develop new course materials for each which will reflect their common ground and expose students to some of the recent developments in each that have emerged from this cross-fertilization. There are a number of common threads between these two topics, including the design of query languages, the logical foundations of databases and language semantics, and a recent proposal to deal with concurrent access to data by building a notion of “transaction” into new programming languages. The project will also lead to a presentation for a computer science education conference, to enable faculty at other institutions to take advantage of the synergy between these two traditional courses, and will feed into my next project, a programming languages textbook.

Beth Benedix

Associate Professor of Religious Studies

Celebrating Blasphemy

What is blasphemy? Is it really an act of disrespect? A kind of religious treason? Or is it, perhaps, precisely the sort of critical and/or humane thinking that pulls rigid ideologies into more livable spaces? This project will result in a book-length manuscript that considers the spirit of blasphemy in its broadest terms and celebrates thinkers who have been (or might be) accused of operating in this spirit. In this age of diminishing freedom of speech and rather disappointing lack of innovative thinking, we can learn a great deal from thinkers who refused (and refuse) to blindly accept the governing ideologies of their times. *Celebrating Blasphemy* will treat a variety of thinkers, both “real” and “literary”—among them Nietzsche, Freud, Rumi, Holden Caulfield and Stephen Colbert—who imagine and then inhabit worlds that subvert (and in some cases define themselves in deliberately antagonistic terms against) the status quo.

Linda Elman

Associate Professor of Modern Languages - Spanish

Divine Design: Providential Protagonists in the Spanish Comedia

In this project I will explore why Old Testament heroines held such special appeal for classical Spanish dramatists. Recent feminist scholarship on the Hebrew Bible, which suggests new strategies for interpreting the stories about women in the ancient world, may also provide pathways to a more full understanding of the roles of female protagonists in seventeenth-century Spanish drama who are patterned after women in Old Testament narratives. These plays were written during the Catholic Counter-Reformation, at a time of increasing challenge to absolutism by poet clerics and profane authors alike. One answer may involve the seventeenth-century preoccupation with the Virgin Mary: a new woman for the New Covenant, prefigured in the ancient texts. Like the Bible itself, these plays were written by male authors, and may have served to reinforce patriarchal values and assumptions of woman's subordinate status in Spanish society in the 1600s. But Biblical heroines also exemplify the actions and concerns of the Spanish nation, considered to be the "new" Israel of the Christian era. This project will lead to a manuscript which will demonstrate that women characters from biblical sources have much to tell us, whether these texts served as imaginative entertainment, as political, moral or religious propaganda, or as all of the above,

Arthur B. Evans

Professor of Modern Languages - French

Scholarly Editing: Science Fiction Studies and Wesleyan University Press

This faculty fellowship will provide support for scholarly activity of editing both a professional journal and a book series from a university press. As managing editor of *Science Fiction Studies*, I oversee and coordinate the production of each issue and am responsible for all “business” aspects of the journal (subscriptions, advertising, back issue sales, permissions, etc.). As general editor of Wesleyan University Press’s “Early Classics of Science Fiction” book series, I solicit manuscripts, edit them, and serve as intermediary between the contributing authors and Wesleyan’s editorial staff, copyeditors, and production team. With the help of this Faculty Fellowship, my goal is to publish nine issues of *Science Fiction Studies* (three per year) and at least three books in the Wesleyan series (one each year).

Rick Hillis

Associate Professor of English

February – *A Short Novel*

With support of this fellowship I will write a short novel about an elderly writer who returns to the landscape of his past, literally and figuratively. The story will be set in Saskatchewan in winter in a dying town that is being erased by the prairie as younger farmers sell out to the Hutterites and move their houses to bigger centers, leaving grave-like empty basements littering the landscape. The writer has returned from his own abandonment of this place and his unsteady mind will find it increasingly difficult to keep certain fragments of memory underground as the narrative progresses. I'm interested in exploring and trying to capture the hostile, emptying landscape of the prairies, the lure of golden America—only one hundred miles across the border—with its promise of a "better" life, and the writer's mind in regards to the politics of art, ambition versus ethics, and the power of place and the past on the creative impulse.

