Departmentalization and What It Means

As all of you surely know, departmentalization of Ethnic Studies has been a long process and was only possible through the support of a great number of people. Current students and several alumni, in particular, were strong advocates on the department’s behalf. Students wrote letters, made phone calls, and set up face-to-face meetings with senior administrators to discuss their support for departmentalization, and they also sent letters to the editor of the Daily Emerald. In addition, we were fortunate enough to have support from former University Provost Linda Brady and from Vice Provost for Academic Affairs Russ Tomlin.

The most significant change in the department’s status now primarily affects faculty. As a program, Ethnic Studies faculty had to be approved by other departments, both at the time of hiring and at the time of tenure. This was a significant limitation on our ability to recruit and to retain faculty members. In addition, these departments “taxed” Ethnic Studies in exchange for the work they put in to reviewing the quality of our faculty members. This “tax” took the form of courses that each ES faculty member had to teach for outside departments each year (without compensation). This meant fewer courses available to ES majors and minors, making it more difficult for students to complete their degrees on time and more difficult for ES to attract students to the major.

With the change to department status, we are now in the process of renegotiating faculty contracts so as to convert “tenure lines” over to Ethnic Studies and are running our first faculty search as a department. The position, in African American or Black Studies, is one we advertised for last year as well. Last year, as a program, we received fewer than 50 applications. This year, as a department, we have received nearly 150 applications. This bodes very well for the future of our recruitment and retention efforts at the professor level.

I am sure that the entire faculty in the Department of Ethnic Studies joins me in thanking our alumni for their support over the past 35 years. We did it!

Winter 2009

From the Department Head...

The Ethnic Studies Department has had an eventful year—a year of transitions. These transitions have been mostly positive, but the Department needs to move forward to the future with caution as well, mindful of the potential risks of success. On the local front, the transition to department status and the rapidly growing size of our faculty have produced a feeling of optimism and helpfulness here, although with department status comes the risk of complacency and the diminution of student activism in support of Ethnic Studies. We have a newly established account with the University Foundation, which means that contributions to Ethnic Studies can now go directly toward meeting the expenses associated with visiting speakers, ES events, and student scholarships. At the same time, however, the economic outlook nationally and regionally does not bode well for public universities or for private fundraising.

Similarly, the success of Barack Obama’s presidential campaign was one to which many of our faculty, students, and alumni contributed. As many in the press have noted, this is a historic moment for the nation. We in Ethnic Studies have already begun to have conversations about what it means to teach about race and ethnicity in the United States in the Obama Age. Certainly, attitudes seem to have changed from the days when Ethnic Studies began, although, sadly, the economic conditions under which vast numbers of ethnic

(continued on page 3)
The single best decision I ever made during my time at the University of Oregon was declaring a major in Ethnic Studies. I was a sophomore, young and idealistic, ready to add another field of study so I would get the most out of my college experience. Today, as I prepare to leave the UO with Honors in Political Science and Honors in Ethnic Studies, I cannot help but think how different I would be if it were not for the things this academic discourse provides.

Ethnic Studies is an opportunity to enrich the undergraduate experience because it provides the student with a variety of important components. First, it exposes students to multiple social science disciplines (Political Science, History, Sociology, Women’s and Gender Studies, English, and more) with a unique twist to its framework. Extensive attention is paid to race, a socially constructed trait that influences virtually everything in our modern culture and society, be it obvious or engrained. Second, Ethnic Studies pushes its students to wrestle with turbulent pasts, violent dissent, discriminatory policy, and societal inequality before it allows us to hammer out solutions. Anyone with an Ethnic Studies framework, be it a student or professor, recognizes the importance that context, history, and change over time each play in the discipline, and regularly fight to unpack these characteristics before analyzing or fixing a problem. Third, it encourages students to be involved with their most passionate issues in and out of the classroom. Many Ethnic Studies majors I know are overtly involved with UO student unions, student government, volunteer efforts, outreach programs, and more commitments that allow them to articulate what they learn in the classroom to others across campus and the greater community. And last, Ethnic Studies gives the most driven professional academics a space to articulate their knowledge and passion to eager undergraduates, many of which will follow in their footsteps. Ethnic Studies is so addictive that many students, myself included, will one day pursue further study in an effort to not just learn more, but also so we are able to spread that knowledge outside of the discipline to others.

