Joseph and Joanna Nazro Mullen Professor Emeritus of Art and Art History William A. Camfield was awarded a Mellon Emeritus Fellowship this past year in order to continue his work on a catalogue raisonné documenting the works of the French artist Francis Picabia (1879-1953).

“This is a great honor for Bill because the competition for these fellowships was by invitation from the Mellon Foundation,” says Dean Gary Wihl. “The competition was quite intense; in fact, out of 120 nominees from 60 universities across the country, only 14 research fellows were selected. It’s a perfect opportunity for Bill to showcase his work on the artist Picabia – and to visit Paris in order to carry out his research.”

Camfield became involved with the project in 1990 when Picabia’s widow (Olga Picabia, 1905-2002) asked him to serve as the art historian in charge of the catalogue of her husband’s work. “I felt that I had a professional and moral obligation to take up this work,” explains Camfield. “I could not say ‘No.’” Considered the fundamental study of Picabia’s work and the basis for all future studies on Picabia, the catalogue involves documenting and ordering the entire authentic work of the artist, and will eventually lead to a 3-4 volume publication with texts, entries, and illustrations for an estimated 3,500 works, with expected publication in about five years. “And owing to Picabia’s role in so many movements and issues in art in the twentieth century, it will be of use to diverse scholars,” adds Camfield. “In fact, the very qualities of his work that alienated earlier critics – his bewilder shifts in style and his irreverence toward values and authorities in modern art – resonated with postmodern interests. His work engages issues of gender and sexual identity, the nature of the author, and appropriation of images as opposed to original invention.”

According to Camfield, his path toward full appreciation of Picabia’s art began in high school when he encountered Cubism and Surrealism. He attended Yale University six years later (1959-1964) where he completed his dissertation on Cubism in order to pursue his fascination with that genre. “At that time, most scholars of Cubism marginalized both Francis Picabia and Marcel Duchamp as secondary cubists who did not understand the work of Picasso and Braque. That missed the mark as far as I was concerned,” notes Camfield. “I thought that Picabia and Duchamp were not ‘failed cubists,’ but something else altogether – something important that had never been the subject of critical inquiry.”

In time, Camfield published studies of Duchamp and other twentieth-century artists, but he began with Picabia. Primarily known as an artist, Picabia was also a poet, polemicist, scenarist, and bon vivant. His friends and associates included Guillaume Apollinaire, Gertrude Stein, Alfred Stieglitz, Marcel Duchamp, Tristan Tzara, and André Breton – and eventually Camfield’s pursuit of Picabia expanded into a study of major intellectual circles and debates in twentieth-century art and literature, especially Cubism, abstract art, Dada, and Surrealism.

Camfield finished his dissertation in 1964 and published a breakthrough article in 1966. For the Guggenheim Museum in 1970, he organized the first – and still the only – large retrospective exhibition in this hemisphere of Picabia’s work. Camfield published the first major book on Picabia in 1979. Considering the larger cultural context in which Picabia participated, Camfield combined in his book various elements of biography, intensive analysis of his art work, consideration of his poetry and polemical writings, and his collaborations with composer Erik Satie and the Swedish ballet, and with René Clair on a film.

Now regarded as an expert in the study of Picabia, Camfield’s name is still linked with Picabia despite his publication of other works and his organization of exhibitions on other artists and topics.
Recently appointed as Professor of the Practice in the School of Humanities, and the new director of the Program in Asian Studies, Steven W. Lewis comes from the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy. He is concurrently a research fellow, working with humanities and social sciences faculty on the Transnational China Project, a pioneering interdisciplinary research and pedagogical support project that explores changes in contemporary Chinese culture.

Lewis also coordinates the Jesse Jones Leadership Center’s Summer Intern Program at the Baker Institute, which supports a select group of Rice undergraduates in conducting policy research at government agencies, think tanks, and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Washington, D.C. “These various appointments allow me to enjoy more often the epistemological culture of the humanities – one that invites competing views of the importance of culture,” notes Lewis, “and at the same time provides an organizational space sufficiently flexible and dynamic enough to afford the free and critical discussion of its significance.”

Lewis received his doctorate in political science from Washington University in St. Louis in 1996. His current research critically examines theories salient in Western political economy today, including the institutional and organizational foundations of collective identity formation, and the emergence of local, national, and transnational relationships between political, economic, and social organizations in the context of globalization. His empirical research is comparative and often focuses on cases from China.

