

American Graffiti



Northwestern | Program in American Studies

Volume 26
2025-2026

AMERICAN GRAFFITI Volume 26

2025-2026 MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Kathleen Belew

Fall is a wonderful time in the American Studies community: the students return from summer trips, volunteering, research, and work excited for the year ahead. The seniors are beginning to work intensely on their research projects, our 14 new majors are starting the 301 seminar series, and the juniors are roving about campus, enrolling in classes with the freedom and intent that this unique major affords. I'm so delighted to take the helm from Geraldo Cadava as Director this year—I was affiliated with American Studies many years ago as a Postdoctoral Fellow, and because my own doctoral training is in American Studies, I've always had a soft spot for this program.

But methodology aside, I am struck anew by how special American Studies students are Northwestern: at a time of concern about classrooms turned into AI modules, these students seek rigor, friction, and challenge. As some worry about students avoiding ideas different than their own, these students seek them out and engage in difficult conversation. They look for learning that is deep and broad, fun and engaged, transformative and meaningful.

This year's crew includes interests ranging from journalism to environmental policy and from global health to dance. Their extracurriculars span Greek life, mock trial, rugby, and debate. This quarter alone, they are studying at Oxford and in Washington, D.C., not to mention Copenhagen, the United Kingdom, and Spain. Our 25 current majors include five Phi Beta Kappa scholars (a stunning percentage). Last year's graduates include a Fulbright Scholar; matriculates and researchers at Cambridge, Johns Hopkins, and the London School of Economics; and young talent at Spencer Stuart, Creative Artists Agency, and Evercore Investment Bank. These varied interests and outcomes testify to the power of an interdisciplinary education: our majors are thinkers prepared for a complex world.

It was wonderful to see many of you at the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Northwestern American Studies last year. Many of you humored me as I spoke about my obsession with megalodon conspiracy theory and fear of sharks, and we raised our glasses to many past directors and staff members in attendance. Of course we saw Carl Smith, Kate Baldwin, Ivy Wilson, Shana Bernstein, Jay Grossman, Henry Binford, Julie Lavin, Natasha Dennison, Calos Ballinas, Kevin Boyle, Nicolette Bruner, Jerry Goldman, Doug Kiel, Liz Pardoe, Adrian Randolph, Liz Son, Rebecca Zorach, Julia Stern, Robert Lerner, and Joe Germuska. It was nice to see the familiar faces of alumni and to hear what they've been up to after graduation. I hope more of you will get in touch with us to let us know what you've been doing!

Next Fourth of July, America will celebrate the 250th anniversary of its founding, and we will embark together on an exploration of what it means to pursue American Studies at this watershed moment. When I think of the work ahead, I am heartened to undertake it with these students.



Kathleen Belew (Associate Professor, History) is a lifelong pursuer of interdisciplinary scholarship, delighted to direct the American Studies Program at Northwestern. She earned a doctorate in American Studies from Yale University and an undergrad degree in Comparative History of Ideas from the University of Washington. This education fed her interest in story-driven research and her specialization in the history of the present.

Belew's forthcoming book, *Home at the End of the World*, illuminates an era of apocalypse through a history focused on her native Colorado where, in the 1990s, high-profile kidnappings and murders, right-wing religious ideology, and a mass shooting exposed rents in America's social fabric, and dramatically changed our relationship with place, violence, and politics (Random House).

Her first book, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America* explores how white power activists created a social movement through a common story about betrayal by the government, war, and its weapons, uniforms, and technologies. By uniting Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazi, skinhead, and other groups, the movement mobilized and carried out escalating acts of violence that reached a crescendo in the 1995 bombing of Oklahoma City. This movement was never adequately confronted, and remains a threat to American democracy.

She is co-editor of and contributor to *A Field Guide to White Supremacy*, and has contributed essays to *Myth America*, *The Presidency of Donald J. Trump: A First Historical Assessment*, and *Conspiracy/Theory*. Her award-winning teaching centers on the broad themes of history of the present, conservatism, race, gender, violence, identity, and the meaning of war.