Anyone who favors terminology like “liberal arts education” or “critical thinker” will tell you that being personally engaged with the material is the key academic success. This is where Ethnic Studies shines: it is personal on a level unlike any I have experienced to date. Regardless of how a student self-identifies, it is not possible to be an Ethnic Studies major without being personally invested in reversing the overt and hegemonic racism that still abounds in our culture and society. Ethnic Studies was developed during 1960s student political activism as an anti-racist way to combat discrimination and inequality. It still holds these ideals today, and any declared major will tell you that each course they experience bears these hopes and objectives throughout. Ethnic Studies seemingly knows that only when an issue such as racism becomes your problem personally will one take action, stand up and demand to be heard. But it also knows that this cannot happen unless one has the appropriate tools, theories, frameworks and knowledge. Ethnic Studies provides these components and so many more. It is not about the letter grade, the class paper or the reading overload. Ethnic Studies is about making a relationship between what is personal and the indignation we all express toward racism, discrimination and inequality. Only when such a relationship is highlighted will any impact be discerned, for better or worse.

Before Ethnic Studies, I used to be shocked reading about racist history like slavery and Jim Crow. Today, I ask specific questions about how such inequality might be over and gone, yet still has lingering impacts. Before Ethnic Studies, I used to be offended when I would hear racist or sexist jokes thrown around casually. Today, I fearlessly walk up to complete strangers and let them know that using such terminology is embarrassing, ignorant, and displays their (continued on page 7)
On April 17 and 18, 2009, Ethnic Studies will cosponsor the groundbreaking symposium “Racial Formation in the 21st Century” with renowned sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant. The two-day symposium includes over twenty scholars from disciplines and universities across the U.S., including a plenary session with Omi and Winant, keynote addresses by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and Devon Carbado, and four thematic panels.

The symposium is organized around Omi and Winant’s pivotal book *Racial Formation in the United States*. Now considered a classic text on U.S. race and ethnic relations and an essential read for both graduate and undergraduate students, this text provides an analytic tool for examining race relations at both the macro and micro levels of social interaction. Omi and Winant’s theory of “racial formation” explores the contested definition of race as a dynamic and fluid socially constructed phenomenon.

The symposium will use Omi and Winant’s theory of racial formation as a springboard to explore the ways in which scholars currently engage theories of race and racism. Organized around presentations and panels by over twenty scholars from an array of disciplines – Sociology, History, Anthropology, Political Science, Ethnic Studies, Law, and Geography – to engage key debates, contradictions, analytic shifts, trends and future developments in this area.

Select essays presented at the conference will be edited for inclusion in a collected volume to be published in 2011 to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the original publication of *Racial Formation*. A press for this project is currently being identified.

Panelists and speakers include: Nikhil Singh (American Studies, New York University), Catherine Lee (Sociology, Rutgers University), Evelyn Hu-DeHart (History, Brown University), Denise Ferreira da Silva (Ethnic Studies, UC San Diego), Sherene Razack (Sociology and Equity Studies, University of Toronto), Matt García (History/American Civilization, Brown University), John Jackson (Anthropology Communications, University of Pennsylvania), Deborah Thomas (Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania), Laura Gómez (Law/American Studies, University of New Mexico), Tomás Almaguer (Ethnic Studies, San Francisco State), Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (Sociology, Duke University), Gary Delgado (Applied Research Center, Oakland), Devon Carbado (Law, UCLA), Martin Summers (History & African and African Diaspora Studies, Boston College), Michelle McKinley (Law, University of Oregon), Andrea Smith (Media & Cultural Studies, University of California, Riverside), Neil Gotanda (Western State University College of Law), Howard Winant (Sociology, UC Santa Barbara), Michael Omi (Ethnic Studies, UC Berkeley), Laura Pulido (American Studies and Ethnicity, University of Southern California, symposium co-organizer), Quinka LaBennett (Anthropology and African American Studies, Fordham University, symposium co-organizer), Daniel HoSang (Ethnic Studies and Political Science, University of Oregon, symposium co-organizer).

