

Oakland University  
Rochester, Michigan

## Letter from the Director

Warm greetings to MALS students, OU colleagues, friends, and the Oakland community.

This academic year has already been a busy one, especially for the MALS students who are working to complete their degrees in spring of 2010. Five students have either begun work on, or have completed, their final project proposals, so this should be a bumper year for MALS graduates. All are to be congratulated on reaching this final step in the program and for submitting creative and challenging proposals.

The year also began with the very welcome announcement that an article by one of our students, Erin Johnson, was chosen for publication in the national journal for graduate liberal studies, *Confluence*. This is great news both for Erin and the program as she is the first student from OU to be so honored. Interviews with Erin and Professor Barbara Mabee, for whose course Erin originally wrote her paper, are featured on pages four and five. Congratulations to both women on this MALS first.

The fall semester has been busy for me as well. I am teaching the LBS 500 introductory colloquium entitled "Bandits, Pirates, and Highwaymen." I thoroughly enjoy my energetic and engaged students. Together, we have pursued various bandits, pillaged pirates, and are in the process of hunting down errant highwaymen—all as a part of learning to integrate disciplines into a single, interdisciplinary research paper. Other activities that have contributed to a busy semester for me include teaching an undergraduate course (HST 375), various committee tasks, course scheduling, a conference presentation in October, and some

(continued on page 2)



*O'Dowd Hall reflects the surrounding landscape and is also self-reflective.*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- **Introducing our acting director winter 2010 page 2**
- **Announcements page 3**
- **Professor Barbara Mabee Interview page 4**
- **Erin Johnson, Published MALS student page 5**
- **Student Conference page 6**
- **Winter 2010 Courses pages 7-9**
- **Cole Pope Scholarship Award page 10**
- **Introducing a new executive committee member page 10**
- **Executive Committee News page 11**

(continued from page one)

limited preparation for my sabbatical semester in winter 2010. My winter also promises to be busy as I have a book contract with Pearson Education to fulfill and have also accepted an invitation to participate in a project exploring the impact of Christianity in modern China. While I know I will miss interacting with MALS students, winter will be busy and, hopefully, very productive as well.

Although I will be on sabbatical, MALS will be in very good hands. Professor Stacey Hahn, Modern Languages and Literature, will serve as acting director in my absence. An interview with her appears below. Graduate assistant Kathy Fabian and program secretary Graciela Osterberg will assist her and will continue to support students in every way possible. Please join me in extending a warm welcome to Professor Hahn.

In closing I want to urge you all to read the notice about the May 2010 Graduate Liberal Studies conference to be held at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, detailed on page six. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet graduate students in other liberal studies programs in our region, as well as to present your research. Many of you have already given excellent presentations as part of your MALS courses, and this is a chance to present your work to a wider audience. The deadline to submit a proposal is February 1, 2010, so now is the time to make plans to attend!

Warm wishes to you all for the coming holiday season,  
Linda



### Introducing Professor Stacey L. Hahn Acting director winter 2010

Professor Stacey L. Hahn is Associate Professor of French in the Modern Languages Department. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin (Madison) and began teaching at Oakland in 1991.

Professor Hahn also coordinates the university's French study abroad program with the University of Orleans in Orleans, France. Professor Hahn teaches a variety of French classes in the department and her special interest is in medieval literature. She particularly likes to concentrate on the Lancelot Grail cycle which

includes King Arthur, Lancelot, Knights of the Round Table, Lancelot's love for Guinevere and the quest for the Holy Grail.

One of the literary works she uses in her courses is the tale of Me'lusene, founding mother of the Lusignane family in France. This is a fascinating prose romance of revenge, murder, intrigue, immortality, and transformation written in old French. Professor Hahn says that many early French literary works are like fairy tales.

Professor Hahn will be acting director of the MALS program while Professor Linda Benson is on sabbatical during the winter 2010 term. Professor Hahn served as an acting director twice before in the Women and Gender Studies program and enjoyed that very much. She is looking forward to interacting with MALS students, especially those who are working on their final projects. Though she has not yet taught a MALS class, she is scheduled to teach one on French Cinema in winter 2011. She loves the idea of being able to teach her subject in greater depth in an interdisciplinary manner and looks forward to meeting and working with MALS students next semester.