Belew has spoken about her scholarly research on wide variety of platforms, including The Rachel Maddow Show, The Last Word With Lawrence O'Donnell, AC 360 with Anderson Cooper, Frontline, Fresh Air, and All Things Considered. Her work has featured prominently in documentaries such as *Homegrown Hate: The War Among Us* (ABC) and *Documenting Hate: New American Nazis* (Frontline). Her research has received the support of the Chauncey and Marion Deering McCormick Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Jacob K. Javits Foundation. Belew earned her BA in the Comparative History of Ideas from the University of Washington, where she was named Dean's Medalist in the Humanities. Belew has held postdoctoral fellowships from the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University (2019-20), Northwestern University, and Rutgers University.



Michael J. Allen (Ph.D., Northwestern University, 2003) researches the relationship between ideas and action in US politics. His book *Until The Last Man Comes Home: POWs, MIAs, and the Unending Vietnam War* (University of North Carolina Press, 2009) examined the political and cultural legacies of American defeat in the Vietnam Wars through a history of the POW/MIA movement. His current book-in-progress *The Center Ring: The Making and Breaking of the Liberal Presidency* examines the relationship between liberal reform and presidential power from Franklin Roosevelt to Richard Nixon.



Shana Bernstein (Ph.D., Stanford, 2003) is an historian of the twentieth-century United States, with a particular interest in social reform movements, including civil rights and environmental health and justice. Originally from Northern California, where she completed degrees at UC Berkeley and Stanford, she initially joined Northwestern as a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Latino Studies before accepting a tenure-track position in History at Southwestern University in 2004. She rejoined the Northwestern faculty in 2014 as a Clinical Associate Professor of Legal Studies.

Her first book, *Bridges of Reform: Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Oxford, 2011), reinterprets U.S. civil rights activism by revealing its roots in the interracial efforts of Mexican, Jewish, African, and Japanese Americans in mid-century Los Angeles. It also argues that the early Cold War facilitated, rather than derailed, some forms of activism. Bernstein has also written academic articles on the history of environmental health and civil rights, and has written essays for CNN, *The Forward*, *Talking Points Memo*, *The Hill*, *Pacific Standard*, *American Prospect*, and the *Austin American Statesman*. She has received fellowships including from the Huntington Library and the Mellon Foundation, and is a distinguished lecturer for the Organization of American Historians.

Bernstein is currently working on a project that uses the history of strawberries as a lens for exploring the intersection of worker health, consumer health, and environmental health. She teaches undergraduate courses on comparative race and ethnicity, immigration, and health and inequality.

Nicolette Bruner (Ph.D. in English Language and Literature, University of Michigan; J.D., University of Michigan Law School) is Assistant Professor of Instruction at the Center for Legal Studies and the Program in American Studies. Prior to joining Northwestern's faculty, she was a postdoctoral fellow with the Stevanovich Institute on the Formation of Knowledge at the University of Chicago and taught in the Department of English at Western Kentucky University.

Bruner's research explores how the law shapes the way humans understand and interact with the nonhuman entities and systems around them. Her current book project, *Thing People: Living with Corporations and Other Nonhumans*, examines how the legal doctrine of corporate personhood offers a framework for articulating the rights and responsibilities of other nonhuman entities, including animals, plants, rivers, and robots. She also teaches and works in American literature, corporate law and policy, jurisprudence, and the environmental humanities.



Geraldo L. Cadava is an historian of the United States. He focuses on the history of Latinos in the United States and the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Originally from Tucson, Arizona, he came to Northwestern after finishing his Ph.D. at Yale University.

He is the author of *The Hispanic Republican: The Shaping of an American Political Identity, from Nixon to Trump* (New York: Ecco, 2020); and also *Standing on Common Ground: The Making of a Sunbelt Borderland* (Harvard University Press, 2013), about the Arizona-Sonora borderland since World War II. He is now working on a book about Latino history over the past 500 years, tentatively titled *A Thousand Bridges*, to be published by Crown in 2026.

Cadava is also a Contributing Writer at *The New Yorker*; co-Editor-in-Chief of the online magazine *Public Books*; host of the podcast *Writing Latinos*; and Principal Investigator for Northwestern's Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program.

At Northwestern, he teaches courses on Latino History, the American West, the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, migration to and from Latin America, and other topics in U.S. history, including Watergate, the 2016 election, and the musical *Hamilton*.





Robert Orsi (Ph.D. Philosophy, Yale University) is the first holder of the Grace Craddock Nagle Chair in Catholic Studies. Professor Orsi studies American religious history and contemporary practice; American Catholicism in both historical and ethnographic perspective; and he is widely recognized also for his work on theory and method for the study of religion. In 2002-2003, he was president of the American Academy of Religion. Professor Orsi has held fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Fulbright Foundation. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 2010 he received the E. Leroy Hall Award for Teaching Excellence, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, Northwestern University, the highest recognition for teaching offered by WCAS.



