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## College of Arts and Sciences E-News Issue 23: March 2015

College of Arts and Sciences

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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

# College of *Arts and Sciences*

e-News Issue 23: March 2015

## Upcoming CAS events



## Stay in touch!



## Update your information



Simon Forde  
named director and  
managing editor of  
Medieval Institute  
Publications



## CAS News

- ▶ Anita Hill's lecture rescheduled due to weather

## FACULTY Features

- ▶ Dr. Elena Litvinova awarded \$284,000 NSF grant for theoretical nuclear physics
- ▶ Biological sciences associate professor, Dr. Sharon Gill awarded grant to study soundscape

## ALUMNI Profiles

- ▶ Sociology alumnus, Alex Wirth-Cauchon, Ph.D. '82 named chief information officer and executive director of Library, Information, and Technology Services at Mount Holyoke College
- ▶ English alumna, Luanne Castle '90 publishes poetry collection
- ▶ Roxana Gamble '14, anthropology and Spanish graduate begins Peace Corps in Panama



WESTERN MICHIGAN  
UNIVERSITY

## Medieval Institute



# Anita Hill's lecture has been rescheduled

by Mark Schwerin  
February 24, 2015 | WMU News



Hill (Photo credit: Jack White)

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—A presentation by Anita Hill, the woman who captivated the nation with her testimony of sexual harassment directed at then-U.S. Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas, has been rescheduled.

Hill will speak at **7 p.m. Monday, April 13**, in Kalamazoo's Chenery Auditorium. Her appearance, part of the new "Raise Your Voice" speaker series, had to be rescheduled due to the severe weather.

The documentary, "Anita: Speaking Truth to Power," originally shown in late January, will be re-screened at **5:30 and 8 p.m. Thursday, April 9**, at the Alamo Drafthouse, in downtown Kalamazoo at the corner of Portage and South streets.

## Raise Your Voice Series

The speaker series is led by the Lee Honors College, co-sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Fine Arts, and is being supported by multiple departments and units across campus and by organizations in the Kalamazoo community.

**For more information**, including a full listing of series sponsors, visit [wmich.edu/honors/events/raise-your-voice](http://wmich.edu/honors/events/raise-your-voice).

## Litvinova Awarded NSF Grant



Western Michigan University assistant professor of physics, Dr. Elena Litvinova was awarded a three year \$284,000 grant from the National Science Foundation for research in the field of theoretical nuclear physics. Litvinova, along with graduate associate, Irina Egorova and research associate, Caroline Robin hope to advance theoretical and computational methods to give reliable predictions for nuclear processes at the limits of the existence of atomic nuclei. According to Litvinova, this project will help to answer three fundamental questions:

What is the origin of chemical elements around us?

Where are the limits of nuclear stability?

What is the mass of neutrino?

Having the answers to these three fundamental questions will advance nuclear theory and provide intensive training for graduate students preparing for careers in industry and academia.

While Litvinova's focus will be on theoretical physics, her work will include collaboration with experimental physicists. Physicists know that in atomic nuclei, protons and neutrons interact with forces, but there is not a consistent mathematical theory for this interaction. Having precise calculations will not only help theoretical physicists, it will help astrophysicists get reaction rates in stars. In making this theory as fundamental as possible, precise predictions can be tested and developed using experimental physics.



Litvinova's grant is exciting news for WMU. In addition to attracting the talents of graduate associate, Egorova from Russia and scientist Robin from France to WMU, this project will provide a groundbreaking framework to train graduate students. There are also plans to develop software based on the mathematical methods, which will remain at WMU. Litvinova hopes to answer her three fundamental questions by developing the new mathematical and computational methods and have it tested at world-renowned physics facilities all over the world, including the National Superconducting Cyclotron Laboratory at Michigan State University and RIKEN, Japan's

largest comprehensive successful theory, Litvinova, Egorova and Robin plan to publish their research, present at international conferences and provide post-doctorate training at WMU while advancing and getting a clearer understanding of nuclear theory and nuclear physics.

## Sharon Gill Awarded Grant to Study Soundscape



Department of Biological Sciences associate professor, Dr. Sharon Gill received an award of nearly \$25,000 from the Eppley Foundation to research the soundscape — the collections of sound from animals, wind, water and humans — of local nature preserves and to learn what soundscape tells us about the environment.