Please visit http://waynemorsecenter.uoregon.edu/democracy.html for additional information.
FACULTY PROFILES

A

ssociate Professor Michael Hames-García joined the Ethnic Studies faculty in the fall of 2005. He holds a B.A. in English from Willamette University and an M.A. and a Ph.D. in English from Cornell University. Professor Hames-García’s research interests include Chicana/o, U.S. Latina/o, and African American literatures and cultures, prisons in the United States, gender and sexuality, and theories of identity and the self. He began to serve as the Director of Ethnic Studies in 2006 while concurrently serving as the Director for the Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality Studies (CRESS). Professor Hames-García recently published Identity Politics Reconsidered with co-editors Linda Martín Alcoff, Satya Mohanty, and Paula M.L. Moya. This volume “offers original answers to questions concerning the analytical legitimacy of ‘identity’ and ‘experience,’ and the relationship among cultural autonomy, moral universalism, and progressive politics”. Included in the volume is a chapter by Michael titled, “What’s at Stake in ‘Gay’ Identities?” Under review is the book, Gay Latino Studies: A Critical Reader, co-edited with Ernesto J. Martínez, and Identity Complex: Gender, Race, & Sexuality from Oz to Aou Ghrailb. In Ethnic Studies, Michael has offered a range of courses from the Introduction to Ethnic Studies to courses on the Prison-Industrial Complex and Chicana/o literature.

D

aniel Martinez HoSang is an Assistant Professor in Ethnic Studies with a joint appointment in Political Science. He joined the faculty in 2007. He holds a B.A. in History from Wesleyan University and a Ph.D. in American Studies and Ethnicity from the University of Southern California. His dissertation, “Racial Propositions: Genteel Apartheid in Postwar California” won national awards from academic associations in American Studies, History and Political Science. A book based on the dissertation will be published by the University of California Press in 2010. Professor HoSang’s broad interests include racial and ethnic politics and cultural studies. He was named the 2008-2009 University of Oregon Wayne Morse Center Resident Scholar and received a 2008 Outstanding Faculty Award from the Office of Multicultural Academic Support. Professor HoSang recently published “The Rise of Racial Liberalism, the Decline of Racial Justice: Lessons from California” in the edited volume Race and American Political Development. He is a former community organizer and trainer and continues to collaborate with social justice organizations in California and the Northwest. Professor HoSang’s courses include, Racial Politics in the U.S., Theories of Race and Ethnicity, Introduction to Asian American Studies, and Race, Gender, and Public Policy.

N

ative American ethnohistory, constructions of race and indigeneity, and Native American educational history are the broad academic interests of Assistant Professor Brian Klopotek. He joined the Ethnic Studies faculty in the fall of 2003, after receiving a B.A. in anthropology from Yale University and a Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Minnesota. He received a University of California Office of the President Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of California-Berkeley for 2008-2009. Professor Klopotek's teaching interests are wide, including courses in Native American education, Native American environmentalism, and Indian-black relations. His book, tentatively titled Recognition Odysseys: Race, Sovereignty, and the Politics of Federal Recognition of American Indian Tribes, will be published by Duke University Press. He recently published an essay in the American Indian Culture and Research Journal, titled “Ordinary and Extraordinary Trauma: Race, Indigeneity, and Hurricane Katrina in Tunica-Biloxi History,” and he has also written on Native Americans and gender in popular culture and Native communities.

(continued on page 5)
Assistant Professor Ernesto Javier Martínez joined the University of Oregon faculty in 2006, as a joint-appointment between Women’s and Gender Studies and Ethnic Studies. His interests include comparative ethnic studies, lesbian and gay/queer studies, U.S. Latina and Latino literature and culture, and literary theory. Prof. Martínez is the author of “Dying to Know: Identity and Self-Knowledge in Baldwin’s Another Country,” forthcoming in PMLA (May, 2009), and “Shifting the Site of Queer Enunciation: Manuel Muñoz and the Politics of Form” (forthcoming). He is also the co-editor, with Michael Hames-García, of Gay Latino Studies: A Critical Reader (forthcoming, Duke UP). His current book project is a volume of essays, co-edited with Stephanie Fryberg, which brings together junior faculty of color and university presidents, provosts, deans, and department heads in order to discuss various factors that adversely influence the daily experiences and professional achievements of junior faculty of color on university campuses across the country.