Ivy Wilson (Ph.D., Yale University) teaches courses on the comparative literatures of the black diaspora and U.S. literary studies with a particular emphasis on African American culture. His book, *Specters of Democracy: Blackness and the Aesthetics of Nationalism* (Oxford University Press, 2011), interrogates how the figurations and tropes of blackness were used to produce the social equations that regulated the cultural meanings of U.S. citizenship and traces how African American intellectuals manipulated the field of aesthetics as a means to enter into political discourse about the forms of subjectivity and national belonging. Along with recent articles in *ESQ*, *Arizona Quarterly*, and *PMLA*, his other work in U.S. literary studies includes two forthcoming edited books on the nineteenth-century poets James Monroe Whitfield and Albery Allson Whitman. His current research interests focus on the solubility of nationalism in relationship to theories of the diaspora, global economies of culture, and circuits of the super-national and sub-national.



Carlos Ballinas

Senior Program Administrator in American Studies
Carlos Ballinas received a B.A. from the University of Illinois at Chicago and a Ph.D. in Higher Education from Loyola University Chicago.

He has worked at Northwestern University for 11 years and currently provides administrative support to the Council for Race and Ethnic Studies, the Asian American Studies Program, and the Latina and Latino Studies Program. Before that, he worked at the City Colleges of Chicago and El Valor.

Julie Lavin

Program Assistant. Julie received a B.A. from University of Kansas in Journalism and has worked in a variety of nonprofits in the Chicagoland area including the Evanston Community Foundation and the Chicago Botanic Garden.



Congratulations
**AMERICAN
STUDIES
CLASS OF
2025!**



'25
Mariam Adesiji

ADVISOR **Megan Geigner**
American Mass Incarceration's Impact on Women of Color: A Cross-Cultural and Auto-Ethnographic Exploration of Incarceration-Adjacency
MARIAM IS A FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR IN COLUMBIA IN AN ENGLISH TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP



'25
Audrey Bannister

ADVISOR **Ivy Wilson**
Reimagining Interracial Interactions: Jazz Clubs as Sites of Social Formation in Mid-20th Century Chicago
AUDREY IS A GALLERY EDUCATOR FELLOW AT PRINCETON UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM



'25
Vivian Bui

ADVISOR **Michelle Huang**
Exceptional Spaces, Manufactured Enemies: How the U.S. Empire Sustains Itself
VIVIAN IS AN ANALYST AT SPENCER STUART IN CHICAGO



'25
Garrison Guzneau

ADVISOR **Ivy Wilson**
Anyone Can Wear the Mask: Re-Spinning American Identity in the Spider-Verse
GARRISON IS EXPLORING NEXT OPPORTUNITIES ON THE EAST AND WEST COASTS



'25
Mary Childs Hall

ADVISOR **Susan Pearson**
Undercover for the Working Class: Eva Gay and Nell Nelson's Gilded Age Investigative Reporting as a Response to the Labor Question
MC WORKING AT EVERCORE INVESTMENT BANK IN NYC



'25
Liliana Jurado

ADVISOR **Sarah McFarland Taylor**
To Embrace or Erase: The Impact of Social Media and Reality Television on the Relationship Between the Mormon Church and its Peculiarities
LILI IS EXPLORING NEXT OPPORTUNITIES ON THE EAST COAST



ADVISOR **Reuel Rogers**

*The Geography of Race: How Racialization Affected
Asian American and Black Housing Experiences in
San Francisco*

JESSICA IS EXPLORING NEXT OPPORTUNITIES



ADVISOR **Andrew L. Roberts**

*The Minimal State:
Meditations on Christopher Lasch*
BEN IS EXPLORING NEXT OPPORTUNITIES AFTER
ATTENDING MIDDLEBURY OVER THE SUMMER



'25
Elliot Oppenheim

ADVISOR **Geraldo Cadava**
Pecan Trees and Picket Lines: Koinonia Farm and the Struggle for Racial Justice in Southwest Georgia
 ELLIOT IS ATTENDING CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY IN THE UK