Gill has been studying how anthropogenic noise affects animal communication and while conducting this research she often visits local natural areas. The Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy (SWMLC) manages many of the sites where her research has been done, and their experiences at the preserves led Gill and her collaborators to the study of soundscapes and how anthropogenic, or human-generated, noise from outside preserves might affect soundscape quality. Though there are 40 potential locations for this fieldwork and data collection, Gill and her team, made up of Dr. Maarten Vonhof (biological sciences), Dr. Kathleen Baker (geography) and Nate Fuller (conversation and stewardship director, SWMLC) will begin by studying 8. They selected reserves with both grasslands and



forests, differing in sizes and distances from types of noise. Data collection will take place using automated recorders that are programmable by time. The recordings begin in March and will go through the end of September in order to capture mating season of birds, frogs and insects. These recordings will help Gill understand how often noise is audible at these sites, how human activities outside of the preserves contribute to noise, and the link between noise audibility and biodiversity. The team will then make recommendations to the SWMLC regarding how to mitigate noise on their preserves.

In addition to comprehending soundscapes at these preserves and mitigating noise at the land conservancy, Gill hopes to ultimately connect people to their environment using sound. She plans to help others understand how noise affects animals and can filter out some species, which impacts biodiversity. According to Gill, by studying soundscapes we also gain understanding about how noise affects human health in areas of stress and sleep. In order to inform more than the scientific community and stakeholders, Gill has started having sound walks at SWMLC preserves where people are encouraged to focus on listening rather than seeing.

The Eppley Foundation for Research was incorporated in 1947 for the purpose of "increasing knowledge in pure or applied science...in chemistry, physics and biology through study, research and publication." Today the Foundation funds projects in medicine, life sciences and the physical sciences. Particular areas of interest include innovative medical investigations and applications, endangered animals and ecosystems, and climate change.

# People In Business: Alex Wirth-Cauchon of Mount Holyoke College

[http://www.masslive.com/business-news/index.ssf/2015/01/people\\_in\\_business\\_alex\\_wirth-cauchon\\_of.html](http://www.masslive.com/business-news/index.ssf/2015/01/people_in_business_alex_wirth-cauchon_of.html)

## A Journey in Writing

Posted on Monday, February 23, 2015



Luanne Castle (*BBA '77, Marketing; MA '90, English/MFA, Creative Writing*) has just published her book, 'Doll God,' a collection of poetry that traces the spirit world in human-made and natural objects—a Japanese doll, a Palo Verde tree, and a hummingbird.

“The gripping poems take the reader on a journey through what is found, lost, or destroyed.” The collection was released in late January, and has since landed on Amazon’s list of Hot New Releases in Poetry.

From the time she was a child, Castle wanted to be what

she referred to as one of the three 'A's': author, actress or archaeologist, but when she got the Western for her undergraduate degree, she was encouraged to major in marketing. After several years in the field, Castle decided it was time to return to WMU for a Master's degree in English or creative writing. "I was blessed to study with some wonderful teachers, scholars, writers, and mentors," she remembered.

After completing her graduate studies in English and Creative Writing, Castle and her husband packed up and moved to California where she continued her education. This time Castle would be entering a doctoral program at the University of California, Riverside.

"When I picked up my writing a few years later, my grandmother made me promise her that I would never give up writing," Castle said. "My drive comes from deep inside, but when I get discouraged I can think about my promise to my grandmother and move beyond immediate disappointments."

And that's what she imparts on current students seeking a writing career. "Remember that rejection is a big part of writing," she said. "One of my mentors recently posted a copy of a very rude and demoralizing rejection letter she received when she was starting out. She didn't let it stop her--and she wasn't too embarrassed to publicize it. That attitude goes a long way."

Reading, studying, and cultivating relationships with other writers is key, she says.

To learn more about Castle or 'Doll God,' visit [luannecastle.com](http://luannecastle.com).

Luanne Castle and her husband, Marshal (*BBA '77, Marketing*) are both alumni of WMU. Luanne's grandmother is a graduate of Western State Normal School, and both of her parents, her brother, aunt, uncle, and a number of cousins are also alumni. "For many years, there was always somebody in our family at WMU," she said. "I grew up in the Kalamazoo area, and Western is a big part of the Kalamazoo experience." Luanne is currently working on a new book of poetry and maintains a blog 'Family Kalamazoo' in which she documents family stories and antique photographs from genealogical research.

## **Canton, Mich., resident begins Peace Corps service in Panama**

<http://midwestpcvs.com/2015/02/23/canton-mich-resident-begins-peace-corps-service-in-panama/>