## MALS Graduate Assistantship

Applications are invited for the 2020-2011 Graduate Assistantship.

This award is open to students currently enrolled in the MALS program. Applicants must have maintained a consistently high GPA and also have the necessary writing and academic skills to assist the director and to support the overall goals of the MALS program.

The MALS program graduate assistant receives both a stipend and remission of tuition for eight credits of coursework. In return, he or she works with the director for fifteen to twenty hours per week on assignments that range from editing the newsletter to assisting other students with writing and computer skills. Holders of the assistantship may not hold other employment and are required to take two courses during the semester in which they serve in this capacity.

If you would like more information, please contact the Program Director, Professor Linda Benson, Varner Hall 221, Oakland University via e-mail, at [benson@oakland.edu](mailto:benson@oakland.edu).



*Happy Holidays*



## **ANNOUNCEMENT**

Oakland University MALS Students  
are invited to attend the  
**MALS Student Conference**

**WHEN:** May 8, 2010

**WHERE:** University of Michigan-Dearborn

To present a paper at this regional Graduate Liberal Studies conference, current MALS students or recent graduates, should submit a typed, 250-word abstract for a 20 minute presentation to: [malsconference@umd.umich.edu](mailto:malsconference@umd.umich.edu)

**DEADLINE:** February 1, 2010

See page 6 for further conference details

## An Interview with Professor Barbara Mabee

by Kathleen Fabian



Professor Barbara Mabee offered me a cup of coffee in her well organized Honors College office at Vandenberg Hall where we sat and chatted about her career and interests, the class she taught for MALS in 2008, and specifically how she feels about the accomplishments of one of her students in her MALS class, Erin Johnson.

Professor Mabee came to the US from Germany as an exchange student in 1965. She attended and graduated from North East Missouri State University (now Truman State University) as an English and German major. She decided to stay in the U.S. and moved to California where she received her MA in English from California Polytechnic in Pomona and then received her Ph. D in 20th Century German Literature at Ohio State University

She has been here at Oakland since 1988 teaching 20th and now 21st Century German Literature, German language, language and culture, translation and European literature in translation. Her main focus of research is East German Literature after the unification of East and West Germany and, in particular, women writers after unification.

In her classes she explores problems of identity and the nostalgia over what has been lost to the people of post unification East Germany through literature and films. Professor Mabee feels that the fall of the Berlin Wall has informed her whole career as she studies memory and historical consciousness.

In 2008 Professor Mabee taught the MALS core seminar course in language and literature. The title of the course was: United Germany and its Discontents: Issues of Memory, Identity, and Community. The course was an interdisciplinary approach to the study of German unification in the context of cultural, economic, political and literary debates. One of the students in her course, Erin Johnson, has recently been honored by having her course paper printed in the MALS national journal, *Confluence*. ( See story on following page).

Professor Mabee shared her feelings of enjoyment when teaching in the MALS program. MALS makes it possible to cover a topic in much more depth and from a different perspective than would ordinarily be considered in a German class. Readings for the course consisted of memoirs, autobiographies, fiction and poetry as well as various other materials. She said Erin's paper is outstanding and was delighted to see a condensed version of it in our winter 2009 *Spectrum*. She was even happier to find that the *Confluence* accepted it for their October 2009 issue.

Professor Mabee is currently working as interim director of the Honors College. She is also the current President of the Northeast Modern Language Association, directs an exchange student program between Oakland and Oldenburg University, and is in the process of co-editing an anthology with a professor from North Carolina on the topic of humor in post unification literature and film, as well as co-authoring another edition of the intermediate college German textbook *Kaleidoskop*. She has also taught an Independent Study on memory for Vera Ruseckas, a MALS student working on her Masters Thesis and is a member of Vera's final project committee. In the future, Professor Mabee would like to teach a course on East German film for the MALS program.

## Erin Johnson, Published MALS Student

By Kathleen Fabian

Erin Johnson's article *East German Nostalgia After the Fall of the Berlin Wall*, has recently been published. She wrote it as a paper for her MALS class, United Germany and its Discontents: Issues of Memory, Identity, and Community, taught by Professor Barbara Mabee in winter 2008. Erin met with me on campus to discuss the class and how she felt about having her paper published in a major liberal arts journal.

