

SPECTRUM



Master of Arts in Liberal Studies

Fall 2014 Volume 9 Issue 2

Oakland University, Rochester

Director's letter

his past year has given us numerous opportunities to learn and to advance toward our academic goals, and you MALS students have done outstanding work. Please keep your spirit of accomplishment strong and your goals in sight, and success will be yours.

My deep thanks to Peter Markus, whose students in the MALS seminar, "The Writer in Nature: to Wonder and Wander," produced some of the finest work I have ever seen in a class of that kind. In the near future we are planning the publication of a selection of the poems and essays MALS students penned for the course. You can find a sampling on pages 4 and 5, as well as an interview with Peter Markus on page 3, of this edition of *Spectrum*. Once again, hats off to Peter Markus for a job well done!

Other highlights in this issue include an interview with Jennifer Law-Sullivan, Professor of French, who held a guest lecture in our Fall 2013 Seminar on Romanticism, and a report on papers read by two MALS students, Regina Weiss and Dan Kosuth, at the Michigan Academy in February 2014.

I wish you all a restful and safe summer, and I look forward to seeing you again in the Fall Semester.

Best wishes,

Chris Clason



Inside this Issue

Page 11

Page 11

Page 12

Page 1	Director's Letter
Page 2	Featured Interview with Professor Jennifer Law -Sullivan
Page 3	Featured Interview with Professor Peter Markus
Pages 4 - 5	Grad Student Poetry
Page 6	Michigan Academy Conference - MALS Student Participants
Pages 7– 9	Fall 2014 Courses
Page 10	Winter 2015 Course Preview

Information on Graduation

Important Dates

Posting for Graduate Assistantship

Featured Interviews



November 4, 2013, MALS students in LBS 500 were treated to a guest lecture from an expert in French Romanticism, Professor Jennifer Law-Sullivan. In a subsequent interview, *Spectrum* caught up with Professor Law-Sullivan during a lull in her busy day as chair of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures. We posed some questions to her regarding the Romantic Period in France; here's what she had to say:

Spectrum: What does Romanticism mean to you, how can this period be described from a cultural

point of view?

Law-Sullivan: As with all literary and cultural movements, Romanticism is a direct response to the preceding movements. After the classicism of the 17th Century and the Age Enlightenment of the 18th Century, the world was ready to focus on the senses, emotions, and feelings. This, in essence, is what the Romantics did. Organized, well-reasoned, and methodological frameworks were replaced with a disordered embracing of passionate chaos. The focus on the good of "Man" was replaced with a focus on the individual human being – her feelings, her place in the world.

In France, Romanticism is also a direct result of the French Revolution. The thirst for "liberté" fueled the literary and artistic world as well as the political world. The constraints applied to society were rejected during the Revolution. Romantics depicted this notion in characters who sought freedom to live as they wished and to love whomever they desired.

Spectrum: You spoke about *Ourika* and *René.* How do the recurring themes characteristic for the Romantic Movement relate to these two novels?

Law-Sullivan: René (1802) is read in the context of Chateaubriand's larger work, *Le Génie du christianisme*. In this work, Chateaubriand

argues that man's destiny on earth is to suffer, but he will find peace and hope in paradise after his death. Man's condition on earth is one of isolation and despair and this comes through very clearly in the character of René. He suffers as soon as he is born and his mother dies! His only consolation is in his sister, but he finally realizes that the love



they have for each other is not a "natural" one and instead is incestuous and taboo. The only peace they can find is in death, which will take them to their eternal reward. René, therefore, must find his refuge in nature, removing himself from society and suffering alone from his malaise.

In Claire de Duras's novel *Ourika* (1823), these themes are very closely replicated, but now we have a female protagonist who is also black. She, too, is bound to suffer, but the overt references to an eternal reward are more subtle. Moreover, her suffering is compounded by her gender and race. Whereas René suffered simply because of his human nature, Ourika endures a threefold suffering. Her isolation is more directly connected to her otherness than her humanness. In other words, her isolation is not something she chooses, but something that society forces upon her. She laments her isolation and solitude and would rather feel a sense of belonging somewhere, but society rejects her and

her only place of belonging is in a convent where she soon dies. This trajectory falls in line with the typical romantic plot wherein a woman has very few choices: she can marry, become a nun, or die. As Ourika has no appropriate suitor, she is only left with the last two options.

