

Senior Sabbatical Fellowship Awards 2008/2009

The H. Axel Schupf '57 Fund for Intellectual Life supports the Senior Sabbatical Fellowship Program, which increases tenured faculty members' salaries for one semester of leave from 80 to 100 percent. The fellowships are competitive, and they are awarded by the Dean of the Faculty and the Committee of Six once their recommendations are approved by the President and the Trustees. The following are summaries of the 2008-2009 Fellowship recipients' research projects.

Anston Bosman, Associate Professor of English

Research Project: "Dramatic North: Shakespeare's Theatre in North Sea Culture"

During his sabbatical, Professor Bosman will complete his book, "Dramatic North: Shakespeare's Theatre in North Sea Culture." The book restores the writers, actors, and plays of Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre, usually treated as exceptional symptoms of an island culture, to their neglected international context in the North Sea-Baltic world. While on leave, Professor Bosman will write a substantive introduction on artistic collaboration between England and Northern Europe in the Renaissance, as well as a final chapter detailing the present-day legacy of that cross-cultural engagement in Europe after globalization.

Kristin Bumiller, Professor of Political Science and Women's and Gender Studies

Research Project: Criminalization and Incarceration in the United States

Professor Bumiller will examine how the dramatic increase in criminalization and incarceration rates in the United States and the UK has led to a growing number of second class citizens: persons with criminal records who are excluded from employment opportunities and who must struggle to maintain social relationships and live meaningful lives. The decline in social welfare programs and a shift of responsibility for helping those in need to the private sector has resulted in intractable obstacles for former prisoners and little support in their efforts to escape poverty. The problems associated with one's status as a criminal offender is quickly becoming one of the most important concerns of scholarship about poverty in advanced democratic countries. Professor Bumiller's project has four specific objectives: (1) to document both the legal and social barriers experienced by persons with criminal records in their efforts to obtain employment and participate in civic life; (2) provide ethnographic accounts of the experience of persons with criminal records in seeking employment and other opportunities; (3) provide ethnographic accounts of how gatekeepers (such as employers) incorporate criminal record information into their decision-making; and (4) draw broad connections between the treatment of people with criminal records and social welfare policy. More generally, this research will document how the problems experienced by the formerly incarcerated are fundamentally connected to limited options within the communities they come from and return into. In doing so, this research will challenge the "reintegration" paradigm, as criminal justice professionals have traditionally understood it, and strive for a better understanding of ex-prisoners' situation by focusing on the structural conditions of marginalized communities.

Lawrence Douglas, James J. Grosfeld Professor of Law, Jurisprudence and Social Thought

Research Project: "Reflections on the Glass Booth"

Professor Lawrence Douglas will spend his senior sabbatical at work on his present book project, "*Reflections on the Glass Booth*." This book seeks to offer a broad history of international law's contact with atrocity since Nuremberg, and to provide a critical re-thinking of the theory and purposes of what Professor Douglas calls a "jurisprudence of atrocity." Against universalists such as Hannah Arendt and contemporary cosmopolitan thinkers, Professor Douglas insists that crimes of atrocity should be understood less as attacks on humanity writ large than as attacks on human life as an enterprise organized

in terms of group attachments, collective identities, and community allegiances. Doing justice to such crimes, he argues, can best be accomplished by trials *in situ* (such as the trial of Adolf Eichmann) and by a legal process that attends to the intimate connections between people and place ruptured by horrific acts.

Caroline Goutte, Associate Professor of Biology

Research Project: Notch signaling in the Roundworm *C. elegans*

Professor Goutte will use her Senior Sabbatical Fellowship to bring several research projects to completion and publication. She has been using the roundworm *C. elegans* as a genetic model system in which to tease apart the molecular machinery that mediates cellular communication. These molecular machines have been maintained over the course of evolution, and so any insights we gain through easily manipulated model systems can be directly applied to humans. Professor Goutte has been focusing on one type of cellular communication which is common to all animals, and is called “Notch signaling.” While the genes that encode the nuts and bolts of Notch signaling have been identified in worms as well as humans, Professor Goutte’s research is currently aimed at the more subtle, and yet crucial ways in which Notch signaling can be regulated. Several years ago, her lab identified a new worm gene that encodes a block to Notch signaling. Professor Goutte has been investigating how this block works in different circumstances, and she plans to publish this work.