Kevin Howley

Associate Professor of Communication and Theatre

Over Under Sideways Down: Essays on Media, Culture, and Politics

This fellowship focuses on writing cultural criticism for general audiences. Over the course of the first and second years of the fellowship, I will post weekly essays on cultural criticism to a weblog. These essays will serve as “fodder” or “rough drafts” of more substantive essays on media, culture, and politics taken up during the final year of the fellowship, which will serve as the basis for a planned volume titled “Over Under Sideways Down.” Ranging from discussions of celebrity journalism and radical filmmaking, to communication policy debates and the cultural politics of new media, the book will survey the terrain of contemporary media, taking up such questions as, “What is the relationship between media and culture?” “How are media implicated in political processes?” “Does the current media system strengthen or undermine democratic values and practices?” The volume will serve as both a primer on critical media studies and a resource for helping readers make sense of their bewildering, enthralling, and often ambivalent relationship to media.

Carrie Klaus

Associate Professor of Modern Languages -- French

Transnational Women Writers of Revolutionary France

This faculty fellowship project will examine and evaluate the French Revolutionary period, a moment that Carla Hesse has recently called a “literary awakening” for women, citing a rapid rise in the number of publications by women who wrote in French during the Revolutionary years. Scholars such as Joan Landes, Joan DeJean, and others have long lamented the devastating effect the bourgeois society that developed in France after the Revolution had on women, declaring them “passive citizens,” shunting them into exclusively domestic roles, and rewriting literary history by eliminating once-prominent women writers from anthologies and textbooks. The specific topic of the study is transnational women writers of French expression, that is, European women who were not of French origin but who had close ties to France and who chose to write and publish in French. It will focus especially on the works of Brussels-born writer and translator Cornélie Wouters (1737-1802), Dutch writer and composer Isabelle de Charrière (1740-1805), and Swiss writer and *salonnière* Anne-Louise Germaine Necker de Staël-Holstein (1766-1817), daughter of Jacques Necker, Director of Finance to Louis XVI. All these women, whose careers spanned the years before, during, and after the French Revolution, were exceptionally well positioned to comment on the momentous changes taking place in Paris and beyond, and all bring up a wide range of Revolutionary issues and themes in their work. This genre-based study will consider epistolary novels, political pamphlets, and plays by these and other such women writers, in order to assess both the “literary awakening” the French Revolution may (or may not) have occasioned for women and the insights these transnational women writers provide into the dramatic events of their time.

Howard Pollack-Milgate

Associate Professor of Modern Languages -- German

Consciousness After Neuroscience: Towards a Post-Romantic Subjectivity

By examining recent debates in Germany about the nature of subjectivity, and especially its relationship to time consciousness, I hope to sketch the possibilities and limits of a scientific understanding of human consciousness as striven for by cognitive neuroscience. In response to those who see science as providing exact and unchanging answers to the fundamental questions of the humanities (What is human nature? What does human experience mean in a universal context?), I will show that the final results of scientific research are merely the starting points for a deeper humanistic exploration of the potentialities and limits of human experience (and, in turn, that humanistic explorations give similar impulses to the sciences). I will approach the topic initially historically, comparing our situation with the one at the end of the eighteenth century, where the German romantics and idealists attempted to grapple with the implications of the science of their time for a de-theologized universe. Their solutions, like the one I aim at, do not attempt to dismiss science, but seek to reinscribe it into the broader question of the relationship between mind and matter, envisioning more of a continuous overlap than a stark dualism. Ultimately, I seek a model of the self which is neither the self-sufficient, otherworldly metaphysical being of the Cartesian tradition, nor the evolutionarily and biochemically determined self-deluded automaton of some recent neuroscientific theories, but rather the delicate aesthetic, historical, and embodied construct of the Romantics.

