

Global & Regional Studies Newsletter

University of Vermont



★ African Studies

★ Global Studies

★ Asian Studies

★ Latin American & Caribbean Studies

★ Canadian Studies

★ Middle Eastern Studies

★ European Studies

★ Russian & Eastern European Studies

A Message from the Director

Pablo Bose, Geography Department & GRS Co-Director

This past year has been another productive and at times challenging one for our program, our discipline, and of course the world as a whole. The continued retreat of the US from multilateral institutions, agreements and global governance has had far reaching effects, which our faculty and students have examined in their work in various ways. Indeed, it has been gratifying to see the continued and often increasing interest amongst our students in understanding transnational and regional processes and connections, despite – or perhaps sometimes because of – the denigration of global linkages and cooperation in so many places. Global Studies major Sarah Barrett wrote an excellent and timely honors thesis on the closures in the Temporary Protected Status program by the US government and the wholesale changes made to the worldwide asylum and refugee systems. European Studies major Will Fitz has been working on a thesis looking at the rise of anti-immigrant politics and movements in Germany throughout 2018. And multiple GRS students have worked in and with migrant and non-profit groups in the US and worldwide through internships, volunteering, and research projects to engage directly with such issues. Their efforts remind us that with xenophobia, ethno-nationalism and the demonization of minorities on the rise worldwide, it is imperative to continue to educate about, intervene in and raise awareness for the importance of the ties that bind us together rather than the issues that divide us.

One of the major efforts of the GRS directors and community this year has been to engage in an Academic Program Review, a year-long evaluation of our curriculum, programs and outcomes that happens approximately every ten years or so. As part of this process we engaged in a self-study that included looking at the evolution of the GRS program, at the courses we teach and the job placements of graduates, feedback from current students and alumni and discussed possible changes we can make to improve our various majors and minors. Two external reviewers – Dr. Jana Braziel of Miami University (Ohio) and Dr. Alexandra Alonso of the New School (New York) – spent time on campus meeting with faculty, staff, and students and prepared an extensive set of recommendations for our programs. We will be responding to these suggestions and incorporating many of the lessons we learned over the past year into our program in the months to come.

The GRS programs hosted a number of exciting speakers and fascinating events across campus during 2017-2018. African Studies Director Vicki Brennan helped to curate a semester-long exhibition entitled “Spirited Things: Sacred Arts of the Black Atlantic” at the Fleming Museum and organized a series of public and scholarly lectures to accompany it. Visitors to the exhibition were challenged and engaged by a series of objects, artifacts and installations that explored questions of identity, faith, politics and culture throughout the range of the African diaspora across the Atlantic. Canadian Studies Director David Massell took students to Cree Country to meet with community members and understand some of the complex ways that indigenous, Francophone, and Canadian culture intersect within these spaces. Other visitors provided similarly enriching opportunities for our campus community to learn about different regions and processes. Sara Smith, a feminist political geographer gave our Lintilhac Lecture on youth identities in Ladakh, India, while Tim Hawthorne, sociologist using GIS presented on the use of drone technology for community improvement in Belize and we were also able to help bring several performers to campus as part of the World Dance class. Stephanie Farrior from Vermont Law School spoke to our students about international human rights advocacy in the current era. European Studies helped to sponsor an interdisciplinary conference on “Austria and the East” as well as the visit by a collective of three Italian artists. GRS also supported the visit to campus by Sally and Paul Bermanzohn – survivors of the Greensboro Massacre in which neo-Nazis attacked counter-protestors – to speak about the resurgence of white supremacy movements across the world.

We were also proud to recognize the achievements of many of the GRS directors this year, including Ilyse Morgenstein-Fuerst (Middle East Studies), who published *Indian Muslim Minorities and the 1857 Rebellion*, Vicki Brennan (African Studies), who published *Singing Yoruba Christianity: Music, Media and Morality*, and Tom Borchert, who published *Educating Monks: Minority Buddhism on China’s Southwest Border* – quite a set of writing achievements from our powerhouse Religion Department at UVM! GRS Co-Director Jonah Steinberg was also awarded a National Science Foundation grant for his research on migrant and Roma lives in contemporary Europe entitled “Intersections of Social and Geographic Marginality in Contemporary Urban Spaces”. The important research and scholarship carried out by all of our faculty and directors are a large part of what continues to make GRS a vital and vibrant community. All the best for the year ahead,

