2012-13 Annual Report

University Center for the Humanities

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At the Center...

After a successful inaugural year of service that saw Western Michigan University embrace the mission of the University Center for the Humanities, the Center entered the 2012-13 academic year with great momentum and high expectations. The contents of this report show that the Center has proven to be a popular and useful place to gather. In addition, the success of the center is a clear sign that the humanities are the center of our university and the wider community.

This past fall the center turned to the drama of national elections in our 2012-13 series “Power and Publics.” Before all of us went to the polls, Washington Post columnist E.J. Dionne was on campus to weigh the State of Michigan’s power in the Presidential race. Following the election, American Prospect science writer Chris Mooney measured the political impact of the results on the study of science. In January as we observed Martin Luther King Day, Stanford theater historian Harry Elam looked back at the political performances given by Barack Obama and Mitt Romney, and in February Harvard professor Jocelyne Cesari reflected on the Arab Spring and gauged the power of Islam in constructing democracies.

The University Center for the Humanities is a grassroots effort by faculty from several colleges to recognize and celebrate the humanities on our campus and throughout our community with the continuing strong support of Provost Tim Greene.

Center Staff
Katherine Joslin, founding director
Scott Bade, coordinator
Bethlynn Sanders, administrative assistant
Jason Aiello, graphic designer
LaTasha Chaffin, coordinator, Humanities for Everybody
Denise Negrea, undergraduate intern
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Our Mission
The mission of the Center is to recognize and support the humanities. As a gathering place for dialogue, the Center acts as an incubator for the exchange of ideas among faculty, emeriti, alumni, undergraduate and graduate students, and people in the wider community. Through the understanding of diverse cultural, professional, political, and intellectual landscapes, we nurture an engaged and vital academic life.

The Center, in all its programs, is learner centered, discovery driven, and globally engaged.

About the Humanities
The deep wellsprings of humanities scholarship have long been honored in higher education and continue to provide fundamental intellectual resources for exploring the issues of our day. Rooted in diverse perspectives, the humanities comprise the classics, languages, literature, philosophy, ethics, history, jurisprudence, religion, archaeology, cultural studies, the social sciences, such as cultural anthropology, economics, geography, political science, and sociology, and have close links to the study of visual and performing arts, the sciences, engineering, business, and health sciences. Moreover, the humanities cross disciplinary boundaries, taking up questions about the meaning of human existence that transcend the thinking of any single field of study.

A university culture that opens such pathways of appreciative understanding will both nurture diverse particular strands of scholarship in the humanities and enhance formation of connections across the university with our students and throughout our wider community.

By the Numbers
- **2000** people attended our series, “Power and Publics,” and other sponsored events.
- **167** disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and cross-disciplinary events were held at the Center.
- **15** faculty publications were donated to our Humanities Library.
- **5** Interdisciplinary Humanities Groups were awarded funding.

Building upon a Strong Foundation in the Humanities
Learner Centered, Discovery Driven, Globally Engaged
Advisory Board

Katherine Joslin
English

Peter Blickle
Foreign Languages

Lofton Durham
Theatre

Paul Farber
Educational Studies

Lynne Heasley
History

Carla Koretsky
Lee Honors College

Mary Lagerway
Nursing

Timothy Light
Emeritus

Ann Miles
Sociology

Natalio Ohanna
Spanish

Mike Pritchard
Philosophy

Kathy Purnell
OVPR

Joseph Reish
Libraries

David Rudge
Biological Sciences

Mary-Louise Totton
Art

Brian Wilson
Comparitive Religion
E.J. Dionne  
October 25, 2012  

Cosponsored by Center for the Study of Ethics in Society; College of Fine Arts; Department of Political Science; Lee Honors College; Office of the Provost; School of Communication.