Fred Soster

Professor of Geosciences

The Role of Mud-Dwelling Insects in Lake Erie Hypoxia

This project will investigate the role that mud-dwelling insects, especially mayflies, play in causing hypoxia in Lake Erie. As these insects burrow into the lake bottom, they re-suspend mud into the water column and pump water into their burrows for respiration. Both processes consume oxygen. This project will test the hypothesis that the burrowing activities of large populations of mud-dwelling insects that were previously absent from the ecosystem significantly enhance the rate of oxygen depletion in the bottom waters of western Lake Erie. One of the most serious environmental problems in Lake Erie has been oxygen depletion of the bottom waters that was the result of excessive loading of phosphorous from municipal discharges and agricultural runoff. Phosphorus stimulates the growth of algae and large algal blooms occurred regularly in the 1960s and 1970s. As this biomass died, it sank into the bottom waters and decayed, causing severe oxygen depletion and massive fish kills. By the mid 1960s, Lake Erie was being called the “Dead Sea of North America.” In 1972, Canada and the U. S. implemented the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, which limited total phosphorus in municipal discharges to the lake. As the amount of phosphorus entering the lake decreased, water quality improved, and oxygen depletion was no longer a serious problem. Mud-dwelling insects such as mayflies that had previously disappeared from the lake because of poor water quality reappeared in the lake in the early 1990s and quickly re-established large population densities. The improvement in Lake Erie water quality unfortunately was a short-lived phenomenon. Following a period of improved oxygen conditions in the early 1990s, low oxygen conditions (hypoxia) began to recur in the late 1990s. It is not yet clear why these changes have occurred and they are the subject of much current research and of this particular project.

Valarie Ziegler

Professor of Religious Studies

American Edens: Genesis 1-3 and Popular American Culture

The end product of this fellowship will be *American Edens: Genesis 1-3 and Popular American Culture*, a book I am co-writing with Linda Scheearing, a biblical scholar from Gonzaga University. Images from Genesis 1-3 saturate American culture. Whether they are working for or fulminating against the inclusion of intelligent design or creationism into science curricula, snacking on Eden food products or contemplating vegetarianism, admiring the one-chunk-out Apple logo on their MacBook, considering (or fantasizing about) perfect sexual ecstasy, thinking about taking the kids to a Bible theme park, or watching Captain Kirk confront the Genesis Project in *Star Trek* reruns, Americans are surrounded by images of Eve, Adam, and Eden. Eden, the first man, and the first woman represent not just sacred origins, but also an idyllic type-time and type-place that serve as a model for those who come after. Defining the first woman as subordinate to the first man, for example, lends credence to gender hierarchy; just as in nineteenth-century America it provided support for slavery. Similarly, reading Genesis 1 as literal history privileges creationism as a scientific theory, and arguing that Eden was geographically located in the United States contributes to the myth of American exceptionalism. Popular images of Eve, Adam, and Eden wield power over any number of cultural attitudes, including the social construction of gender, the definition of scientific “truth,” the privileging of one race or nation over others, and the issue of whether humanity ought to dominate or live in harmony with the natural world. Popular images of Eden ultimately matter because those who have the voice to proclaim and the power to pursue their reconstructions of the Garden will irrevocably shape American society.

Barbara Whitehead
Professor of History

A Study of the History of Happiness

This fellowship will enable me to develop a new course focused on the idea of happiness as it developed over time in Western Civilization. A central assumption widely held in the West today is that there exists a “right to happiness.” Not only was no such “right” recognized in earlier ages, but the very understanding of in what happiness consists in those earlier times would be for us unrecognizable or, at the very least, unpalatable. Happiness as an idea evolved over time in different ethical, philosophical, religious, and political contexts. As such, happiness has a history. A new area of research within the field of intellectual history has arisen in order to make sense of these changes—the history of emotions. The history of emotions treats human emotions as cultural creations that vary in meanings and value over time and place. I will begin with the other-worldly conception of happiness held by the pre-Socratic Greeks and then trace the alterations brought to bear on that view first by Socrates and his followers, then by the medieval Christian philosophers, the humanists of the Renaissance, and finally by the *philosophies* of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment who formulated what could be seen as the modern Western conception of happiness.

Mary Dixon

Professor of Economics and Management

Development of a New Student and Faculty Group, Women in Economics and Business (WEB) With Research Component on Why Women Chose Economics as a Major

With this fellowship, I will *do* three things: (1) *study* why there are so few women economics majors; (2) *launch* a new student/faculty/alumnae group called Women in Economics in Business (WEB), which will be modeled after the successful programs already operating at DePauw including, Women In Science and Women in Computing, and (3) *assess* whether WEB affects the number of women economics majors and provides better support for this underrepresented group. Over the past twenty years, the percentage of women economics majors at DePauw has not increased even though the percentage of women faculty members in the department has increased to more than 50%. The seeming lack of a faculty gender role model effect at DePauw corresponds to research conducted by colleagues at other liberal arts colleges. Clearly additional action beyond the hiring of a gender-based faculty is needed. Along with the value of developing scholarly expertise in the area and sharing my findings with others, I hope the creation of the new group will be of important and lasting benefit to DePauw.