Spectrum: What do the two novels have in common or what sets them apart from each other?



Law-Sullivan: While both works present a quintessential Romantic plot, the story presented in *Ourika* is much more complex and nuanced. The layers of suffering multiply Ourika's isolation and negate, to a certain extent, the general precondition for suffering that Chateaubriand espoused. And, as mentioned above, Ourika's isolation is not of her own choosing.

Spectrum: In *Ourika* the author is a white female aristocrat and her narrator in the novel is a black slave girl. Do you think Claire de Duras took advantage of her privileged position to express social injustice?

Law-Sullivan: Yes, absolutely. But I don't believe that she did so in a malicious or negative way. What I mean is that, yes, Duras was indeed in a privileged position. However, she used this position to publish for the first time a story with a complex, black, female narrator. While certain elements of the work are problematic for today's readers, the fact remains that Duras introduced to French society a completely new and fresh plea for the abolition of slavery and recognition of the equality of women. As with the first steps for any social change, there are missteps and mistakes, but we must not let those things detract from the generally positive movement toward social betterment.

Fall 2014 3

Featured Interviews



Professor Peter Markus, Senior writer with the InsideOut Literary Arts Project in Detroit, taught LBS 501 "The Writer in Nature: To Wonder and Wan-

der" in Fall 2013. Peter Markus opened our eyes, ears and hearts to a world of writing unknown for most of us. Completely engaged during our class sessions, we were drawn into a new world of language, while we explored innovative ways of experiencing the environment and translating the experience into words, through "wandering" and "wondering."

Spectrum: Please tell us a little bit about your educational background.

Markus: I did my undergraduate work at the University of Michigan and my graduate work at Western Michigan University. I learned how to make things out of language, though, by watching my first-born child navigate the world and the way that she named what she saw in it.

Spectrum: When did you start to write poems and what was your motivation or idea behind teaching poetry?

Markus: I'm more of a fiction writer than I am a poet, though my stories are oftentimes called poems. I just try to say things in ways that haven't been said before and to string together enough words to make them make books. I like to share what I know, or what I think I know. I think I know a thing or two about how poems sometimes work, or don't work, or how language can make us more alive in the world. Teaching poetry is like breathing, or like teaching breathing. It's what I do mostly with children who are open receptors to all things poetic and possible.

Spectrum: What do you want to inspire in your students?

Markus: I hope to inspire my students to realize that poems are alive inside them waiting to be brought out of them, so that the world might be a place seething with the strangeness and beauty that poetry is. I want them to see that their lives are poems waiting to be written and lived the way poetry teaches us to live with our eyes and our hearts opened wide.

Spectrum: In our class your first question to us was: "What is a poem?" - You then led us to the question: "Does language need words?" What are words to you and what is the relationship between language and words to you?

Markus: I think words are one part of our language. Silence is its own language. As is listening. Paying attention. Words take on resonance in the context of these things. Words are things. Objects. I think of words as being like snowflakes. More than we can count. Yet inside each one, as my daughter once said, "is a waterfall where God is taking a bath." I like to take walks in the snow. I like to watch the snow fall. My relationship to language and words is like my relationship with the snow. Snow has sound. Snow has design. Snow has an accumulative power. We can build with snow. Make a house, a shelter. If we are not prepared for it, if we spend too much time with it, it can even kill us. I have much respect for words, for language, for snow.

Spectrum: What did you gain from your experience of teaching the LBS 501 Seminar last Fall Semester?

Markus: I don't know that I've ever encountered such a group of adult students who were so entirely open to the devices that I brought into our classroom. I was much inspired by how receptive and daring and how willing the students were to put their pencils in all the places that I asked them to explore. I found much pleasure and warmth in our Tuesday evening gatherings spent around poetry's fire. I hope they can keep their torches lit.

Spectrum: What are your future projects?

Markus: I teach around the clock wherever I am asked to teach. I teach most of the time, full-time, as the Senior Writer with the InsideOut Literary Arts Project of Detroit where we send poets and fiction writers into the public schools for year-long workshops with the future poets and dreamers of America. When I'm not teaching and being taught by my own students, I am fathering my two children and doing my best to give them the best that I can offer. I do my best to be the best friend that I can be to my wife, their mother.