Erin Johnson is about half way through the MALS program and has found it to be a good fit for her interests. She specifically enjoys classes that mix disciplines to offer a totally different perspective on a topic. She found the

German class to be very interesting and since the class size was small it accommodated a lot of discussion and interaction with the professor.

The course covered an historical period that Erin was not familiar with. As she explained, "In school we learn a lot of history about the time after World War I and World War II, but after the destruction of the Berlin Wall, there wasn't much said. Everything in this class was new to me and I really learned a lot." At that time in history there was a lot of news coverage about the actual tearing down of the wall, but very little was said about the reunification of the East and West German territories. The world assumed that the German people were happy with unification and would just carry on their lives as usual. There wasn't much thought about the adjustment that the East German's would have to make. In reality, the East Germans became immigrants in their own land; it was as if their country had moved away. The East German government changed, the economy changed, the workplace changed, the social life changed for the people, and no one outside seemed to notice or care.

Erin entered her paper in the *Confluence* writing contest last spring but belatedly Professor Benson realized that Erin's paper was about 1000 words more than the rules for the contest allowed. It was too late to edit it so she forgot about her submission. However, in August she received an e-mail from the editor of the *Confluence* journal saying that he would like to publish her paper in the October issue. They had edited it a little and wanted her approval. She agreed with the edits and provided a two sentence biography they had requested and dismissed it from her mind.

When asked how she felt when she found out, she said it really didn't hit her that this was quite an honor until recently. In June, she had started a new job, and by August she was super busy with new projects and a planned move to a new home. But when she heard from Professor Benson that she was the first student of the MALS program to have a paper selected for publication in the liberal studies national journal, she began to understand the enormity of the honor.

As of this writing, she has not received her two free copies of the magazine, but she is really looking forward to seeing her words in print!





**Interdisciplinary Intersections:  
2010 Graduate/Post-Graduate Student Liberal Studies Conference**  
Location: University of Michigan-Dearborn, Dearborn, Michigan  
Call for Papers Deadline: February 1, 2010  
Conference Date: May 8, 2010

The Masters of Liberal Studies Program at the University of Michigan-Dearborn is pleased to announce its inaugural Graduate/Post-Graduate Student Liberal Studies Conference to be held on the UM-D campus, May 8, 2010. Graduate and recently graduated students of master level liberal studies programs are invited to submit proposals for the one-day conference that explore and analyze interdisciplinary scholarship including the intersections between the natural sciences, humanities, behavioral and social sciences. The conference hopes to bring together students from different universities and backgrounds in order to share ideas. We encourage students to present topics that are of historical and contemporary concern.

The committee is open many genres of scholarly interdisciplinary study. This includes: research papers, articles, creative multimedia projects, graphic novels and poetry chapbooks. Special attention will be given to those providing stellar examples of interdisciplinary academic research and analysis.

The inaugural conference will also feature poster sessions that will run throughout the day in conjunction with paper presentations. These sessions serve as a unique opportunity to present research in an one-on-one setting and typically last 10-15 minutes. Those selected to participate in a poster session will be given further instructions for proper presentation upon acceptance.

Topics could include, but are not limited to:

- Memory, Emotions, Self
- Place, Time, Space
- Literacy, Travel/Memoir Writing
- Cross-Cultural Relations
- Environmental Studies
- Gender and Identity formation
- New Technologies and Transformations

All submissions are to be a typed, 250-word abstract for a twenty-minute presentation. All submissions should be sent in .doc or .pdf format to [malsconference@umd.umich.edu](mailto:malsconference@umd.umich.edu). Only emailed submissions will be considered. Proposals should include the author's name, academic affiliation, email address and article title. We cannot be responsible for submissions that do not meet these guidelines.

The deadline for proposal submission is February 1, 2010.  
Entrants will be notified no later than March 1, 2010.

Information about the University of Michigan-Dearborn and the Masters of Arts in Liberal Studies program can be found at: [umd.umich.edu](http://umd.umich.edu).