Judith Frank, Professor of English

Research Project: “Noah’s Ark”

Professor Frank will use her Senior Sabbatical Fellowship to continue work on a novel called Noah’s Ark. The book is about sexuality, parenting, and terrorism, in the context of the Israeli occupation. It centers upon a gay couple, Daniel Portis and Matthew Greene. As the novel opens, Daniel’s brother and sister-in-law, who live in Jerusalem with their two children, have been killed in a café bombing. They have designated Daniel as the guardian of their children should they die, and the novel is partly about the firestorm that erupts in the families when they learn that these bereaved children are going to be raised by gay men. Moreover, Daniel is a Jewish leftist, and he finds the cultural scripts about mourning offered to him by the “war on terror” profoundly unhelpful. The question he grapples with is how one mourns a death from terrorism when one understands the oppression that led to terrorism in the first place. As he works it out, partly by fighting with his non-Jewish lover, the novel also explores the romance of masculinity Israel seems to offer American Jewish men. The first half of the novel takes place in Jerusalem, and concerns the immediate aftermath of the bombing. In the second half, which takes place in Northampton, Massachusetts, Daniel and Matthew try to reinvent their lives and keep their relationship together while raising two grieving

Alexander George, Professor of Philosophy

Research Project: The Nature of Belief’s Justification by Testimony

In “Of Miracles” (1748), David Hume claimed to have shown once and for all that it is not rational to believe on the basis of testimony (that is, on the basis of someone’s telling you so) that a miracle occurred. Taking off from this seminal text, which presents many fascinating exegetical challenges that Professor George plans to take up along the way, he will address some fundamental issues about the nature of belief’s justification by testimony. This work will be informed by Ludwig Wittgenstein’s posthumous “On Certainty,” as well as by contemporary work on the epistemology of testimony.

Maria Heim, Associate Professor of Religion

Research Project: The Springs of Action: Buddhist Theories of Moral Agency

Professor Heim will spend her sabbatical working to complete her book “The Springs of Action: Buddhist Theories of Moral Agency.” The book considers all of the main genres of Theravada thought in the Pali sources—the Buddha’s discourses (Sutta), moral psychology (Abhidhamma), monastic rules (Vinaya), and narrative literature—to explore the tradition’s various approaches to moral intention. The book looks closely at how theorists from the Theravada tradition understood the various emotions, motivations, and dispositions that underlie moral agency, and in this sense is a close study of Buddhist moral psychology. The book also examines the quasi-legalistic treatment of intention in the monastic rules and the ways that intention is treated in narrative literature. The main aim of the book is to offer fresh interpretative possibilities for our understanding of Buddhist ethics. The fellowship will also support several smaller projects Professor Heim is working on concerning Buddhist theories of the emotions and moral sentiments.

Larry Hunter, Stone Professor of Natural Sciences (Physics)

Research Project: Testing Local Lorentz Invariance and Search for the Electron Electric Dipole Moment

During his sabbatical, Professor Hunter plans to make significant progress on his NSF-supported experiments to test local Lorentz invariance and to search for the electron electric dipole moment. Both of these experiments are being conducted at Amherst College. Over his twenty-five years at Amherst, Professor Hunter’s group’s tests of fundamental symmetries have provided great training for many Physics majors, several of whom have gone on to successful careers in the field. Sustaining this program will allow Professor Hunter to continue to offer rich research opportunities to students. Longer term continuation of the program will require new ideas. Professor Hunter therefore envisions spending about one day each week at Yale during his leave. This will allow him to attend their rich seminar and colloquium series so that he can remain abreast of recent developments in his field. During his time at Yale he will also have a chance to interact with the faculty and to consider new directions for his research program. In particular, he looks forward to discussions with Professor David DeMille and Professor Steven Lamoreaux, two world-renowned experts in his field. Over the last twenty years Professor Hunter has had successful collaborations with both of them that have resulted in five joint publications.

Jenny Kallick, Professor of Music

Hot in the Kitchen: An Original Chamber Opera.

In collaboration with partners to be named, Professor Kallick will write the libretto, compose electronic music, produce, and spearhead the design team for *Hot in the Kitchen*, a chamber opera for six solo singers and fifteen players that will celebrate the contemporary cult of food. Its sounding world—a combination of sound objects collected electronically and forged artistically with music for voices and orchestra—will embrace the paradoxes of culinary traditions and the passions that food excites, portrayed with a shifting tone of satire, parody, and bittersweet comedy. Set in an unnamed future, the characters devote themselves to a re-discovery of food traditions from “the past,” in other words, our present practice. The pursuit of this culinary revival will be the primary activity at an onstage spa/retreat—think of a cross between the Berkshire, Massachusetts, Canyon Ranch Spa, and Davos in the Swiss Alps, which is featured in Thomas Mann’s *Magic Mountain*—where mis-readings of what we take for granted in food preparation and eating practices will inspire the comedy. From the moment the curtain goes up, the oddities of futuristic culinary and accompanying social practice contribute to the fun and romp. Personal relationships that thrive or crumble when confronted with the “old ways” of food propel the human drama of conflict, reversal, and change.