Lecture: “The Election and Our Divided Political Heart”

Over four hundred people from WMU and the wider community attended events related to E.J. Dionne’s campus visit, the first event in the 2012-2013 Center for the Humanities Power and Public speaker series. In the morning Dionne spoke with nearly 50 students at the Lee Honors College. In the evening, 400 people filled the Dalton Center Recital Hall to hear E.J. Dionne speak about the approaching presidential election. Dionne, author of *Our Divided Political Heart*, read selections from his book that explores the tension between individualism and community throughout our nation’s history. The event was organized by Lofton Durham, Department of Theatre.

Chris Mooney  
November 29, 2012  

Cosponsored by College of Fine Arts; Center for the Study of Ethics in Society; Departments of Biological Sciences, Chemistry, and Physics; Mallinson Institute for Science Education; Office of the Provost.

Lecture: “Political Science 2012: What the Election Means for Science Policy on Climate Change and Beyond”

Two hundred people from WMU and the Kalamazoo community braved a chilly November evening to attend the standing-room-only lecture delivered by Chris Mooney. Mooney discussed the evolution of American science policy over the past eight years and how he anticipates it will fare during President Obama’s second term. On Friday morning following the lecture, Mooney met with students and faculty in the Center for the Humanities for an informal talk and Q&A. The events were organized by David Rudge, Department of Biological Sciences.
Frigid temperatures and icy road conditions did not prevent three hundred people from WMU and the Kalamazoo community from attending Harry Elam Jr.’s lecture on the power and politics of performing race. In the talk Elam asked what does it mean to “perform race?” How do we, and how can we, understand the relationship between race and performance? He examined the meanings of various performances, including the horrible spectacle of slavery, the plays of Lorraine Hansberry, Spike Lee’s *Bamboozled* and finally the 2012 presidential campaign and Stephen Colbert’s discussion of race and politics with Debra Dickerson. On Friday morning after his lecture, Harry Elam, Jr. visited the Kalamazoo Black Arts & Cultural Center for an informal lunch and discussion with members of the community. The events were organized by Lofton Durham, Department of Theater.

One hundred and fifty people from WMU and surrounding community were treated to a provocative and profound lecture given by Dr. Jocelyne Cesari. Cesari’s talk shed new light on secularity and the role of Islam in the democratization process, and opened discussion for plausible democratic “Islamic” regimes. Cesari used original data she produced in 2011-2012 as the Minerva Chair at the National War College to ground her argument and demonstration. The lecture was followed by spirited Q&A with the audience. The event was organized by Lofton Durham, Department of Theater.
Special Programs

Catherine Julien Memorial Lecture Series in Interdisciplinary Studies

In March, the Center for Humanities sponsored the first Catherine Julien Memorial Lecture. The mission of the Julien Series is to bring back to campus WMU alumni (graduate or undergraduate) whose professional or academic work is broadly interdisciplinary.

“Performing Maya: Archaeology, Tourism, and the Mayanization of the Mexican Caribbean”

The University Center for Humanities advisory board member and Professor of Sociology Ann Miles welcomed alumni Dylan Clark: (BA WMU, PhD candidate at Harvard University, and William R. Tyler Fellow, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library & Collection) and Carmen Muñoz-Fernández: (MA WMU, instructor at Phillips Academy Andover) as the inaugural lecturers in the series. Dylan and Carmen delivered their lecture to a capacity crowd of 200 students and faculty from across the humanities.

The event was cosponsored by the Anthropology Department; College of Arts and Sciences Interdisciplinary Committee; Graduate College; History Department; Lee Honors College, Sociology Department, and Spanish Department

Lee Honors College’s 2013 Lyceum Lecture Series

This themed lecture series on climate change featured seminars by twelve WMU faculty representing eight different departments (Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Geosciences, Political Science, Sociology, Environmental Studies, Physics, Anthropology). Weekly lectures at noon on Wednesdays typically were attended by 50 or more community members, staff and faculty. Outside speakers Mark Schauer (former U.S. Representative from MI) and Rob Sisson (President of ConservAmerica) also contributed to a discussion on the politics of climate change.