In addition, Lewis examines the influence of advertising and consumerism in new public spaces in localities that are integrating with the global economy; the role of traditional forms of property association in state enterprises undergoing privatization in transition economies; and the agency of oil and gas companies and local governments in the development of national energy policy, energy security policy, and environmental awareness policies, as well as the formation of international energy policy organizations.

According to Lewis, his work at the Baker Institute and previous teaching on China and Chinese culture in the School of Humanities will assist his efforts to develop the uniquely interdisciplinary and global focus of the Program in Asian Studies. “I am looking forward to continuing the Transnational China Project’s work with faculty from the Departments of Religious Studies and History,” says Lewis, “as they examine how globalization is changing religious pilgrimage and religious tourism—with particular implications for the study of religion, consumerism, and civil society in Asia. I am also very excited to work with our Asian Studies language faculty as they develop innovative methods to strengthen foreign language and cultural instruction to serve Rice students. There is an growing need for students to be able to communicate with, work with, and live with the future generations of South, Southeast, and East Asia in the increasingly global professional workplaces and academic environments of the future.”

Lewis intends to explore new organizational models for the Program in Asian Studies through consortia and complementary individual research and pedagogical projects with other universities in order to provide new resources for graduate students specifically.

As part of Rice’s greater mission, Lewis also plans to attend to public education. “Our Asian Studies faculty members are well-respected in Houston and in Texas for their dedicated service to educators, students, and public leaders,” explains Lewis. “Their efforts to help these groups to understand the rich history, cultural diversity, and growing global influence of Asian societies are not only useful for demonstrating the strategically important role of private research and teaching in a democratic society, but they are also essential in attracting to Rice those future generations of bright young people who value a quality education in the humanities.”

New Mellon Research Seminars

In fall 2004 the Dean of Humanities announced the inception of a new series of doctoral seminars funded by the Mellon Foundation. Under this pilot program conceived and proposed by Dr. Gary Wihl, doctoral students may collaborate with selected Rice scholars. The program is designed specifically to encourage participating students to expand the scope, quality, originality, and ambition of dissertation topics, and to prompt students to pursue higher standards of excellence in their chosen field.

Applicants are evaluated based on academic record, demonstrated evidence of research activity, and how closely dissertation research matches with seminar topics. Participants may also apply for funding in addition to the graduate student base stipend and for special summer research funding.

Each semester Rice’s Center for the Study of Cultures leads the screening and selection process of Rice faculty members who will conduct separate year-long seminars on a core issue in the humanities. The first two Mellon seminars began in spring 2005 under the direction of Dr. Caroline Levander, Associate Professor of English, and Dr. Rafael Salaberry, Associate Professor of Hispanic Studies and Linguistics.

Designed to enrich the work of graduate students in the disciplines of American history, American literature, religious studies, and Latin American studies, Dr. Caroline Levander’s seminar “Toward a Hemispheric Americas,” offers an interdisciplinary, comparative paradigm for the study of the Americas. According to Levander, the field of American Studies is in a state of conceptual transformation. The innovative work of many prominent scholars of American studies who have adopted a comparative, hemispheric approach – which is gradually reorganizing the fields of literature, history, and religious studies – has challenged new scholars to broaden and deepen their analysis of the cultures of the Americas.

Levander intends to invite such scholars to read students’ work over the course of the seminar with a view to helping students publish an original piece of writing in a professional journal in their field, and submit abstracts to two major annual conferences in their field. Direct dialogue and collaborative writing exchanges between students and cutting-edge scholars will provide students the opportunity to involve prominent leaders in the fields of Latin American Studies, American literary studies, and American history in their work, and to develop ties with outside readers.

Because graduate students work under steady pressure within the various disciplines to assimilate professional methods of research quickly, Levander strives to provide these young scholars with the additional time, knowledge acquisition, and archival research that an Americas paradigm requires in order to realize the hemispheric dimensions of their work. In summary, Levander hopes the seminar will yield a sharper generation of Americanist scholars and will develop a model for the reorganization of American studies in the twenty-first century.

