

**Dr. Robbie Lieberman** was awarded a 2020-2021 Scholarship Support Grant Award in the amount of \$8,000. She will use this grant to support her research on her next project. She is also on leave for the fall semester with a CETL Tenured Faculty Enhancement Leave.

**Rudy Aguilar** published an article in the journal *Gracias a Dios que los Bailes, Me Han Ayudado*, "Exploring the Baile Economy and Symbolic Networking among Mexican Sonidos in Chicagoland."

**Miriam Brown Spiers** published "The Yellow Monster: Renanimating Nuclear Fears in Cherokee Science Fiction" in the journal *Native South* as part of a special issue on Native Southern Literature. She is also the editor of the *Transmotion Journal*, an online journal of Indigenous Studies.

**Laura Davis** published "Roleplaying during Grading Conferences: Using Fictional Scenarios to Increase Student Writing Self-Efficacy" in *Engaged Student Learning USG*. The essays are all written by Regents Teaching Award Winners in the USG System.

**Luciane Rocha** published, "Estamos em Marcha!: Anti-Racism, Political Struggle, and the Leadership of Black Brazilian Women." *Black and Indigenous Resistance in the Americas: From Multiculturalism to Racist Backlash*, edited by Juliet Hooker, Lexington Books, pp 159-187.

**Ziaul Haque** and David Carol published, "Assessing the Impact of Information and Communication Technologies on Electoral Integrity," in the *Election Law Journal*.

**Federica Santini** shared that her poem, "Asleep No More" was published in the spring edition of *Tint Journal*. She also translated the work of four Chicago poets which was published in an anthology *Nuova poesia Americana*. I am happy to have brought to Italy a selection of works by the great modernist Niedecker, a poet I love and whose work on and with language has influenced my own in many ways.

**Kristen Walker** is the recipient of the 2020 Douglas Evenlyn Scholarship for Minority Professionals. She will attend the American Association for State and Local History conference. AASLH presented thirteen of these scholarships this year.

Congrats Grads!  
Lisa Williams, Jocelyn Shaw and Akili Taylor graduated with a BA in African & African Diaspora (AADS) in Fall 2019.  
Malik Zellars graduated with his BA in AADS in Spring 2020



Congrats to Jacqueline Winters-Allen on graduating in July with her MA in American Studies. Her thesis was entitled "Jewish Identity on American Television and Viewer Attitudes in an era of rising Semitism." Thank you to her MA Thesis Committee: Dr. Rebecca Hill and Dr. Catherine Lewis.



KSU Asian Studies hosted 23 faculty and students from Kanda University of International Studies (Japan) in February 2020.



**Dr. May Gao** with faculty from Kanda.



**KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY**

# Interdisciplinary Studies Department Fall 2020

Dear colleagues, students, staff, alumni and friends of ISD,

I hope that you and your loved ones are well in light of the various ways in which our lives and world have changed during the past few months. I acknowledge that many of us have been called to re-structure our lives, adapting to new ways of inhabiting shared space, caring for family members, teaching children at home, and thinking about how to teach effectively in a new paradigm.

I am honored and excited to be joining the Interdisciplinary Studies Department. I began work on July 1, 2020, and I have been learning: learning about the university and the department, and learning about your teaching, research, mentoring, and service.

I want to extend a special thanks to each of you for the ways in which you have welcomed me into the department and shown me patience as I figure out all that I don't know and what questions to ask.

I am thrilled to be part of a department that has social justice at the core of its mission. While others may now be realizing the importance of social justice in light of the pandemic and racial protests, ISD colleagues are continuing the work they have been doing all along, to study, teach, and write about the inequalities and histories of violence that have led to this moment in the United States.

Colleagues around the country and around the world have been inviting their university communities to go beyond mere words and take concrete action to truly address issues of systemic racism and inequality. It is clear that we are living history, and our roles as educators during this period include helping our students find the words to express their fears and hopes, as well as to find ways they can engage in creating material change. As a department founded and grounded in social justice, it is crucial that we continue to provide historical, social, and economic context to help explain

why and how the pandemic and police brutality disproportionately affect Black, Latinx and Indigenous communities.

As we embark on a new semester filled with new challenges, I am here to support all of you as you continue the amazing work that you are doing in your teaching, research, mentoring, and service. Today more than ever, our students need to understand how they can be part of the change they want to see in the world.

I want to extend a special welcome to the colleagues from University College who have joined the Interdisciplinary Studies Department. Their expertise in First Year and Transition Studies, Leadership Studies, and Integrative Studies will be invaluable as our department continues to grow and fulfill its mission.