Professor Martínez has offered courses entitled Queer Ethnic Literature, Introduction to Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies, Theories of Race and Ethnicity, and Queer Migrations. Among his other activities, Professor Martínez serves as a member of the national coordinating team for the Future of Minority Studies (FMS) Research Project, a national consortium of scholars and academic institutions with a primary interest in minority identity, education, and social transformation.

After one year as a Visiting Professor, Assistant Professor Irmary Reyes-Santos joined the Ethnic Studies faculty in 2008. Professor Reyes-Santos holds a B.A. in Comparative Literature from the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez and a Ph.D. in Literature from the University of California, San Diego. Her interests broadly include transnational Carribean literatures and cultures. Professor Reyes-Santos recently published “Capital neoliberal, raza, migración: relaciones domínico-haitianas y domínico-puertorriqueñas” (“Neoliberal Capital, Race, Migration: Haitian-Dominican Relations and Dominican-Puerto Rican Relations”) in Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales. She is working on a book manuscript titled, Racial Geopolitics: Interrogating Caribbean Cultural Discourse in the Era of Globalization. Professor Reyes-Santos has offered a wide variety of courses in Ethnic Studies, including Introduction to Ethnic Studies, Introduction to African American Studies: Hemispheric Legacies of the Plantation, Narrating the Americas: Gender, Race, and Globalization, Caribbean Migrations in the Literary Imagination, Latin American and Latino/a Cultural Studies, and Approaches to Race in Globalization and Postcolonial Studies.

Indeed, I would argue that Ethnic Studies is precisely the place to look for nuanced and complex ways of understanding race and ethnicity that can advocate for a more egalitarian and just society beyond the “colorblind” and “post-race” frameworks that many in the mainstream have promoted in the wake of Obama’s election victory. Thus, while some might question the relevance of Ethnic Studies after Obama’s historic election, I would counter that our work and the work of our colleagues, students, and alumni is more relevant, more important, and more urgently needed than ever.
The Ethnic Studies Department received a Tom and Carol Williams Fund for Undergraduate Education Teaching Grant to restructure the large introductory survey course, and three upper-division courses. The Williams Fund “provides financial support for innovative teaching ideas that contribute to the quality of the educational experience for undergraduate students at the University of Oregon” (http://www.williamsfund.uoregon.edu/about.html). Ethnic Studies is one of seven departments on campus to receive this honor.

The recent departmentalization and a significant expansion in the number of tenure-related faculty provided Ethnic Studies with an unprecedented opportunity to redesign the way courses operate individually and collectively to meet the needs of a broad range of students. ES majors and non-majors will greatly benefit from a redesigned introductory lecture course, which will include an expanded emphasis on race and ethnicity in Oregon and a more deliberate incorporation of multimedia resources.

In addition to revising the introductory course, three capstone courses – Theories of Race and Ethnicity, Research Methods in Ethnic Studies, and the Proseminar will be restructured or newly developed for majors and minors. Each capstone course will individually and cumulatively require students to develop research and writing skills in the field of Ethnic Studies. These courses introduce questions, key terms, and research methods of Ethnic Studies. They will also create spaces where students can consider the interdisciplinary framework of Ethnic Studies as they familiarize themselves with theories and methods in other ES courses and develop research and critical writing and thinking skills in a systematic manner.

Photos From Graduation 2008

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Winter 2009

Ethnic Studies Newsletter
2007-2008 BALLEW SCHOLAR

With the generous donation of Mr. Jon Ballew of Eugene, the Ethnic Studies Program and now Department, has been able to award the Marian Ballew Thomas Memorial Scholarship to majors and minors over the past three years. The scholarships are designed to recognize undergraduate students who are engaged in studies that further the development of their social awareness and analytical skills and who are actively engaged in community service.