The series was co-sponsored by the University Center for Humanities (Interdisciplinary Humanities Climate Change Group) and the Lee Honors College. Organized by Carla Koretsky, Lee Honors College.

Graduate Humanities Conference

Fifty WMU graduate students and faculty took part in the 2nd annual WMU Graduate Humanities Conference. Fourteen graduate students were selected for presentation in three sessions. Lofton Durham, Department of Theatre, gave a keynote address. Moderators for the conference were Eve Salisbury, Department of English, Dini Metro-Roland, Department of Teaching, Learning and Educational Studies; and Brian Wilson, Department of Comparative Religion. The first place prize ($500) for best conference paper was awarded to Suzanne Ehst for her paper “I Love the Country but I Can’t Stand the Scene: Teaching Literature to Examine and Complicate Adolescent National Identity.” The runner-up prize ($300) went to Eric Mendes for his paper “Ancient Magic and Modern Accessories: A Re-Examination of the Omamori Phenomenon.” The Graduate Student Activities Committee and the Graduate College funded the conference, and papers will be published in The Hilltop Review. The conference was organized by Scott Bade, Coordinator, Center for the Humanities and Becky De Oliveira, Department of English.
Partnerships

Cosponsored Events

Poetry Reading
Philip Levine, United States Poet Laureate in 2010
William Olsen, New Issues Poetry & Prose

“The Influence of the Media”
Brooke Gladstone, audio program host for NPR “On the Media”
Irving S. Gilmore Foundation; Friends of Kalamazoo Public Library; mlive-Kalamazoo Gazette; Center for the Humanities; Center for the Study of Ethics in Society; Department of Communication; WMUK-FM; College of Fine Arts

“Falling in Love with Italy: The Trojan Journey in Vergil’s Aeneid”
Chris Fletcher, professor, Louisiana State University
Department of World Languages and Literatures; the Lee Honors College; and the Department of History

“Awakening Human Rights”
Shirin Ebadi, Nobel Peace Laureate
Great Lakes PeaceJam; Seeding Change, WK Kellogg Foundation, Irving S. Gilmore Foundation

Spanish Lecture series
A committee including Department Chair Irma Lopez, Antonio Iseas and Natalio Ohanna organizes the series. The program for the coming academic year is presently being finalized.

“If Iola Were a Man: Gender, Politics, and Public Protest in the Work of Ida B. Wells”
Mia Bay, professor, Rutgers University
Department of Gender and Women’s Studies
Interdisciplinary Humanities Groups

About the Program
The Center offered the first annual competitive sponsorship of interdisciplinary groups working across departments and colleges on issues in the humanities. In this pilot year, five groups won awards ($500 each) to facilitate conversation across our campus and into the wider Kalamazoo community. These groups encourage and support distinctive learning and innovative teaching as well as advanced research initiatives. From such groups will come grant projects that will bring external funds into the Center. Some groups also aim to develop a diverse, inclusive, healthy, and environmentally sustainable world. This program will continue in the fall and future semesters, and selected groups are now eligible for $1000, which includes a contribution of $500 from the College of Arts and Sciences.

Groups
The Study of Climate Change: Working Toward a More Livable Future
In 2012-13, the interdisciplinary group on climate change continued interdisciplinary discussions and activities from 2011-12 in three main areas: (1) enhancing WMU students’ understanding of the causes and consequences of climate change (2) enhancing understanding in the community of the causes and consequences of climate change, and (3) supporting interdisciplinary research and grant-seeking related to climate change. Notable accomplishments included the establishment of a website: http://wmuclimatechange.info/ with a speakers bureau. Under Carla Koretsky’s leadership the group planned and carried out a Lee Honors College Lyceum Lecture Series on “Climate Change: Scientific, Socioeconomic and Scientific Perspectives,” with lectures by 12 faculty from various disciplines, a politician, and the director of an environmental advocacy group. Many of these lectures were well attended not only by students enrolled in the class but also by people from the community and from across the university. The group held a breakfast discussion on climate change with the Bronson Park Clergy. Additionally, the group submitted their first external grant proposal and were awarded a grant of $3000. Finally, the interdisciplinary group on climate change supported the Center for in inviting Bill McKibben, a leading environmental activist, to speak at WMU in October 2013, and in beginning to organize a series of climate change-related events in the community and at the university in the weeks before and after McKibben’s visit. In addition to these accomplishments the group organized and participated in discussions about other interdisciplinary grant seeking, curriculum development possibilities, and related topics.