In between all this I am working on a new book, a novel, and have a new book of stories, *The Fish and the Not Fish*, coming out in the Fall of 2014. Hopefully I'll be invited back to teach another seminar in the future.

LBS 501: "The Writer in Nature: To Wonder and Wander" Taught by Professor Peter Markus, writer and poet. Fall course 2013

No Song of Myself

-By Susan Walsh

This is no song of myself; I have nothing to say It's you not me: this verse is set free Meanings might change, but images stay.

Keep what you like; let the rest float away Brown field? Blue lake? Black bird? Oak tree? This is no song of myself; I have nothing to say.

I could praise the boy on the tractor, the freshly mown hay I can praise what I like, you don't have to agree Meanings might change, but images stay.

Lie in a hammock, let the breeze hold sway It takes two to make a poem—you, me. This is no song of myself; I have nothing to say. These words are dead until read, some day And the nightingale flies beyond the sea. This is no song of myself; I have nothing to say. Meanings might change, but images stay.



Walt Whitman

Glass Statue —By Robert Rietze

I like broken glass

The way the edges have cracked

Here and there scars of white powder

That tells a different story

I like the different colored parts

The crimson red stained up top

The pale white core

Dotted pink like a raven

I love how it's not just one thing

A piece of broken glass to change a house

It can bring flavor to the kitchen

Youth to the classroom

Or even focus to an office

I like how careful you must be in handling it

If you're too rough it splinters and cracks

If your grip is too loose it can fall and shatter

I like that someone needs to have that perfect grip

That supports while not restricting the

freedom I need to transform

How I love the light it can bring when it's next to her

The warmth of the now, transformed from the then

I like the broken glass that I am.

Allegiance to Eve

-Regina N. Weiss

I praise my space,

the light enticing aromas throughout

I praise the flesh, the red, the outer thick layer of the pome

I praise the undiscovered, the manifest it is holding

I praise the moment it redeemed creation from its ignorance

I praise Eve, she is my Bodhi

I praise the knowledge, the wisdom of women,

I praise the moment of enlightenment, even the dark ages could not stop it

I praise the centuries after Eve, it was the beginning of human consciousness,

leaving ignorance behind

I praise the struggle that comes with it,

I praise the struggle for recognition and self-discovery,

I praise women's voices which imprison in one moment and uncage in another

I praise Eve and in the same I praise all women

I praise Eve whose daughter I am

CA Teacher's Haiku —Bv S.M.G.

Celebrate today.

Tomorrow will be chaos. End of semester.

Grades are due in red. Questioning students bother. My stress increases.

Eleven P.M.

Still checking endless essays

Eyes drooping for sleep.

What? I'm finally done? It's truly miraculous! Time for deserved sleep.

> Martini in hand. Finally time to relax,

Breathing the freedom.

One Moment

—By Sarah Peck

Standing on the boardwalk

Watching the sun sink into the lake The water blazing up in a burst of flame True beauty that can't be replicated Or captured on film

In that moment, I think I understand What the meaning of life is

It's looking for the amazing In an ordinary world Finding beauty In something normal and mundane

I don't think about the fact That it will soon be over Fading to black

Instead I focus on that moment The few minutes of peace and beauty Trying to commit it to memory

But I don't Because I can't How can you hold on to something That can't be caught?



Michigan Academy — Conference Spring 2014

late February, two MALS students spent the Friday of Winter Break at the annual meeting of the Michigan Academy. The prestigious Academy brings together scholars of virtually all academic disciplines from colleges and universities across the state, providing an ideal opportunity for interdisciplinary engagement. Regina Weiss and Dan Kosuth each read research papers in their sessions, fielded questions, and held conversations with some of the best minds of Michigan academe.

Regina began her research in the LBS 500 colloquium on Romanticism in the Fall Semester of 2013. Her main interest centers on the sociology of literature, specifically the cultural history of female writing during the late Eighteenth- and early Nineteenth Century. As the focus of her investigations, she has discovered that letters provide a great deal of content that lends itself well to an interdisciplinary treatment. Thus, she studies the epistolary exchange among women of the period as a medium for women to voice both a public and a private opinion, and therefore the letter becomes a vehicle for female empowerment. The letters Regina studies emerge from a time of great social and political change, and give a unique insight to the forces that heralded the birth of the modern Western European and North American civilizations.