'25
Kara Peeler

ADVISOR **Geraldo Cadava and Joanna Grisinger**
No Safe Spaces: Understanding Discrimination Against LGBTQ+ Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence in Domestic Violence Shelters Post-Obergefell
 KARA IS TAKING A GAP IN CHICAGO BEFORE STARTING LAW SCHOOL AND DOING FREELANCE COPYEDITING FOR *SUNSET* MAGAZINE AND CONTRACT JOURNALISM FOR *GLASSE FACTORY* MAGAZINE



'25
Camilla Pellliccia

ADVISOR **Peter Fenves**
Between Heaven and Earth in Kafka
 CAMILLA IS FURTHERING HER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES ON THE EAST COAST



'25
Gracie Schecter

ADVISOR **Anthony Chen**
The Wartime Use of Dr. Seuss and the Racial Tropes He Could Not Cut Loose: An Analysis of Dr. Seuss' Liberalism, Political Cartoons, and Children's Authorship
 GRACIE IS ATTENDING THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS WORKING ON HER MASTERS IN INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL AND PUBLIC POLICY



'25
Ellie Solomon

ADVISOR **Robert Orsi and Phillip Davis**
U.S. Evangelicals and Efrain Rios Montt's Guatemala: A Spiritual Justification of Genocide
 ELLIE IS WORKING IN SPORTS BUSINESS AFFAIRS AT CAA (CREATIVE ARTISTS AGENCY) IN NYC



'25
Mia Xia

ADVISOR **Nitasha Sharma**
Equalizer No More: Intersections of Chinese, Black and Choctaw Education in the Age of Separate and Unequal Policies
 MIA IS A PREDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOW AT JOHNS HOPKINS IN BALTIMORE





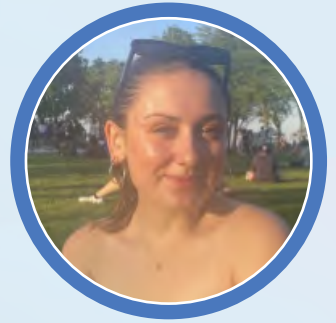
Soup Kitchen, April 2025



Cubs Game, September 2024



Téa Bartlett is an American Studies major with a second major in Legal Studies and a minor in Gender and Sexuality Studies from Oakland, California. Her research focus is centered on how the law allows for the policing of gender and sexuality. Outside of academics, Téa is a member of the Northwestern Mock Trial team, is a lifeguard at SPAC, a competitive archer with Chicago's North Side Archery Club, teaches young girls STEM with Full STEAM Forward, and works part-time at an immigration law firm.

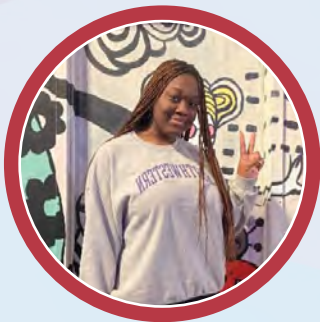


Simon Carr is a journalism, political science, and American studies major from Portland, Oregon, and Providence, Rhode Island. He's interested in how utopian intentional communities (and other abolitionist projects) influenced mainstream politics throughout U.S. history. Simon works on campus with the Northwestern Undergraduate Law Journal and Jewish Voice for Peace. He also enjoys reading, designing sound, playing tennis, and solving *The New York Times* crossword.

Psippi Haendel is an American Studies major hoping to minor in Environmental Policy and Culture. Originally from LA, Psippi is interested in the history of the American West, historic preservation and restoration, and how historic structures are able to further certain narratives in museum settings. She works part-time at a local elementary school.



Jordyn Howard is from Columbus, GA, majoring in American Studies and Psychology with a minor in Legal Studies. She is a member of the Black Pre-Law Association and the Black Mentorship Program and Mock Trial team. She is interested in exploring the development of social activism throughout history alongside the development of social media, with a focus on the ways in which marginalized communities have fought for rights and freedoms.



Melanie Tapia is an Evans Scholar from Chicago pursuing a double major in American Studies and Environmental Policy & Culture along with a minor in Business Institutions. She is the Deputy of Northwestern's Sustainability Committee through ASG and also serves as the Co-chair of Resource Management. She is also an active member in Kesem and a Peer Advisor.



Talia Winiarsky is an American Studies major with a Spanish minor from New York City. She is interested in recent American history and politics. During her summers, Talia has interned at the U.S. House of Representatives, New York City Council, and the American Jewish Committee. She writes a weekly column, usually about politics, for the Daily Northwestern. In her free time, she loves walking along the lake, trying new restaurants in Chicago, and reading Sally Rooney.