Group Leaders: Ron Kramer, Department of Sociology; Dave Karowe, Department of Biological Sciences; Paul Clements, Department of Political Science.
**Groups (cont)**

**Spatiality and the Urban/Rural Nexus**
The spatial humanities group, co-led by Sally Hadden of History and LouAnn Wurst of Anthropology, met multiple times in fall and spring to discuss selected readings. The group included graduate students and members of 6 different departments or units. The readings for 2012-2013 included William Cronon’s Uncommon Ground, Anne Kelly Knowles’s Placing History, Carolyn Steel’s Hungry City, Sharon Zukin’s Naked City, Marc Auge’s Non-Places and several other texts. The group also hosted Professor David Bodenhamer from IUPUI who spoke on “Deep Maps: The Future of Spatial Humanities.” The talk was co-sponsored by Departments of Anthropology, Geography, History, and the W. E. Upjohn Center for the Study of Geographical Change.

Group Leaders: Sally Hadden, Department of History; LouAnn Wurst, Department of Anthropology;

**Interdisciplinary Group on Language and Education**
During the 2012-13 year the IDHG on Language and Education met 4 times each semester, averaging 12-15 people per meeting. Over the course of the year 60 total faculty, administrators, community members, and graduate students participated in one meeting or another. Topics were addressed from interdisciplinary perspectives. Departments and groups represented included: Anthropology, Spanish, World Languages and Literatures, English, CELCIS, Teaching Learning and Leadership, Waldo library, teachers and administrators from the Kalamazoo Public Schools, and several administrators from the WMU College of Education. Faculty in different units met, sometimes for the first time, built relationships, and developed common knowledge and strategies for impacting research and curriculum and instruction at WMU. One of the fascinations of the study group was the exchange of perspectives on related topics as understood by scholars working in strikingly different disciplines and paradigms. The group addressed topics including: second language acquisition, linguistic and pedagogical theory, the experience, preparation, and professional development of teachers (public school and university) working with non-English speaking students, fostering the success of non-English speaking students at WMU and in the public schools. Sessions were led by faculty members including Holly Nibert (Spanish), Kristina Wirtz (Anthropology) and faculty members in the CELCIS program. There was a variety of reading, including contemporary research articles and three books: Monica Heller’s Bilingualism: A Social Approach, Tamara Lucas’ Teacher Preparation for Linguistically Diverse Classrooms, and Diane Musumeci’s Breaking Tradition: An Exploration of the Historical Relationship between Theory and Practice in Second Language Teaching.

Group Leaders: Allen Webb, Department of English; Kristina Wirtz, Department of Anthropology;

**Interdisciplinary Japanese Studies**
In conjunction with the creation of an undergraduate Japanese major on campus, which began in Fall 2012, the Japanese studies reading group of undergraduate and graduate students as well other faculty members was created to help professors abreast of new developments in Japanese studies while also giving undergraduates a taste of the different sorts of possibilities that exist within the field of Japanese studies. Each session of the reading group was headed by a professor in a different field. At each meeting, the professor in charge led a discussion about a new or recent book important within their field. When possible, the Japanese Studies reading group coordinated their readings to coincide with The Soga Japan Center speaker series for the 2012-2013 academic year.