Titled “Language Policies as Markers of National and Cultural Identity,” Dr. Rafael Salaberry’s seminar is based on the analysis of case studies on the topic of language planning and language policies as markers of national and cultural identity. Language planning refers to the ways in which organized communities united by religious, ethnic, political or social reasons attempt to influence language use. Concrete manifestations of such policies are obvious in the case of bilingual education, the establishment of an official national language, and the control over gender-biased language.

Over the course of the seminar, Salaberry will introduce a number of case studies for analysis based on legal decisions and political debates that require expert testimony from different specialists – in other words, each graduate student’s focus of study – to substantively analyze each case and to form relevant conclusions.

For instance, Lau vs. Nichols (414 US 563, 1974) brings up the topic of educational rights for language minorities, thus providing an ideal case for the analysis of bilingual education and its many social, political, and economic ramifications. Similarly, Gutiérrez vs. Municipal Court (838 F.2d. 1031, 9th Cir. 1988) focuses on the application of English-only requirements in the private workplace, focusing the discussion on the relevance of using one’s mother tongue as part of cultural identity, among other potential themes. Throughout the course of discussions, students will be encouraged to expand the scope of analysis and to pose new questions from their individual disciplinary perspectives.

In fall 2005, three additional Mellon Research Seminars will be offered: by José Aranda, Department of English; by Steven Crowell, Department of Philosophy; and by Harvey Yunis, Department of Classical Studies. Details about these new seminars are forthcoming.
Letter from Gary Wihl
Dean of the School of Humanities

The School’s second annual newsletter provides a snapshot of the many new activities and programs that are occurring across our departments and centers. I am very pleased to be able to report on the various accomplishments of our faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates. Taken together, I can say with certainty that Humanities at Rice University is thriving. And there are many more items in the works, which I look forward to featuring in the coming year. I am reserving a little bit of space in the current edition to announce the appointments of our new faculty members in September 2004.

With the arrival last year of Matt Shibitani, Deedee McMurtry Professor of Humanities, as Chair of the Department of Linguistics, the department has quickly rebuilt its faculty and is positioned to go forward as a leading department in the field of empirical linguistics.

Two new faculty members have joined the department. Claire Bowern received her Bachelor’s degree in Linguistics from the Australian National University and her Ph.D. from Harvard University. She contributes to the department’s commitment to the study of non-Indo-European languages and more generally to the field of historical linguistics.

Katherine Crosswhite obtained her B.A. in Russian and Linguistics from the University of Arizona and her Ph.D. from the University of California at Los Angeles. Before she joined our faculty, she held a postdoctoral fellowship at the Center for Language Sciences at the University of Rochester. Her focus on experimental phonetics and phonology complements Claire’s historical approach.

Hanoch Sheinman joined the Department of Philosophy last September. He pursued two graduate degrees simultaneously before coming to Rice: a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Princeton and a Doctor of Laws degree from Yale Law School. Hanoch’s appointment is an expression of the department’s aspiration to become recognized as one of the top schools for the study of the philosophy of law. Hanoch will also expand the department’s undergraduate course offerings in law and related topics. Prior to his graduate studies, Hanoch clerked for the office of the Attorney General and for a Supreme Court justice in Israel, and completed a Bachelor of Common Law degree at Oxford University.

The School of Humanities also appointed two new Professors of the Practice: Steve Lewis, who is Director of the Program in Asian Studies, and Diana Strassman, who teaches in the Program for the Study of Women and Gender and is founding editor of the journal Feminist Economics. You will find more information about Steve and Diana in articles in this newsletter.

I would like to close by acknowledging Angela Wren Wall, administrative coordinator for the Program for the Study of Women and Gender, for writing, editing, designing, and producing most of this newsletter. Without Angela’s dedication and assistance, this newsletter simply would not exist. Thank you!

Gary Wihl
Rice’s Debate Team Still Strong

Housed in the School of Humanities, the George R. Brown Forensics Society, Rice’s intercollegiate speech and debate team, consists of 15 students who represent Rice locally, regionally, and across the nation. Coached by faculty members Dr. David Worth and Jeremy Grace, the team has experienced great success during the 2004-2005 academic year, winning 178 awards and 161 separate debates so far, and adding to its record impressive wins at the University of Wyoming, Creighton University, Texas Tech University, and the Colorado College.