Dan's take on his topic arose from a paper he wrote for Professor Eric LaRock's LBS 502 on "Consciousness, Persons and Free Will," where he constructed a notion of "agency," or the ability to choose a course of action that is efficacious and consequential. He developed his idea further in Charles Mabee's LBS 512 "History and Hope" Seminar, and found an ideal vehicle to test out his concept in Chris



Clason's LBS 500 Seminar on "Romanticism," where he authored a paper on "The Development of Human Agency in Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound.*" Consequently Dan's ideas on this subject have grown and evolved over three courses, and with each iteration they are becoming more tested and better honed.

Both Dan and Regina value their experience at the Michigan Academy, particularly the discussion of ideas and the feeling of community with other scholars. It is hard work to edit and to rewrite one's paper for oral presentation, but both agree that it is well worth the effort. Furthermore, it gives a scholar the opportunity to reveal her/his thoughts, ideas and conclusions to others, which is the most important function of scholarship. Congratulations, Regina and Dan, on your excellent work!



Fall 2014 Courses 7

Seminar in Sciences: Feeding the World: Is the 'Green Revolution' the Problem or the Solution? Professor Fay M. Hansen, Biological Sciences

LBS 504 Seminar in the Sciences, T, 6:30 PM-9:47 PM

This seminar explores questions concerning "feeding the world", integrating science, public policy, and globalization

The "Green Revolution" of the 20th Century is being followed by a push for a "Second Green Revolution" in the 21st Century. What are the driving forces, why are these controversial today, and what are the alternatives?



Women, Power & Persuasion Professor Valerie Palmer-Mehta., Communication and Journalism LBS 511 Language and Literature Elective W, 5:30 PM-8:50 PM

In the course "Women, Power & Persuasion" students will investigate persuasion as a central tool of social change and unearth women's long, active, and innovative methods of influencing public culture through persuasion.

Starting in ancient Greece, the birthplace of democracy, and making our way across time and space to the U.S., we will study the major voices that have transformed our socio-political landscape. Further, we will travel outside of the Western world to explore how women in developing nations are questioning and changing the socio-political culture of their countries.

As we move across time and space, we will investigate and challenge key sites of patriarchal influence and power: politics, education, religion, sports, war, and the media industries.



Ethical Issues in the Media Professor Garry Gilbert, Communication and Journalism LBS 511 Language and Literature Elective TR, 10:00 AM-11:47 AM

This is a study of ethics in the mass media with an emphasis on problems that arise in the world of digital, broadcast and print news. We also will examine ethical concerns in advertising and public relations.

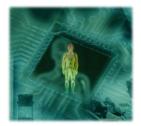
In many cases, the choice facing the communication professional is not a clear one between right and wrong, but rather between two almost equally unattractive alternatives. We will not always agree on, or even find, the "right answer" to every ethical question we confront. Some of us, for example, may see nothing wrong with using a hidden camera or microphone to gather potentially incriminating evidence that will expose wrongdoing or corruption. Others may view such stealth practices with alarm.



Bioethics Professor Elysa White, Philosophy LBS 512 Humanities Elective TR, 3:00 PM-4:47 PM

Bioethics is a course that examines the ethical issues that arise in healthcare.

It investigates the notion of professionalism and the health care professional/patient and family relationship within a variety of situations. Examination of end of life issues, reproduction ethics, and genetics are some of the areas we will survey.



Fall 2014 Courses

Ethics, Language & Reality
Professor Fritz J. McDonald, Philosophy
LBS 512 Humanities Elective TR, 1:00 PM-2:47 PM

We will consider theories of the nature of morality. What are the meanings of moral terms such as "good," "ought," and "right?"

Are moral claims capable of being true or false? Is the truth of moral claims relative to societies or individuals? Do moral properties such as *rightness* and *goodness* exist, and if so, what are their natures? How is morality dependent upon or independent of our emotions and psychological states? How are people motivated, if at all, to do what they ought to do?



8

History of Photography I

Professor Claude Baillargeon, Art and Art History
LBS 512 Humanities Elective TR, 10:00 AM-11:47 AM

This course surveys photographic image making from the origins of the medium to the First World War.