Jennifer Lleras (class of ’08) is a first generation college graduate who completed a degree in both Ethnic Studies and Spanish, and was the 2007-2008 Ballew Scholar. Jennifer focused on social justice during her four years at the University of Oregon, which she attributes to providing her a chance to gain irreplaceable skills. Her work gave her the tools to advocate for underrepresented communities, stand up for what she believes in and organize and strategize against things she disagrees with. As a student organizer, she worked with fellow students to fight for the departmentalization of Ethnic Studies. As a representative of the Student Government and a member of the Multicultural Center, Jennifer was able to bridge the gap between the two organizations alongside Kari Herinckx. She helped create a powerhouse coalition that around the departmentalization, Jennifer plans to work in the State of Oregon for a non-profit organization advocating for communities of color in some capacity. Following a few years of community organizing she hopes to go back to school to get a Masters and Ph.D. in Ethnic or American Studies so that she can come back to the university setting and continue the tradition and passion of Ethnic Studies.

Student Profile (continued)

Cultural unawareness plain and simple. Before Ethnic Studies, I was always afraid to talk about the tough issues related to race it our world today: immigration, affirmative action, recruitment, retention, genocide, politics, and more. Today, I write and research the most critical issues (specifically, student activism around issues of race in the American university, and racial articulation within the War on Drugs) in thesis projects that are too long because they are too rich and interesting to be any other way. Essentially, before Ethnic Studies, my life as a student was missing a handful of pieces necessary for success, both internal and externally, personally and academically. Today, I would argue my life as a student is among the richest at the University of Oregon, and I have Ethnic Studies and its many parts (professors, support staff, students, academic resources, campus involvement, etc.) to thank.

The great Black writer and civil rights activist James Baldwin once wrote: “People pay for what they do, and still more for what they have allowed themselves to become, and they pay for it, very simply, by the lives they lead.” Ethnic Studies undoubtedly has given me an opportunity to lead a life richer, fuller, and more encompassing than I ever knew was possible. Perhaps when more students and professors across academia realize that Ethnic Studies matters greatly, we can collectively use what ever is left in our time here to find a goodness and meaning in this lifetime. A lifetime worth living.

Scholarship Announcement

The Ethnic Studies Department is currently soliciting applications for the 2009 Marian Ballew Thomas Memorial Scholarship. Open to Ethnic Studies majors and minors, the award is designated for undergraduates engaged in studies that support the development of social awareness and analytical skills. Preference will be given to students who need financial help with their tuition and/or who have documented community service, and/or are minoring in natural sciences, social sciences, peace studies, education, business or planning and public policy. Up to two awards of $500 each will be given this year. Applications must include a short personal statement (two to three pages in length) addressing the applicant’s focus of study and relevant community work; transcripts; and two letters of reference. To receive full consideration, applications must be delivered to the Ethnic Studies office no later than April 3, 2009.

E.S. Network

Shanté Stuart, B.S. Ethnic Studies 2008, is coordinating the Oregon E.S. Network. The purpose of the Oregon E.S. Network is to provide a space for Ethnic Studies alumni to announce news, events, and milestones in their lives. The Oregon E.S. Network is currently an emailed update list, with the potential development of an internet forum. If you would like to participate in this exciting networking opportunity, please contact Shanté Stuart at skstuart5@gmail.com or return the Alumni Questionnaire on the back of the newsletter.
Profiles from the Class of 2008

Paloma Alicia Reza graduated Cum Laude with a B.A. in Ethnic Studies and History and a minor in Latin American studies. She will continue her academic journey by pursing a M.A. in Conflict Resolution with a focus on cross cultural conflict, reconciliation and violence prevention and a Ph.D. in American Studies or History with a focus on border studies, human rights movements in the Americas and the prison-industrial complex.

Kyra Hayashi graduated Cum Laude with a B.A. in Ethnic Studies and Japanese. Some highlights from her experience in the Ethnic Studies program were that it has provided her with a great undergraduate experience, tools to critically analyze issues and fight for social justice, and multiple opportunities to learn from great faculty and peers. Kyra's post-graduations plans involve returning home and attending the University of Hawaii at Manoa as a student in the M.A. Japanese Language program.