Uday Mehta, Clarence Francis Professor in Social Sciences (Political Science)

Information to come

Samuel Morse, Professor of the History of Art and Asian Languages and Civilizations

Research Project: Enoshima and the Cult of Benzaiten in Early Modern Japan

Located less than half a mile off shore of Fujisawa some forty kilometers south of Tokyo, the island of Enoshima is one of the most well known Famous Places (meisho) in the Tokyo region and has long attracted attention both as a pilgrimage site and as a scenic spot. Enshrined on the island is a statue of Benzaiten, the Buddhist deity of eloquence, the arts and good fortune, carved completely nude but dressed in actual robes. Sanctuaries to Benzaiten had been established on the island by the twelfth century, but Enoshima rose to prominence as a religious center only in the seventeenth century after the founding of Edo when the deity began to attract the attention of actors and courtesans, members of the demi-monde of the city, as well as lumber merchants and builders. Over time it became a favorite subject for the *ukiyo-e* artists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. A study of Enoshima is an ideal way to examine the history of the Benzaiten cult in Japan and the intersection of the religious and the profane worlds of Edo Japan as mediated by the artists of the Floating World. Works such as Kitagawa Utamaro's *Gifts of the Ebb Tide* (Shio no Tsuto) and Totoya Hokkei's *Trip to Enoshima* (Enoshima Kiko) can be associated with the popularity of Benzaiten as the primary patron deity for members of the Floating World as well as with the popularity of her cult at Enoshima. Professor Morse's project will address the early history of the island and its religious centers as described in the *Enoshima engi* composed in the thirteenth century, and an illustrated history dating from the seventeenth century. It will encompass a history of the Benzaiten cult in Japan, first worshiped in the eighth century to provide protection for the state, and the custom of dressing statues in Japan. It will also examine the practice of *kaicho* during the Edo period, pilgrimage to the island and its depiction in woodblock prints, and other works that can be associated with Enoshima and Benzaiten such as *Gifts from the Ebb Tide* and *Trip to Enoshima*. Finally, it will explore the religious practices of the women of the Floating World and their ties to one of the few female deities in the Buddhist pantheon.

Patricia O'Hara, Amanda and Lisa Cross Professor of Chemistry

Research Project: Handbook of Fluorescence Spectroscopy Book Project

Professor O'Hara will use her fellowship to continue work on her manuscript for "The Handbook of Fluorescence Spectroscopy," which will be published by Elsevier Press in 2009. The book will provide background, vocabulary, and a basic understanding of fluorescence for newcomers to the field or for those not specifically trained as spectroscopists. Those aspects of fluorescence that are most relevant to an understanding biological systems will be featured. Fluorescence is one member of a family of processes by which light is emitted from a substance after it has been excited or energized. The most familiar of these processes is called "hot light" or incandescence, in which light is emitted after the substance has been heated. Observations of and experimentation with incandescence most likely began about the time that mankind first was able to generate fire. Processes by which light can be emitted from substances that were never heated are collectively called "cold light" or luminescence. The first remaining record of the observation of a luminescent process was by Gaius Plinius Secundus (Pliny the Elder) in 77 AD "Naturalis historia." Pliny refers to the phosphorescent emissions of a mineral containing Phosphite with the chemical composition (PO_3^{3-}). The mineral world again was the source for the first observations of fluorescence: that from feldspar, a mineral known to have a different appearance based on the light used to illuminate it. Today, fluorescence of substances such as green fluorescent protein, quantum dots, and dye labeled antibodies has transformed our understanding of the molecular world of biological processes. Techniques such as FRET, FLIP, FCS, and single molecule spectroscopy have enabled us to understand details of molecular motors, movement along axons, and transport within a cell.