Simon Olshan-Cantin is a first year American Studies and History double major from Westport, Connecticut. He cares about music, movies, and his friends, and is interested in studying how solidarity is created around and across nationality, ethnicity, and class. He wants to understand why things are the way they are, and how they could be better.

Gavin Fisk comes from Franklin, Indiana, has majors in Journalism and American Studies, as well as a minor in English Literature. He is interested in studying the pervasion of propaganda into cultural media, especially as it pertains to the construction of masculinities. Fisk writes for campus media groups like North by Northwestern and *Scene + Heard* and enjoys reading, going for runs and playing guitar in his free time.



Kira Hughes is a Journalism and American Studies major from Clovis, California. Her research focus is centered on the role of women in alt-right organizations in the U.S. Outside of academics, she is a member of the Northwestern Mock Trial Team, Delta Gamma, the *Undergraduate Law Journal* and Northwestern's fashion magazine, *Stitch*. She enjoys movies, scrapbooking and Margaret Atwood novels.

Tahlia Margulies is a sophomore majoring in Theatre and American Studies with a minor in Legal Studies. She is a member of Northwestern's Mock Trial team, Kappa Delta sorority, and participates in musicals every quarter. She is very excited to be a part of American Studies because she loves its discussion based approach to discuss difficult but important topics within a small cohort.



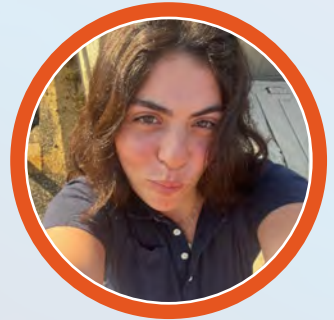
Darby Martinez-Stapelton is a double major in History and American Studies, hailing from Seattle, WA, and Denver, CO. Her research focuses on illuminating histories that are not traditionally told, with particular interest in the intersection of race and religion in the United States, the racist origins of gun laws and their contemporary implications, and the relationships between women of color and true crime media. On campus, Darby is an active member of the Women's Rugby Team and serves on the Library Student Advisory Committee. As a Leopold Fellow under Professor Kathleen Belew, she is currently researching significant historical events in Colorado during the 1990s. In her free time, Darby enjoys exploring Chicago via the "L," tackling the New York Times crossword, and lounging in nearby coffee shops.



Medina “Dina” Miranda is a second-year from Long Beach, California, studying American Studies and English Literature. Her research interests lie in the intersections of race, labor, and the environment in 20th century America and their representations in media. She is currently a URAP research assistant under Prof. Shana Bernstein, researching California’s toxic strawberry industry. Dina is also a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow and an incoming Leopold Fellow. Outside of class, she sings with University Chorale and is active in Kaibigan, NU’s Filipino Students Association. You can find her at Philz Coffee.

Jamie Neiberg is a junior from downtown Manhattan,

double majoring in journalism and American studies. She remains curious, whether that be about different historical movements or just completing a crossword puzzle. In addition to her role as a senior features editor on North by Northwestern, participating in the Sanders Scholars program and serving as a Leopold Fellow for Professor Kathleen Belew, she likes to read and hang out with her friends. If you see her on her phone, she’ll probably be playing Spelling Bee or reading the recipes on *New York Times* cooking (though she never actually makes them).



Ashley Wong is an American Studies and Journalism double major from Singapore. She is most interested in American urbanism, counterculture movements, and visual cultures. As a curious non-citizen in the American Studies department, Wong looks forward to utilizing that tension to explore matters of cultural assimilation and an increasingly international Americana. Prior to attending Northwestern, she was a creative professional in Singapore, working in advertising agencies and the music business.

Clara Wood is an American Studies major with a minor in Dance. Her interests lie in history through pop culture, media, and the environment as a social construct. Wood plans to explore the relationship between historical events and social change through mainstream media, with a concentration on gender dynamics. Outside of academics, Wood is the music director of Northwestern’s “X-factors-” an acapella group on campus- as well as a dancer in Northwestern’s Latin American dance group, “Dale Duro.” In her free time, Wood loves spending time with her dog, playing piano, and watching the sitcom “Friends.”