To underscore the significant impact of changing technologies upon camera images, the bulk of the course is structured according to thematic concerns. This approach affords valuable opportunities to examine how a recurrent theme evolved over time as a result of changes and transformations not only in photographic technology, but also in social, political, historical, aesthetic, and theoretical discourses.



Latin American Art
Professor John J. Corso, Art and Art History
LBS 512 Humanities Elective MWF, 10:40 AM-11:47 AM

This course considers the ways that the cataclysmic meeting of European and indigenous cultures in the area now called Latin America affected art, architecture, and visual culture.

At first, the Europeans established a brutal colonial presence, then a network of viceroyalties. Cultural relationships evolved through changing territories and finally through Independence.

Post-independence, Latin America has endured a variety of persistent turbulence in its politics, which has been equaled only in the region's remarkable capacity for creative response and reaction.

This course seeks to widen the vocabulary of art historians to include post-colonial and cultural studies perspectives, showcasing the hybrid artistic discourse of the diverse peoples of Latin America.



Metaphysics
Professor Paul R. Graves, Philosophy
LBS 512 Humanities Elective MWF, 1:20 PM-2:27 PM

Study of selected influential attempts to characterize the basic features of the world. Emphasis on reformulations of metaphysical problems in the light of modern advances in scientific knowledge.



Philosophy of Science
Professor John F. Halpin., Philosophy
LBS 512 Humanities Elective MWF, 1:20 PM-2:27 PM

Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein changed the faces of their fields and together formed the foundation for what is now known as "philosophy of science".

In recent years, a different revolution is occurring due to the computational power at our disposal: Complexity theory now spans the social, biological, physical, and information sciences

We will try to uncover just what there is to this idea and how thinking about complexity may lead to changes in the traditional ideas regarding both reality as described by science and scientific method, and how this new take has implications for the study of the most complex systems out there: human ones.



Roman Art

Professor Susan E. Wood, Art & Art History
LBS 512 Humanities Elective MWF, 1:20 PM-2:27 PM

The development of architecture, sculpture and painting in Etruria and in the Roman Republic and Empire from ca. 600 B.C. until the relocation of the capital at Constantinople in A.D. 330.

This course examines the development of art and architecture both in the city of Rome and throughout the large, diverse empire over which the city eventually ruled. We will consider works of art in its historical, political, social and religious contexts.



Russian Art Professor Tamara Jhashi, Art & Art History LBS 512 Humanities Elective TR, 1:00 PM-2:47 PM

This course is a survey of Russian painting, sculpture, & architecture from the 10th century to the present.

Particular attention is given to understanding this art in its cultural and historical context, and to the consideration of Russian tradition as part of European history.



Racial & Ethnic Relations Professor Elizabeth R. Paré, Sociology & Anthropology

LBS 513 Social Sciences Elective T, 5:30 PM-8:50 PM

A study of racial, ethnic and religious groups, particularly those of the U.S., emphasizing their historical development, problems of adjustment and assimilation, and contemporary problems and trends.

Course Objectives:

- Identify and utilize elements of critical thought when speaking and presenting on racial-ethnic issues from a scholarly vantage point.
- Identify key concepts, theoretical perspectives, research issues and professional applications associated with race-ethnicity in various social institutions.
- Assess and appreciate the impact of race-ethnicity on functioning cross-culturally.
- Identify historical events, social movements and economic influences on the concepts of race-ethnicity across historical and personal time.



Social Welfare Policies Professor Linda J. Morrison, Sociology & Anthropology LBS 513 Social Sciences Elective MW, 3:30 PM-5:17 PM

This course will introduce students to social welfare policy in the U.S. with a focus on the major areas of income maintenance, health care, nutrition, and social services.

We will explore the history and social context of policy-making, how social problems are defined, and how we have responded to these problems over time. We will also look at how policies are made and changed through the influence of various interest groups.

Finally, we will develop the skills of policy analysis, which involves looking at the goals, implementation, and effectiveness of social welfare policies. Films will be shown as an integral part of the course.



LBS 501 Sem in Lit.: Faust: At the Crossroads of Good and Evil

14658

Clason, Ch.