Group Leaders: Jeffrey Angles, Department of World Languages and Literatures; Steve Covell; Department of Comparative Religions; Rika Saito, Department of World Languages and Literatures
Groups (cont)

On the Flourishing of Teachers: Exploring the Question Across the Curriculum

The group extended inquiries begun in spring 2012 on the conditions of flourishing in the practice of teaching. The focus in the fall semester 2012 concerned the complexity and nature of the question in the work of teachers. Drawing from the works of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jurgen Habermas, we began the year with a discussion of hermeneutics and the implicit questions and understandings that operate in curriculum decisions and practice. This discussion culminated in an Ethics Center presentation in November on “The Question across the Curriculum,” a session designed to heighten awareness of the many kinds of largely implicit questions embedded in curricular and pedagogical decisions. These include questions of identity, standards, disciplinary boundaries, meaning, authority, truth, and aims, among others. In the spring semester, we turned our attention to the nature of education itself. Philip Jackson’s book, What is Education?, provided a frame for our philosophical inquiry grounded both in Deweyan pragmatism and German idealism, and some of the early, influential works of Jane Roland Martin brought to bear a feminist philosophical perspective on the same question. We concluded the year with Mark Edmundson’s transcendentalist reading of the point and purpose of an education in the humanities, in his work Why Read?

Group leaders: Sandra Borden, School of Communication; Paul Farber, Department of Teaching, Learning, and Educational Studies; Jil Larson, Department of English.

Group Success

NEH Enduring Questions Grant

Dini Metro-Roland, assistant professor of Teaching, Learning and Educational Studies, a regular participant in the On the Flourishing of Teachers interdisciplinary group used discussions of the group to help him earn a prestigious NEH Enduring Questions grant to support the teaching of a new, humanities-based course that explores the rich and multifaceted nature of the persisting question “What is Human Flourishing?” Drawing from philosophy, history, literature and the social sciences, the course will introduce students to the conceptions, visions and conditions of human flourishing, its changing nature across many periods of Western history, and its various manifestations in contemporary life. The hope is that this course will also provide a brief respite from the bustling, fast-paced climate of the university, where vocational training, work and an active social life leave little time for students to pursue the type of reflective engagement demanded of the humanities.

“This course addresses a growing interest among faculty members and administrators to expand the influence of the humanities at Western Michigan University. Three years ago Western Michigan University’s Center for the Humanities was established to open “pathways of appreciative understanding…nurture diverse particular strands of scholarship in the humanities and enhance formation of connections across the university, with our students, and in our wider community.” In a relatively short time, the Center has reinvigorated academic life with guest speakers, reading groups, and community outreach programs.” Dini Metro-Roland
For a second year, Western Michigan University faculty members volunteered to teach humanities courses in the Kalamazoo community in the “Humanities for Everybody” program that included eleven participants, many of which have not had the opportunity to attend a university. All eleven participants successfully completed class modules in the ten-week Fall 2012 course and in the fifteen-week Spring 2013 course. The classes met twice a week for one and a half hours of study and discussion. The courses included five modules: Sally Hadden, Department of History, taught the History of American Slavery; Tom Bailey, Department of English, taught Shakespeare’s *A Mid-Summer Night’s Dream*; Mariam Konate, Gender and Women’s Studies Program, taught The Black Experience from 1866 to the Present; Kathy Purnell, Office of the Vice-President for Research, taught Freedom and Empowerment and Paul Farber, Department of Teaching, Learning, and Educational Studies, taught Philosophy, Justice and Well-being.

LaTasha Chaffin, a graduate student in the Department of Political Science was sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences to provide program support. The second year of the program was covered by the Kalamazoo Gazette and the WMU News and was funded by the Kalamazoo Community Foundation. The program is a successful model of a distinctive and innovative learning experience that advances our commitment to diversity, inclusion, and community collaboration.

The program was initiated by Susan Hoffmann, Department of Political Science; Rick Stravers, Executive Director of Open Doors Kalamazoo; Matt Lager, Chief Executive Officer of Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Services (KNHS); Katherine Joslin, Director of the Center; and Rondel Yarbrough, a graduate of WMU and Client Services Specialist at KNHS.