Ari Areco is an American Studies and Political Science major from Dallas, Texas. His research interests include the history and future of immigration policy, the National Environmental Policy Act, and the impacts of diversity programs. Ari participates on the Northwestern Policy Debate Team, loves mint chocolate chip ice cream, and long walks along the beach.



Jack Baker is a double major in American Studies and Journalism from Little Rock, Arkansas. He is interested in how race and gender have shaped American politics, particularly during the Civil Rights Movement. On campus, Jack writes for *The Daily Northwestern* and serves as Vice President of Willard Residential College. In his free time, he enjoys hammocking on the Lakefill, exploring Chicago, and listening to vinyl records.



Sarah Brown is a double major in journalism and American studies from San Diego. She has additional academic interests in marketing, environmental studies, and film-media. At Northwestern, Sarah sails with the NU Sailing Team and writes, edits and designs for various student publications. Outside of class, you will probably find her at the beach, hiking with friends or scrolling Depop.



Daniela Caceres is an American Studies Major and Art Theory and Practice Minor from Austin, Texas. She is interested in the intersections of queer and Latino art, media, and politics, and how they shape identity and cultural representation. This summer, she is researching lesbian representation in Latin American telenovelas as a part of the Posner Fellowship. In her free time, Daniela enjoys crocheting, reading, and going to concerts.



Kylie Chen is an American Studies and journalism double major from the California Bay Area. Her research interests include protest and civil disobedience, as well as how media coverage of political dissent shapes public perceptions of movements and the issues they organize for. Outside of the classroom, Chen enjoys playing music, cooking with her friends, walking by the lake, and volunteering for Books & Breakfast.



Sharmel Gibson is a double major in American studies and Social Policy from Oak Park, Michigan. She is interested in exploring the American public education system and how the education system interacts with people from marginalized backgrounds in terms of race, class, and gender etc. She is also interested in researching policy and how the US Government interacts with citizens. At Northwestern, Sharmel is also a Peer Advisor and a member of Students Demand Action. In her free time, she enjoys reading and spending time outside.



Moorea Lambert is a double major in American Studies and Radio/Television/Film from Colchester, Vermont. She is especially interested in exploring how religion shapes American culture and legislation. This past summer, she worked with the CCTV Center for Media and Democracy and developed choreography for the premiere of *Missed Connections* at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. On campus, Moorea works with the NU College Democrats and the Jewish Theater Ensemble, and enjoys reading and cooking in her spare time.



Beatrice Selch is an American Studies major also interested in studying English Literature and Environmental Policy from New York City. She is interested in the intersections between history and literature and how literature often illuminates different narratives and perspectives. On campus, she is involved in two magazines, the *Helicon* and *Scene & Heard*, and is a member of the club field hockey team. In her spare time, she likes to read, explore new neighborhoods and restaurants and spend time with friends and family.



Dava Sitkoff is an American Studies and English double major with a Psychology minor from Boston, MA. They are interested in studying storytelling and belief systems, specifically the idea of American myths, American-founded evangelical religions, and representations of history in literature. On campus, Dava enjoys singing with Northwestern's *Camerata* and doing dramaturgy work for theater productions. Dava is also part of a fraternity for female and non-binary musicians (Sigma Alpha Iota), and loves hiking and rock climbing!



Rohan Venkatesan is an American Studies and Music Performance dual degree student from Sunnyvale, California. He is interested in studying the effect of the judiciary, particularly the Supreme Court, on broader social movements across the United States. On campus, he is a part of the World Affairs Group and the Political Union. In his free time, Rohan enjoys playing the euphonium, thrifting, listening to music, and playing/watching soccer (massive Tottenham Hotspur fan).

Noteworthy

2024-2025 American Studies Program Awards

CARL SMITH PRIZE FOR OUTSTANDING STUDENT ESSAY
IN AMERICAN STUDIES

Elliot Oppenheim
Mia Xia

JAY ROSEN AMERICAN STUDIES SCHOLARSHIP

Jordyn Howard

PHI BETA KAPPA
Mariam Adesiji

*American Mass Incarceration's Impact on Women of Color:
A Cross-Cultural and Auto-Ethnographic Exploration of
Incarceration-Adjacency*