-Pablo

AFRICAN STUDIES

During the Fall 2017 semester the UVM Fleming Museum presented "Spirited Things," an exhibition of Afro-Atlantic sacred art from West Africa, Cuba, Haiti, and Brazil. African Studies, (along with Global Studies and Latin American Studies) sponsored a lecture series connected to the exhibition that brought distinguished historians, anthropologists, and art historians to UVM to speak on their research related to the exhibition. Of particular interest to faculty and students in African Studies was the keynote lecture given by distinguished art historian Professor Rowland O. Abiodun (Amherst College) on October 3, 2017. His lecture, "ÌMỌJÚ-MỌRA: African adoption of New Styles, Techniques and Materials in the Americas" discussed the survival of African art, religion, culture in new environments and under the difficult conditions of enslavement in the New World via the Yoruba aesthetic canon called "ìmọjú-mọra."



In Spring 2018 African Studies students and faculty also participated in a day-long symposium on "Black Sacred Space: Materiality & Representation" (April 20, 2018). Special guests included Professor J. Lorand Matory of Duke University, Professor Todne Thomas of Harvard University, and Professor Yanique Hume of the University of the West Indies.

Two African Studies students, Katherine Freeman and Madison Schaffer attended the African Literature Association's annual conference, which was held in Washington, DC from May 23-26. Madison described her experience as follows:

"As an undergraduate scholar minoring in African Studies, it was a great opportunity to attend the African Literature Association Conference of 2018. Professor Lokangaka Losambe, sparked my interest in African Literature through an introductory class, and I've been hooked ever since. The conference was vast and diverse. I attended talks on the world of Wakanda, Eco-Feminism, and gothic literature in South Africa. The conference introduced me to dozens of remarkable scholars from all over the world and inspired me to continue to pursue my interests in African Literature through an African Studies minor at UVM"

Singing Yoruba Christianity

Music, Media, and Morality

Vicki L. Brennan



Professor Vicki L. Brennan's book *Singing Yoruba Christianity: Music, Media, and Morality* was published in January 2018 by Indiana University Press. This spring, Professor Brennan also received the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Lecture Award, based in part on her work with students in African Studies, Anthropology, and Religion on selecting and researching the objects featured in the "Spirited Things" exhibition at the Fleming Museum.

Professor Lokangaka Losambe's article "The Colonial Stranger and Postcolonial Agency: The Congo Narrative," was selected by Taylor and Francis to be part of a special collection on "The Environments of African Literature."

Professor Ingrid Nelson published an article entitled "Gendered orphan kits, authority, power and the role of rumor in the woodlands of Mozambique" in the journal *Gender, Place & Culture*.

In October 2017, Professor Peter Von Doepp's research on "The Promise, Challenge, and Foundations of Media Collective Action: Illustrations from Sub-Saharan Africa" was published in *The International Journal of Press/Politics*.



ASIAN STUDIES

This year in Asian Studies, we had two Claire M. Lintilhac Seminars in Asian Studies: Sara Smith, Department of Geography, UNC Chapel Hill, whose lecture was entitled, "Politics, Pleasure and Difference in the Intimate City: Himalayan Students Remake the Future," and Kristian Peterson, Department of Religion, University of Nebraska Omaha, whose lecture was entitled, "Interpreting Islam in China."

Michele Commercio, Associate Professor of Political Science, was the recipient of a Peter J. Seybolt Award to conduct research on polygyny in Kyrgyzstan. It is part of a larger project examining gender dynamics on post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan.



Cree Country Field Trips

1 Northern Quebec

Students in the seminar 'Cree Country: Native History and Environmental Change' spend a week in March in Northern Quebec. They explore the lumber town of Senneterre and Cree reserves of Waswanipi and Ouje-Bougoumou. They also tour the Barrette-Chapais sawmill, and spend several days at the bush camp of Anna and David Bosum.

2 Akwesasne Mohawk Reserve

Students in North American Indian History visit the Akwesasne Mohawk Reserve and hear a panel of community leaders share stories and perspectives on tribal sovereignty at the Canadian-American frontier. Lunch at the casino, a tour of the Museum and a lesson in Mohawk language round out the day.