In October 2004, the team successfully defended its state championship by once again winning the Texas Intercollegiate Forensics Association State Tournament. For the majority of the year, the team has been ranked first or second by the National Parliamentary Debate Association, and strives to finish the year ranked among the top programs in the nation.

Senior Greg Miller and sophomore James Rapore are the team’s top debate pair, having held a top three position in the National Parliamentary Tournament of Excellence rankings for most of the year. They are currently ranked third in the nation.

This measure ranks the nation’s top 1000 debate pairs based on win percentage, number of debates, and quality of opponents.

This semester, the team placed third out of 45 at the prestigious U.S. Air Force Academy tournament. The team will continue to represent Rice through early April, competing at the University of Oklahoma, the University of Houston, Willamette University in Oregon, and Century College in Minnesota. These tournaments should position the team for a strong finish at the National Parliamentary Debate Association National Championship Tournament at Texas Tech University and the American Forensics Association National Individual Events Championship Tournament at Kansas State University.

Feminist Economics & SWG: Linked by a Common Vision

Newly-housed in the School of Humanities, the staff of the journal Feminist Economics relocated its offices in summer 2004 to the east wing of the Humanities building, adjacent to the Program for the Study of Women & Gender. Recently appointed as Professor of the Practice, Diana L. Strassmann offered a new WGST course this year entitled “Feminist Economics” - at the graduate level in fall 2004 and at the undergraduate level in spring 2005. “I am thrilled to be teaching in Humanities and SWG,” says Strassmann, “where it is possible for me to bring an interdisciplinary approach to teaching about human economic well-being and gender justice.”

Strassmann designed some new apprentice-type jobs for graduate students to work as Feminist Economics Fellows in order to give these students an opportunity to enhance their academic field experience – as well as to foster on-going collaborative work between the Feminist Economics staff and SWG. As a Feminist Economics Fellow and an enrollee in the new SWG graduate certificate program, English graduate student Victoria Ford holds a unique position in the graduate community. “Working as part of the Feminist Economics journal staff and within the graduate program allows me to explore my academic interests in a more in-depth and participatory manner,” explains Ford. “I have been able to examine the work of cutting-edge scholars in my field of interest – feminist studies – while developing editorial skills that will be instrumental to me later in my academic career.” Feminist Economics Fellow Anne Dayton, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of English, has successfully managed the journal’s transition to a new on-line submissions system, and in so doing, has communicated with feminist scholars around the world. “Under the direction of Helena Michie, I am working on my dissertation on the portrayal of women’s charitable visiting in Victorian culture,” remarks Dayton, “and I would have loved to have been an SWG graduate certificate student had the program been available during my earlier years at Rice.”

Launched by the Program for the Study of Women & Gender in fall 2004, the graduate certificate program has been tremendously successful, with an impressive 25 enrolled graduate students from various humanities and social sciences departments. The fall 2004 Graduate Studies newsletter led with an article about the success of the new graduate certificate program giving it even greater visibility. “I am so pleased with the early success of the program, which very clearly affirms the need for interdisciplinary study of women’s and gender issues at the graduate level,” comments SWG Director Lynne Huffer. “And in light of the developing sense of intellectual community that I see among graduate students now enrolled in the certificate program, I am confident the program will continue to grow.”
ON THE MOVE

Crown and Veil:
A Journey Seeking Women in Medieval Germany

Due to generous support from the Department of History and the Dean of Humanities, a group of undergraduate students participating in the seminar “HIST 446 Medieval Women” will visit Germany over ten days to explore the actual sites of women’s life and religiosity in the Middle Ages.

Under the direction of Dr. Eva Haverkamp, this excursion (taken during spring recess 2005) will include visits to several monasteries and convents – such as the convent of the famous Hildegard of Bingen (see below left). The group will see the cities of Essen, Cologne, Bonn, and Trier, as well as the Eifel region and the Rhine Valley. By exploring these areas – especially the cities of Cologne and Trier – students will learn how to “read” the history and genesis of these urban communities by sight-seeing the major medieval centers such as cathedrals, market places, particular roads, and quarters.

The excursion leads into two major historical cultural landscapes that have shaped not only the history of Germany, but Europe in general. In the region west of the Rhine, Christianity spread in late antiquity, eventually merging with ancient Roman traditions. Roman buildings were commonly reused for Christian and daily functional purposes, therefore keeping antiquity “alive” in its buildings to the present day. Conversely, regions east of the Rhine were Christianized much later, with influences from the West as well as from the South of Europe and its Mediterranean culture. Both landscapes along the Rhine and Moselle are fascinating not only because of their visible and tangible history, but also because of their natural beauty.