Some of you may be teaching online for the first time, working to keep students engaged and learning without in-person instruction. Please reach out to the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning for support as you navigate what may be new territory.

I am mindful of the fact that many of you have additional responsibilities in caring for family members, friends, and other loved ones during this pandemic. Some of us are parents who will be helping our Pre-K-12th child/ren navigate virtual school. Please know that I am here to support you as best as I can. Our current circumstances require us to practice patience, humility, and self-care. I encourage you to be kind and flexible with yourself.

Take care of yourself!

Cécile

Dr. Cécile Accilien  
Chair and Professor, ISD

## In This Issue:

Message from the Chair: Cécile Accilien

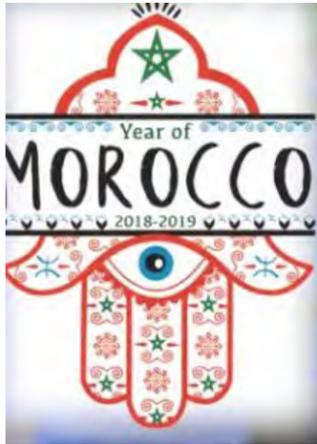
Faculty Highlights

Student Highlights

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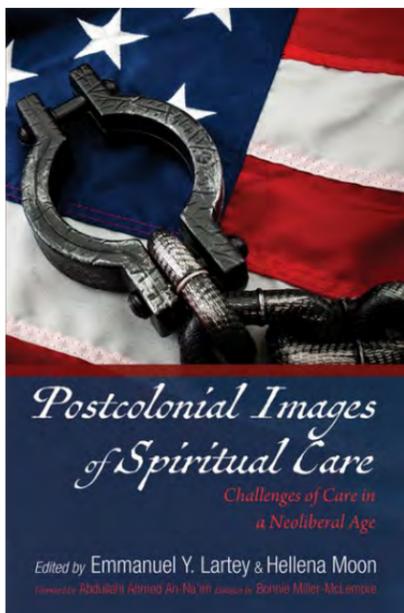
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## Semester at Sea with Seneca Vaught



As a result of work begun during the Year of Morocco, ISD colleagues Dan Paracka, Laura Davis, and Nathalia Jaramillo, along with colleagues Maia Hallward, Laura Beth Daws, and John Fleming in partnership with Hassan II University Casablanca have received a Stevens Initiative grant through the Aspen Institute for a virtual exchange. The project, titled, "Women's Leadership Virtual Exchange: Youth Sharing Digital

Stories" advances recognition of women leaders by sharing their stories online and develops global competency of participants through virtual exchange. Through collaborative reflection and analysis within a gender-focused intercultural curriculum, student participants from the US (KSU) and Morocco (H2UC) will develop the critical and creative thinking skills needed in today's global society. It ensures that participating youth (male and female undergraduate students) understand the challenges and obstacles to increasing women's rights and leadership roles in society. Students will interview and create multimedia narratives about local women leaders to be jointly examined in the curriculum of the participating classrooms. Lead faculty will guide students to examine relevant issues through collaboratively developed curriculum that appropriately and effectively combine gender and women's studies pedagogy, global and intercultural competency, and online technology. Students from H2UC and KSU will engage and analyze together the findings of their research. This is the result of a three-year multi-institutional collaboration.



**Dr. Hellena Moon** is the co-editor of the recently published book, "Postcolonial Images of Spiritual Care," in which she contributed a chapter on the Christocentric nationalist religious ideologies infused in the right wing as part of the normative structures of society. The topics include a historiographical, as well as personal, perspective. Published by Pickwick Publications. Dr. Moon teaches in GWST, ASIA and Religious Studies.

Congratulations!



The fall 2019 semester for Dr. Vaught was unusual in that the classroom floated around the world on a voyage of 111 days over 11 countries. Semester at Sea's 'Atlantic Voyage' carried students, faculty, staff, lifelong learners and

their families to study complicated histories and tragic themes from the transatlantic slave trade (Ghana-Brazil-Trinidad), the Holocaust (Poland), and the Serbo-Croatian War (Croatia). A signature characteristic of the voyage was the call for voyagers to be "sight-thinkers instead of sight seers" drawing on the integrative and interdisciplinary aspects of the 57-year old program's immersive learning experience. Students from all over the world studied some of humanity's most complicated problems together using interdisciplinary methodologies in climate science and oceanography, political science, history, ethics, tourism, business, and other fields.