Ronan Kelly graduated with a minor in Ethnic Studies. Ronan considers receiving the Bruce Adams award for her paper on transgendered women in prison as one of her best academic achievements. She is proud to have fought The Commentator on hate speech and harrassment, and of her working at the Survival Center and The Insurgent. Ronan believes that Ethnic studies made her a more intelligent and sensitive person and better able to work for social justice.

Nate Gulley graduated with a B.A. in Ethnic Studies and a minor in Planning, Public Policy and Management. Nate spent four years teaching at the Co-op Family Center, three years Co-Directing the Coalition Against Environmental Racism, and two years as a Senator for the Associated Students of University of Oregon and the University Senate. He also spent his entire time as an Ethnic Studies major campaigning in different ways for the departmentalization of the program, which was finally accomplished during his last week of classes, thanks to years of protests, rallies, meetings, and waiting. After graduation, Nate is taking a PolitiCorps Fellowship in Portland, Oregon with the Bus Project, a progressive organization for hands-on democracy.

Congratulations to the 2008 Ethnic Studies majors & minors:
Phillip Alexander,
Brittany Crouch, Ariam Fesaha,
Marianne Gonzalez, Alicia Griggs,
Nate Gulley, Kyra Hayashi,
Amy Hertert, Randall Hughery,
John Joo, Alani Kelly,
Lorena Landeros, Jennifer Lleras,
Héctor Miramontes,
Samara Montgomery,
Ashley Nesmith, Bridget O'Donnell,
Lupita Peña, Paloma Reza,
Kristin Robinson,
Matthew Scott, Shanté Stuart,
David Van Der Haeghen,
Kyle Weismann-Yee,
Abrina Wheatfall, &
Rebecca Whitfield.

All photos this page by Ashley Gossman
The icon in the Ethnic Studies logo is the Sankofa. Sankofa is an Akan term meaning “go back and retrieve,” which is reflected in a bird that is looking backward as it moves forward. While the word is specific to a West African lexicon and is most often associated with black cultural nationalism, the term’s essential meaning – that one must understand one’s past in order to comprehend the present and actively work toward a more just future – is equally applicable to those groups who are the focus of the Ethnic Studies Department’s intellectual and social mission.

YOUR HELP WILL MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE

Remember when you attended the university and wished there was more you could achieve but the finances weren’t always available? While the Ethnic Studies Department is growing and making a significant impact on students’ lives, our needs remain the same as when you were here. And, we want to improve.

We’d appreciate your help.

The Marion Ballew Thomas Memorial Scholarship Fund is one way you can make a positive difference for students following in your footsteps. This scholarship fund provides annual scholarships for undergraduate students engaged in studies furthering the development of their social awareness and analytical skills. Awarded to culturally diverse undergraduates who’ve declared their major or minor in Ethnic Studies, preference will be given to students who need financial help with their tuition and/or who have documented community service and/or are minor ing in natural sciences, social sciences, peace studies, education, business or planning and public policy.

You chose to make a difference when you selected Ethnic Studies as your principle area of study. Continue to make that difference by supporting your alma mater and its students, who, like you, also want to make a positive difference with their lives.

Please make a gift online at https://supportuo.uofoundation.org by entering ETHNIC STUDIES in the OTHER designation box, or respond with a “Yes!” when you receive a letter or phone call for the Annual Giving Program.
An equal-opportunity, affirmative-action institution committed to cultural diversity and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. This Publication will be made available in accessible formats upon request. Accommodations for people with disabilities will be provided if requested in advance.

Alumni Questionnaire: Please fill out and return to us at above address or email to ethnic@uoregon.edu.

Name: ____________________________ Year of Graduation: ____________________________

Address (if different than mailing label): ____________________________________________

City: ____________________________ State: ____________ Zip code: ______________________

E-mail: ____________________________

What are you doing now?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Is there anything else you would like to share with the Ethnic Studies Department and other alumni?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________