Jaqueline Vansant, Ph.D.  
Director of Liberal Studies  
3091 CASL Building  
313-593-5153  
[jvansant@umd.umich.edu](mailto:jvansant@umd.umich.edu)



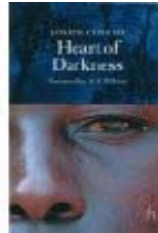
---

## LBS 503: Core Seminar in the Social Sciences

### Politics Through Literature

Tuesday— 6:30 – 9:50 p.m., SFH 170

Professor Paul Kubicek  
Department of Political Science



This interdisciplinary seminar examines fundamental ideas in political theory through works typically classified as literature. Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four*, for example, serve as vehicles for exploration of the world of politics by tracing the development of plot lines and characters as well as the creative impulse that links the world of politics with literature.

Class sessions will provide ample opportunity for debate and discussion, as well as lectures that provide context for the political theories and theorists whose ideas are reflected in each work under discussion. Be prepared to read widely as we venture into the realms of politics and literature, exploring ideas that have been the basis for political and social change and which remain part of a greater national conversation that extends into the present day.

---

Professor Kubicek is the current Chair of the Political Science Department at Oakland University. Recipient of a Fulbright Scholar award, Professor Kubicek earned his PhD at the University of Michigan.

---

## LBS 511: Elective in Language and Literature

### Digital Culture: Identity and Community

Tuesday, Thursday—1:00 – 2:47 p.m. WH 400

Professor Lori Ostergaard  
Department of Communication and Journalism.



This innovative elective in the area of language and literature examines the rhetoric and ethics of internet technology and culture. It introduces students to theories of digital culture and their impact on both on-line and actual identities and communities, especially in relation to ethnicity, gender, class, physical ability and sexual orientation. The course also includes individual and collaborative analysis and construction of Web projects.

---

Lori Ostergaard is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Writing and Rhetoric whose archival research examines the history of composition-rhetoric at Midwestern normal schools and high schools. In addition to teaching WRT 150 & 160, Lori teaches classes in Persuasive Writing, Digital Culture, and Teaching Writing with New Media.

## LBS 511: Elective in Language and Literature

### Language, Gender, and Politics in Chinese Society

Tuesday, Thursday—1:00 – 2:47 p.m. SEB 364

Professor Helena Riha—Department of Linguistics



This new course explores the interplay of language, gender, and politics in traditional and contemporary Chinese society. Among the topics to be addressed are: the interaction of language, gender, power, and civil society in Chinese culture; the characteristics of modern Chinese women's speech and their social meanings; gender-based difference in attitudes toward the national language and Chinese dialects; the construction of gender in writing, including *nushu*, a women's script; and language, gender and Chinese youth culture.

Dr. Helena Riha teaches linguistics in the Oakland University Department of Linguistics. She received her doctorate in Linguistics from the Ohio State University Department of Linguistics. Dr. Riha also has an M.S. in Foreign Service from Georgetown University. Her B.A. is in Chinese language and literature. Dr. Riha's primary research area is language and society, with a focus on

## LBS 513: Elective in the Social Sciences

### JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND ITS SOCIAL CONTROL

MWF—10:40 - 11:47 a.m. EH 214

Professor Amanda Burgess-Proctor  
Department of Sociology and Anthropology



This course provides an analysis of the institutions that influence delinquent behavior (e.g., families, peers, schools, neighborhoods, etc.), as well as the implications of these explanations for juvenile justice policy. Drawing upon current criminological and sociological research, this course offers an empirical and conceptual evaluation of both delinquency theory and juvenile justice.

Amanda Burgess-Proctor is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Oakland University. She received her Ph.D. in Criminal Justice from Michigan State University. Her primary research interests include feminist criminology, criminological theory, intimate partner violence, and intersections of race, class, and gender. She has published research in *Feminist Criminology*, *Violence Against Women*, *Violence & Victims*, and *Women & Criminal Justice*.





**LBS 513: Elective in the Social Sciences**  
**American Religious Experience**

Online Course

Professor Charles Mabee:  
Religious Studies Concentration

This online course requires a maximum of 3 meetings on campus.  
It explores the American religious experience.