Dominic Poccia, Rufus Tyler Lincoln Professor Biology

Research Project: Regulation of Nuclear Envelope Formation

Professor Poccia's fellowship will facilitate two activities: performance of collaborative scientific experiments at Amherst and Cancer Research UK, London Research Institute, and the writing of two major invited scientific reviews. The research concerns the mechanism of formation of the nuclear envelope, a structure that surrounds the chromosomes of eukaryotic cells. It is typically disassembled once at the beginning of each mitosis and reassembled at the end as the cells divide. Defects in its formation may result in envelope deformations that correlate with certain cancers and unsuccessful *in vitro* fertilization and therapeutic cloning. Several hereditary diseases have been linked to mutations in nuclear envelope proteins. The Poccia laboratory developed a fruitful system for studying assembly of the nuclear envelope in homogenates from sea urchin-fertilized eggs, which, over the last decade, has yielded a general model for membrane fusion. Elaboration of this model, which involves initiation of membrane fusion by an isolated membrane vesicle population called MV1, will be undertaken. MV1 has a very unusual phospholipid composition that suggests that it initiates fusion by localized production of diacylglycerol, which is regulated upstream by the enzyme phospholipase C α (PIPLC), which in turn is regulated by a src tyrosine kinase and GTPase. This mechanism will be investigated both biochemically in the homogenates and by confocal microscopy in live fertilized eggs to establish its generality. The two reviews are on "Biophysics of the Formation of the Nuclear Envelope" for the *Annual Review of Biophysics and Biomolecular Structure* and "Phosphatidylinositol Metabolism and Membrane Fusion" for the *Biochemical Journal*.

Paul Rockwell, Professor of French

Research Project: The Promise of Laughter

Professor Rockwell will conduct research on eight Arthurian verse romances that were written in French during the first half of the thirteenth century. These works are examined as intertextual responses to linguistic and legal problems articulated at the end of the twelfth century by Chrétien de Troyes primarily in his comic *Conte du graal*. The generation of poets responsible for producing Arthurian romance at the beginning of the thirteenth century used compositional techniques derived from the tradition of forensic rhetoric that involved the subtle rewriting of specific motifs and plots drawn from poetic or historical works. A consequence of these techniques is that the verse romances of the early thirteenth century exhibit dense networks of allusions to earlier material. For the purposes of this study, the allusions will be read as a kind of intertextual argumentation that responds to the representation of the referential value of language in works that were produced during the previous century. The primary focus of the study will be on the interplay between irony and allegory, and on the consequences of metaphorical formulations for the cultural representation of legal language. This interplay becomes pertinent in a wide variety of judicial contexts as the heirs of Henri II Plantagenet attempt to cope with the consequences of their ancestor's judicial reforms.

Martha Saxton, Professor of History and Women's and Gender Studies

Research Project: "The Widow Washington"

Professor Saxton's book "The Widow Washington" will be a study of the life and circumstances of Mary Ball Washington, mother of the founding father. It will narrate and contextualize her difficult and privileged life as an orphan, a lifelong owner of slaves, an Anglican, a prolific mother, a widow raising five children, a tobacco planter, and a strong, rough edged woman who lived through dramatic political, social, and economic changes in 18th century Virginia. A final chapter will address the question of Mary Washington's perplexing treatment at the hands of her son's biographers who have portrayed her with changing maternal stereotypes and within the powerful magnetic field of her son. This study returns Mary Ball Washington to her place within the values and conflicts of the eighteenth century.

Ilan Stavans, Lewis-Sebring Professor in Latin American and Latino Culture (Spanish)

Research Project: "Hispanic Anti-Semitism"

Professor Stavans will use his fellowship to conduct research for "Hispanic Anti-Semitism," his non-fiction book for a general audience, to be released by the University of California Press, juxtaposing historical analysis with autobiographical and journalistic material. Based on an essay published in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the volume will explore Hispanic anti-Semitism from a myriad perspectives, from the time of La Convivencia in Spain, when the three major Western religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, coexisted; to the rise of the Holy Office of the Inquisition; the expulsion of the Jews from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492; the phenomenon of Crypto-Judaism in the Americas; the arrival of Ashkenazi Jews to Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and other countries on this side of the Atlantic in the late nineteenth century; the presence of Zionism in the Spanish-speaking world; the terrorist acts at the Israeli Embassy and the A.M.I.A. in Buenos Aires in the 1990s; and the persistence of anti-Semitism among Latinos in the United States.

Ronald Tiersky, Joseph B. Eastman '04 Professor of Political Science

Research Project: "Europe's Foreign Policies"

During his leave, Professor Tiersky will work on his book, "Europe's Foreign Policies," which he will co-edit with Professor John Van Oudenaren for the "Europe Today" series at Rowman & Littlefield, Pubs. Professor Tiersky serves as general editor of this series.