Vaught was invited to join the team of faculty based on his expertise in applied historical methods of community engagement in the African Diaspora. He taught three classes: Slavery in the Americas, Africans and the Diaspora, and Interdisciplinary Approaches to Globalization. The voyage began in the Netherlands in September and disembarked in San Diego in December. Some of the highlights of Vaught's role in the voyage included: facilitating a tour of Cape Coast's slave dungeons and the "doors of no return" with SAS students and students from the University of Cape Coast, participating in community workshops with the Afro-Brazil drumming group Banda Dida in Salvador and with Afro-Ecuadorian marimbists in Guayaquil.

Faculty, students, staff, and the crew formed one large family. They enjoyed an experience punctuated with social and academic events throughout the voyage. One of the highlights was a "Black and Brown Throw Down" co-sponsored by the SAS Black Student Union and Latino Student Organization. Other highpoints included the Sea Olympics, screening of the Black KKKlansman with Ron Stallworth and dozens of independent excursions where students and faculty mingled and explored countries together. Vaught is excited to be back at KSU where he will resume his work with study abroad excursions in the Latin American Studies and African Diaspora Studies programs. In July 2021, these programs will collaborate on community engagement projects in the Pacific Coast and Andes Mountains and offer a participants a certificate in Diversity and Community Engagement.

Welcome Back Dr. Vaught. You were missed!



KSU's Master of Arts in American Studies program (MAST) are pleased to introduce you to our new program director, **Dr. Stacy Keltner**, who comes to us from our department's Gender & Women's Studies program (GWST), with which she's been involved since its inception in 2007. Dr. Keltner is a first-generation college graduate from the Nashville area, who double-majored in Philosophy and Literature at the University of Evansville in Indiana. There she received, as she says, "all the individualized attention and loving care a student could ever hope for in two different departments," and that's exactly what she plans to bring to our MAST program.

ISD's Gender and Women's Studies program (GWST) is pleased to introduce you to our new Coordinator, **Dr. Federica Santini**. She is jointly appointed with the Dept. of Foreign Languages and ISD and has been involved with teaching in GWST for many years. She also teaches Italian in the Dept. of Foreign Languages.

ISD's Peace Studies program (PAX) is pleased to introduce you to our new Coordinator, **Dr. Robbie Lieberman**. A passionate advocate for peace, she's the perfect choice to lead the Peace Studies Program at KSU. After her tenure as Chair of ISD, she's looking forward to hosting the Peace History Conference in 2021 and meeting the PAX students.

**Dr. Anne Richards** was elected as the Religious Studies Coordinator beginning in Fall 2020. She is replacing Thomas Pynn in coordinating this vibrant minor. Anne looks forward to investing in the Religious Studies students as they pursue minors in this area of study at KSU.



## ISD ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Miriam Brown Spiers** will Coordinate the new Native American and Indigenous Studies Minor in ISD. Jointly appointed with ISD and English, Brown Spiers her teaching and research interests include Indigenous literatures, science fiction, comics, formal and generic experimentation, 20th and 21st century American literature, gender studies, and Native American studies. Her current book project, *The Sovereign Other*, examines the ways that American Indian and First Nations novelists have adapted the generic tropes of science fiction as a means of resisting cultural assimilation and reasserting the value of Indigenous knowledges in the twenty-first century.

### ISD Welcomes faculty from University College:

**Lynn Boettler**, Assistant Professor, teaching in Leadership, **Benjamin Brooks**, Assistant Professor, Co-Director of Integrative Studies, **Theodore Bullard**, Lecturer, **Sara Giordano**, Assistant Professor, **Nyasha GuranmatuhuCooper**, Associate Professor, **Linda Lyons**, Director of Strategic Outreach and Diversity Initiatives, **Felicia Mainella**, Lecturer, **Katherine Schaab**, Assistant Professor, Co-Director of Integrative Studies, **Heather Scott**, Coordinator of the Leadership Studies, **Deborah Smith**, Professor, **Nirmal Trivedi**, Associate Professor, **Carlton Usher II**, Associate professor,

Additionally, we have some Limited Term Faculty: **Ashley McFarland**, teaches in GWST and is a MAST grad, **Ziaul Haque**, just graduated with his PhD in International Conflict Management, **Maureen Kperogi**, **Jacqueline Romero**, who is teaching GWST and History and **Joan Ledbetter**.

**Theodore Bullard** works with Achieve Atlanta to recruit Atlanta Public High School students to attend KSU. Recently, Achieve Atlanta received a grant (along with Thrive) of \$2 million to assist student success.

Achieve Atlanta was created by the Whitehead Foundation and strives to help students from Atlanta Public Schools enroll in college and ultimately earn their degrees. In 2017, Kennesaw State became a partner institution with its first cohort class of 18 scholars. That number has grown each year, and today, there are a total of 141 Achieve Atlanta students enrolled at KSU.