PHI BETA KAPPA
Vivian Bui

*Exceptional Spaces, Manufactured Enemies: How the U.S.
Empire Sustains Itself*

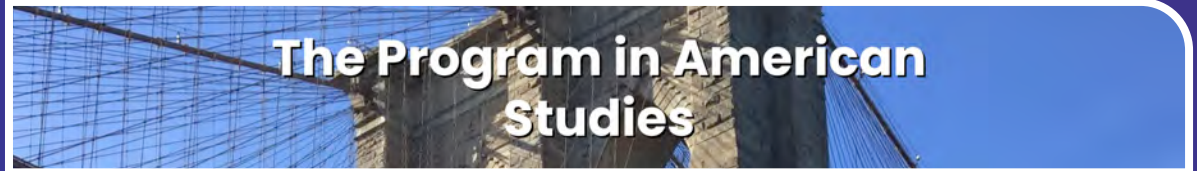
PHI BETA KAPPA
Elliot Oppenheim

*Pecan Trees and Picket Lines: Koinonia Farm and the
Struggle for Racial Justice in Southwest Georgia*

PHI BETA KAPPA
Camilla Pelliccia

Between Heaven and Earth in Kafka

PHI BETA KAPPA
Talia Winiarsky



Student Advisory Board (SAB)
Representatives for 2025-2026:

Melanie Tapia
Ashley Wong
Simon Carr
Darby Martinez-Stapleton

Other Noteworthy Awards, Grants and Fellowships

Jane Clarke

We proudly celebrate Jane Clarke, Class of 2024, on being chosen as a Gates Cambridge Scholar for 2025. Jane studied history and American Studies at Northwestern. She is pursuing a master of philosophy in American History at Cambridge, where she will build on her undergraduate thesis project, which examined ideologies of imperialism in American children's literature in the first half of the 20th century. She plans to explore what is distinctive about how American imperialism is depicted by adding a comparison with British children's literature from the same period. While global history and the study of empire tend to focus on the big-picture or diplomatic level, Clarke's project focuses on these topics through the lens of pop culture and ordinary people.

Ultimately, Jane's goal is to become a historian in a public-facing setting, which is why she was drawn to the Gates Cambridge program.



Simon Carr spent summer 2025 researching Illinois's Prisoner Review Board for PNAP (Prison + Neighborhood Arts/Education Project), a nonprofit in Chicago. His work will be turned into a zine and used for PNAP's participatory defense project, which helps folks navigate Illinois' clemency process. Simon was awarded a grant from Northwestern's Summer Internship Grant Program (SIGP).

Sharmel Gibson will continue to work with Emerging Scholars working on developing their own independent research project to research the education system (past and present) in Detroit with a focus on for profit charter schools.



2024 Homecoming
Alumni Brunch



Harry Potter Experience

American Studies Program 1990s Eras panel

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14TH 2-3PM
VIA ZOOM



Rebecca Traister '97 is writer at large for New York magazine and a contributing editor at Elle. A National Magazine Award finalist, she has written about women in politics, media, and entertainment from a feminist perspective for The New Republic and Salon and has also contributed to The Nation, The New York Observer, The New York Times, The Washington Post, Vogue, Glamour and Marie Claire. She is the author of All the Single Ladies and the award-winning Big Girls Don't Cry and Good and Mad: The Revolutionary Power of Women's Anger. She lives in New York with her family.

About - Rebecca Traister

Sandy Zipp '93 is a writer and historian. He's the author of The Idealist: Wendell Willkie's Wartime Quest to Build One World (Belknap, 2020) and Manhattan Projects: The Rise and Fall of Urban Renewal in Cold War New York (Oxford, 2010), as well as the co-editor of Vital Little Plans: The Short Works of Jane Jacobs (Random House, 2016). He is Professor of American Studies and Urban Studies at Brown University, and has written reviews and essays for The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Nation, n+1, Public Books, The Baffler, Metropolis, and Cabinet.



Northwestern | Program in American Studies

amstp@northwestern.edu

American Studies 2000 Eras Alumni Panel

Wednesday, March 12 at 4pm via Zoom

PUNEET SAHOTA

DR. PUNEET K.C. SAHOTA (2002) IS THE DIVISION HEAD OF CONSULTATION-LIAISON AND EMERGENCY PSYCHIATRY AND ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF PSYCHIATRY AT COOPER MEDICAL SCHOOL OF ROWAN UNIVERSITY. SHE IS ALSO THE DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AT THE NATIONAL INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ASSOCIATION (NICWA), A NATIONAL NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION DEVOTED TO THE WELL-BEING OF AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES. DR. SAHOTA IS PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR FOR THE POSITIVE INDIAN PARENTING PILOT STUDY. SHE ALSO PROVIDES RESEARCH SUPPORT TO AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE COMMUNITIES FOR POLICYMAKING, ADVOCACY, AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT IN CHILD WELFARE AND MENTAL HEALTH. SHE GRADUATED WITH HER A.B. IN AMERICAN STUDIES, SUMMA CUM LAUDE AND VALEDICTORIAN. SHE THEN WAS THE FIRST MD/PHD STUDENT IN CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY AT WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY.