1/6/2015-4/28/2015

Μ

6:30 PM-9:50 PM

10:00 AM-11:47 AM

LBS 503 Sem in Soc Scienc: Common Good

<u>14511</u> Mabee C.

1/6/2015-4/28/2015

T 6:30 PM-9:50 PM

LBS 512 ST: Hst of Photo II 1914-Pres

14062 Baillargeon, C.

1/6/2015-4/28/2015 TR

LBS 511 St: Critical Appr to Pop Music

14515 Farrugia, R.

1/6/2015-4/28/2015 TR 1:00 PM-2:47 PM

LBS 511 St: Culture & Communication

14517 Mendoza, S.

1/6/2015-4/28/2015 W 6:30 PM-9:50 PM

LBS 511 St: Family Communication

14506 Thornton, R.

1/6/2015-4/28/2015 TR 3:00 PM-4:47 PM

LBS 511 St: Hip-Hop, Race & Culture

<u>14516</u> Hay, K.

1/6/2015-4/28/2015 TR 10:00 AM-11:47 AM

LBS 512 St: Art of Ancient Near East

14509 Wood, S.

1/6/2015-4/28/2015 MWF 1:20 PM-2:27 PM

LBS 512 St: Baroque Art

14518 Tirnanic, G.

1/6/2015-4/28/2015 TR 3:00 PM-4:47 PM

LBS 512 ST: Modern Art 1900-1960

<u>14519</u> Jhashi

1/6/2015-4/28/2015 TR 1:00 PM-2:47 PM

LBS 512 ST: Nazi Germany: Soc/Pol/Cult

14510 Hastings, D.

1/6/2015-4/28/2015 TR 1:00 PM-2:47 PM

LBS 513 St: Archaeology of N America

<u>14508</u> Carroll, J.

1/6/2015-4/28/2015 R 5:30 PM-8:50 PM

LBS 513 St: Chinese Politics

<u>14504</u> Epstein, A.

1/6/2015-4/28/2015 MWF 10:40 AM-11:47 AM

LBS 513 St: Pub Sect Human Res

14514 Lombard, E.

1/6/2015-4/28/2015 MWF 1:20 PM-2:27 PM

LBS 513 St: Religion and Politics

14512 Asmussen, N.

1/6/2015-4/28/2015 W 6:30 PM-9:50 PM

LBS 513 St: Global Democratization

14513 Epstein, A.

1/6/2015-4/28/2015 MWF 2:40 PM-3:47 PM

LBS 513 ST: Politics trough Literature

14505 Cantir, C.

1/6/2015-4/28/2015 T 6:30 PM-9:50 PM

Useful Information 11

Don't forget to apply for graduation!

Do you have 20 credits or more completed in the MALS program?

Then it is time to start thinking about your Thesis or Project. A proposal, 3 to 5 typed pages plus bibliography, should be submitted to the MALS Executive Committee before you register for your Thesis Project (LBS 600).

For Fall graduation:......submit by second week of May

For Winter graduation:....submit by second week of November

For Spring graduation:....submit by second week of March

More detailed information can be found on our MALS homepage under "Thesis Project"



MALS Graduate Assistant

The MALS program offers a graduate assistantship

Please apply if:

- You have an undergraduate degree with a strong academic record (3.5. or higher)
- You have been admitted to the MALS program
- You have completed no more than 20 hours of MALS graduate credit demonstrating excellent work
- You can find out more on our MALS home page
- Please contact Professor Clason as soon as possible (clason@oakland.edu) if you would like to apply

MALS

IMPORTANT DATES



FALL 2014

September 1	Labor Day recess
September 3	Classes begin 7: 30 a.m.

September 16 Last day 100% tuition refund

Last day to add a class

September 26 Last day to file application for degree/

certificates for fall 2014

November 10 Thesis Proposals due for registration in

Winter LBS 600.

November 26 Thanksgiving recess begins 10 p.m.

December 1 Classes resume 7:30 a.m.

December 6 Fall classes end 10 p.m.

December 8 - 13 Final exams (end at 10 p.m., Dec. 13)

December 13 Commencement - August 2014 and December 2014 degree graduates

December 24 - January 2, 2015 University closed - holiday recess

January 6, 2015 Winter 2015 classes begin 7:30 a.m.

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