The chronological scope of historical sites for this trip begins in the seventh century in Trier when a convent was established in the ruins of a Roman grain store. In Eibingen, the group will be guests of the convent founded in the twelfth century by the famous mystic Hildegard of Bingen whose members today still actively live according to Benedictine rule.

In addition, the group will travel to Worms, one of the oldest and most famous Jewish communities in the Middle Ages, to visit its most notable historic sites, including the Jewish quarter with synagogue and ritual bath from the eleventh century.

One highlight is a visit to the exhibition titled “Crown and Veil” (see above left and right) housed at two museums in Essen and Bonn. Organized by Professor Jeffrey Hamburger of Harvard University, this unique three-month exhibition with over five hundred exceptional objects from major international collections is “dedicated to all forms of female religiosity from the early Middle Ages until the Reformation in the sixteenth century.” Addressing the shaping of daily life by political and economic conditions as well as religious, theological, and cultural traditions, its emphasis is on the works of art and the architecture produced by and for nuns and canonesses.

The discussion of the readings from primary and secondary sources in the seminar preceding the trip were designed to compare the conditions and lives of Christian and Jewish women in medieval Europe and to show the range of religious orders as they developed in the twelfth century and shaped monastic life far into modern times. Each student will give related presentations before and during the trip.

In this combination of visits to medieval cities, monasteries, and exhibitions, students will gain understanding of and unique first-hand experience with the historical circumstances of women who chose to live together according to religious-normative rules. Finally, the impact of these ways of life and their circumstances up to the present will be clearly demonstrated.


The pregnant Virgin, Saxony, 2nd third of the 14th century, the monastery of St. Marienstern (Panschwitz-Kuckau) (Photo Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Dresden, Waltraud Rabich). Photo used from Krone und Schleier exhibition catalogue shown above left.
Through the generosity of Milton and Laurie Boniuk, Rice’s School of Humanities has become home to the Boniuk Center for the Study and Advancement of Religious Tolerance. The Center aims to understand the conditions that make peaceful co-existence possible and to promote these conditions locally, nationally, and throughout the world. Its mission involves three areas: research, in order to know more about building a tolerant world society; advocacy, in order to shape public debate; and outreach, in order to build broad support for tolerance within diverse communities, both nationally and internationally.

The Boniuk Center seeks partnerships with organizations that share its mission and actively reaches out to those who question tolerance as a value. The programs are designed to facilitate conversations among those who fundamentally disagree even on the most basic questions, and through this questioning, finding enough common ground to permit peace.

During its first semester, the Center established a research seminar allowing faculty and graduate students from various disciplines an opportunity to present and discuss their work. In just a few short months, the seminar has hosted presentations on comparative mysticisms as a source for cross-cultural understanding; on tolerance within monotheism; on how Europeans came to see Islam as backward and “medieval;” and on medieval Christian condemnations of violence against Jews.

The Center hosted lunch talks with two distinguished visitors. Philosopher Avishai Margalit – who visited Rice to deliver a lecture as part of the Ethics, Politics, and Society series – spoke about his work on monotheism and tolerance. Later, historian Robert Jan van Pelt spoke about the emergence of Holocaust denial and his efforts to combat it. Upcoming seminar topics include: violence and Buddhist ritual; religion and middle class identity in the nineteenth century; and getting beyond religion versus secularism.

In April, the Center will award a small number of research fellowships to support Rice faculty and graduate students whose projects explore why religious conflict happens and how to promote peace.

The Center is equally committed to advocacy and outreach, both on campus and beyond. Director Carol Quillen and Assistant Director Jill Carroll frequently speak to community groups and faith communities, and the Center plans a partnership with Interfaith Ministries of Greater Houston. Due to the Center’s administrative coordinator, Calvin Preece, a study break in fall 2004 drew over one hundred students, and in March 2005 the Center will sponsor a forum called “Faith in the Secular University.”

In September 2005, the Boniuk Center will host its first conference, “Tolerance and its Limits,” featuring internationally renowned scholars and culminating with the visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Rice.

~ http://boniuk.rice.edu ~