SHERRI BERGER

Sherri Berger (2005) is a strategic, technology-focused leader in cultural heritage, with 20 years of experience driving impact at complex institutions such as the Smithsonian Institution and the University of California. As the inaugural director for Digital Access & Archives at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, she is executing a vision for dramatically expanding access to millions of historical treasures and the stories they tell. Sherri holds an MS in Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and a BA in American Studies from Northwestern University. She resides in Washington, DC.

BENJAMIN KAHAN

Benjamin Kahan (2002) is the Herbert Huey McElveen Professor of English and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Louisiana State University. He has held fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the National Humanities Center, and a number of other institutions. He is the author of Celibacies: American Modernism and Sexual Life (Duke, 2013) and The Book of Minor Perverts: Sexology, Etiology, and the Emergences of Sexuality (Chicago, 2019). His new monograph Sexual Aim and Its Misses is under contract with Chicago. He is also the editor of The Cambridge History of Queer American Literature (Cambridge, 2024). and a co-editor of Theory Q, a book series from Duke University Press.



Studies Eras Panel

4pm via Zoom

ON HEAD OF CONSULTATION-LIAISON
T PROFESSOR OF PSYCHIATRY AT
SITY. SHE IS ALSO THE DIRECTOR OF
EFARE ASSOCIATION (NICWA), A
DEVOTED TO THE WELL-BEING OF
ION AND FAMILIES. DR. SAHOTA IS
UMAN PARENTING PILOT STUDY. SHE
AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE
CY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT IN
ADUATED WITH HER A.B. IN AMERICAN
STORIAN, SHE THEN WAS THE FIRST
LOGY AT WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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2015

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Northwestern | Program in
American Studies

2010S ALUMNI ERAS PANEL

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23RD AT 4PM ON ZOOM



JONATHAN GREEN, 2012

JONATHAN ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY'S SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR COLLEGE OF LAW. HE WRITES ABOUT THE HISTORY OF COURTS AND JUDGING, AND IS ESPECIALLY INTERESTED IN THEORIES OF LEGAL INTERPRETATION. BEFORE COMING TO ASU, HE STUDIED AT NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY, THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, AND YALE LAW SCHOOL.

SAMANTHA OFFSAY, 2013

SAMANTHA NISSEN (NÉE OFFSAY) GRADUATED AND WORKED IN PUBLISHING IN NEW YORK, BEFORE RETURNING HOME TO LOS ANGELES AND BEGINNING HER CAREER IN TELEVISION. A STRONG BELIEVER IN THE POWER OF STORIES, SAMANTHA'S FOCUS WHILE IN THE AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM WAS HOW ART AND LITERATURE AFFECT AND REFLECT SOCIETAL CHANGE—SOMETHING SHE THINKS ABOUT DAILY IN HER ROLE AS SVP, ORIGINAL PROGRAMMING AT STARZ TELEVISION NETWORK. SHE IS MARRIED TO A FELLOW WILDCAT!



EMILY VERNON 2015

EMILY IS AN ATTORNEY IN THE CITY OF CHICAGO LAW DEPARTMENT'S CONSTITUTIONAL AND COMMERCIAL LITIGATION DIVISION, WHERE SHE DEFENDS CITY LAWS AND POLICIES AGAINST CONSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES. SHE SPENT TWO YEARS AS AN APPELLATE LITIGATION ASSOCIATE AT COVINGTON & BURTING LLP IN WASHINGTON, DC. AFTER GRADUATING FROM THE WITH A BA IN AMERICAN STUDIES AND LEGAL STUDIES, PLUS A MINOR IN CHINESE. SHE ALSO EARNED A MASTER'S DEGREE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO'S MASTER OF ARTS PROGRAM IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES, WITH A CONCENTRATION IN HISTORY.

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