**LBS 513: Elective in the Social Sciences**  
**Biblical Psychology**

Thursday— 6:30 – 9:50 p.m. SFH 173

Professor M. Abramsky  
Religious Studies Concentration

This course will study psychology of biblical teachings and beliefs.



**LBS 513: Elective in the Social Sciences**  
**State Politics**

Online Course

Professor John S. Klemanski:  
Department of Political Science

This online course encompasses comparative analysis of the variations and similarities of the political systems of the 50 states, the political structures, political participation and contemporary public policy.



**LBS 513: Elective in the Social Sciences**  
**American Presidency/Executive Process**

Tuesday, Thursday— 3:00 – 4:47 p.m., PH 314

Professor Roger Thomas Larocca  
Department of Political Science

This course presents a study of presidential politics, decision making and leadership in the American political system.



## Laura Zimmerman Named Co-Recipient of Cole Pope Scholarship

MALS is pleased to announce that Laura Zimmerman has been awarded the 2009 Cole Pope Scholarship which she will share with Elizabeth Z. Jagosz, a graduate student in the English Department. For the first time, the scholarship competition was open to both MALS and English graduate students, and both programs take pride in these two outstanding women whose writing and research represents the best in each of their respective programs. Our congratulations to both recipients, and our thanks to Professor Natalie Cole and her family for funding the scholarship.



## Introducing new Executive Committee Member: ERIC LAROCK

Eric LaRock is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Oakland University. He received his Ph.D. in philosophy from Saint Louis University in 2005. His specialization is the philosophy of mind and related neurosciences, but he also works in ancient Greek philosophy and metaphysics. Some of his recent research has appeared in such peer-reviewed journals as *Behavior and Philosophy*, *Consciousness and Cognition*, *International Philosophical Quarterly*, and *Theory and Psychology*. He also has a forthcoming manuscript on Kant's philosophy of mind in the international journal, *Kant-Studien*. He is currently working on the philosophical implications of anesthesia awareness, and the philosophical and scientific problems related to consciousness and persons.

## CHANGES TO THE MALS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The membership of the MALS Executive Committee changes periodically, and this past summer two members completed their three years terms. We say thank you and farewell to Professor George Gamboa, Biology, and Professor Phyllis Rooney, Philosophy. MALS is grateful for their past advice and counsel, as well as their strong support of the program and students.

Joining the committee this year are two new members. They are Professor Eric LaRock, Philosophy, representing the humanities; and Professor Alberto Rojo, Physics, representing the natural sciences. Welcome to you both!

Continuing their terms in the 2009-2010 academic year are Professor Debra McGinnis, Psychology, representing the social sciences; and Professor Aldona Pobutsky, Modern Languages, representing the languages and literatures area.

Since the inauguration of the program, the MALS Executive Committee has been composed of the MALS director and four faculty members appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Each committee member represents one of the areas in which students complete course work as part of the degree requirements.

Among the committee's responsibilities are advising on policies and administration of the program as well as reviewing applications, student petitions and final project proposals, among other tasks. Members have also taught MALS courses and/or served on student final project committees.

### MALS Executive Committee Member, 2009-2010

Linda Benson  
Professor of History and  
Director, MALS

Aldona Pobotsky  
Associate Professor  
Modern Languages and Literature

Stacey Hahn  
Associate Professor  
Modern Languages and Literature  
Acting Director, Winter 2010

Alberto Rojo  
Associate Professor  
Physics

Eric LaRock  
Assistant Professor  
Philosophy

Debra McGinnis  
Associate Professor  
Psychology

# MALS

Master of Arts In Liberal Studies

academic calendar  
Winter 2010

January 5	Classes begin 7:30 a.m.
January 29	Last day to file application for degree
February 15	Summer registration begins
February 20	Winter recess begins 10 p.m.
March 15	Fall Registration begins
April 19	Winter Classes end
April 21-27	Final Exams
May 1	Commencement

**Need Help with computer or writing, brainstorming for a project?**

Contact:  
Kathleen Fabian  
Graduate Assistant  
521 Varner Hall  
248-370-2154  
[kmfabian@oakland.edu](mailto:kmfabian@oakland.edu)  
Office hours: Mon.& Wed. 1:30—3:30 and  
by appointment.