**2013 Graduates**

Jared Boothe  
Joyce Bragg  
James Galoway  
TiAnna Harrison  
Redice Hudson  
Rachel King  
Stephen Lloyd  
Lela Love  
Lois Phelps  
John White  
Martino Wilson
Humanities Publications

A selection of recent publications in the humanities at WMU

ALLHOF, FRITZ
Terrorism, Ticking Time-Bombs, and Torture: A Philosophical Analysis
University of Chicago Press, 2012

AUER, BLAIN
Symbols of Authority in Medieval Islam: History, Religion, and Muslim Legitimacy in the Delhi Sultanate

CARTWRIGHT, STEVEN R.
A Companion to St. Paul in the Middle Ages
Brill Academic Pub., 2012

CHRISTIAN, SUE ELLEN
Overcoming Bias: A Journalist’s Guide to Culture & Context
Holcomb Hathaway Pub., 2011

CLEMENTS, PAUL, PH. D.
Rawlsian Political Analysis: Rethinking the Microfoundations Of Social Science
University of Notre Dame Press, 2012

CORDE, J. KEVIN
The Fed and the credit crisis
Lynne Rienner Pub., 2012

CORYELL, JANET L.
A history of women in America

EDWARDS, AUTUMN
The Communication Age: Connecting & Engaging
SAGE Pub., 2012

GRINNELL, RICHARD M
Program Evaluation for Social Workers: Foundations of Evidence-Based Programs
Oxford University Press, 2012

HABRA, HEDY
Flying Carpets
March Street Press, 2012

JOSLIN, KATHERINE
“Images of Wharton” in the collection, Edith Wharton in Context, edited by Laura Rattray
Cambridge University Press, 2012

LAWOTI, MAHENDRA
Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict: Identities And Mobilization After 1990
Routledge, 2012

MARTINI, EDWIN A.
Agent Orange: history, science, and the politics of uncertainty
University of Massachusetts Press, 2012

NORTHHOUSE, PETER GUY
Introduction to leadership: concepts and practice
SAGE Pub., 2011

WEBB, ALLEN
Teaching Literature in Virtual Worlds: Immersive Learning in English Studies
Routledge, 2011

WITSCHI, NICOLAS S.
Traces of gold: California’s natural resources and the claim to realism in Western American literature
University of Alabama Press, 2001
2013 – 2014 Series – Changing Climates
In our 2013-14 series, “Changing Climates,” the University Center for the Humanities brings together scientists and humanists to consider how our climate is changing and what we need to know and do in response. Scientific research is defining issues that concern everybody, including the warming of the globe, the toxicity of our environment, and the fundamental changes we are making to the natural world. Scientists are giving us an opportunity, even a necessity, to talk across the usual boundaries within the University and throughout the community. The very culture of the dialogue is changing, and the humanities are at the center of the conversation.

2014 Fulbright Visiting Scholar
Osama Madany, Professor and Chair, English Language Department, Menoufia University, Egypt will be conducting research and lecturing in Arab-American studies on our campus May 1-September 1, 2014, through a Fulbright Egyptian Scholar Program, Lecturing/Research Grant. He will be teaching a seminar in “Revolutionary Literature in the Context of Contemporary Egypt.”

2014 – 2015 Series: The Healing Arts
The theme for our 2014 – 2015 speaker series will be “The Healing Arts” in honor of the founding of the WMU School of Medicine. Among the speakers will be Yann Martell, author of The Life of Pi, winner of the Man Booker Prize in 2002. Ang Lee made the movie version in 2012 and won the Academy Award for best director. The Portage and Kalamazoo Public Libraries are cosponsoring this event.

We welcome your suggestions for other speakers and events.
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http://www.wmich.edu/humanities

Special Thanks

Design - Jason Aiello; Photographs - Mike Lanka; Printing - JB Printing