3 Ottawa

Students in Professor Ayres' Canadian Politics class and Professor Massell's courses in Canadian History explore Ottawa for three days in October. Activities include visits to Parliament, curling at the Rideau Curling Club, and tours of the National Gallery of Canada and the Canadian Museum of History.

4 Odanak

Students in the first-year seminar Reel and Real Indians TAP class visit the community of Odanak, the Abenaki First Nations reserve in Quebec. They learn about the lives of the Abenaki and consider the differences in the ways Indigenous peoples are portrayed in film.

CANADIAN STUDIES



French Connection: Franco Connexions

A conference highlighting the historical, cultural and economic contributions of French Canadians from Québec to Vermont and New England. This year's conference happened on March 20, 2017 at the University of Vermont.

Power from the North Conference

Power from the North is a joint project of UVM's Canadian Studies Program, The Center for Research on Vermont and the Energy Transitions Research Group to explore the past, present, and future of Vermont & Quebec's electricity relationships.

International Conference

On March 23, 2015, the two programs convened an international conference to examine these issues. Transcripts of the Conference proceedings and video interviews with key stakeholders are below. Contact Richard Watts or Jennie Stephens or David Massell for more information.

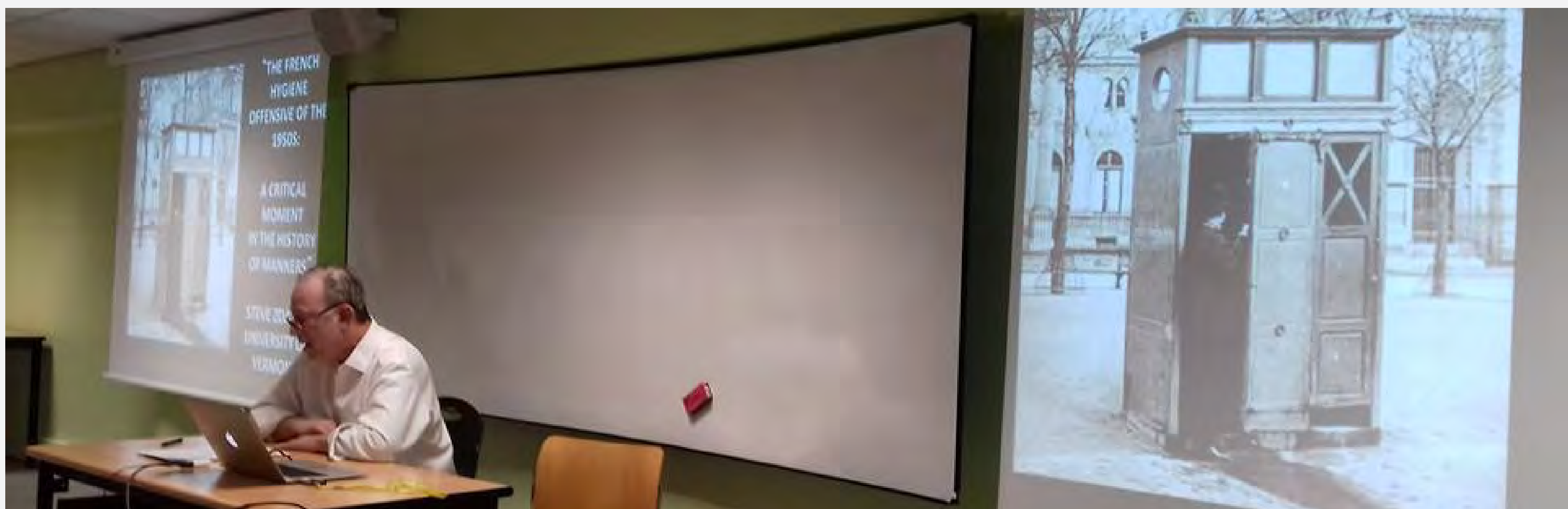
David Alward

David Alward, Consul General of Canada to New England and former Premier of New Brunswick, spoke with Professor Massell's students in both The History of Canada and Canadian-American Relations.



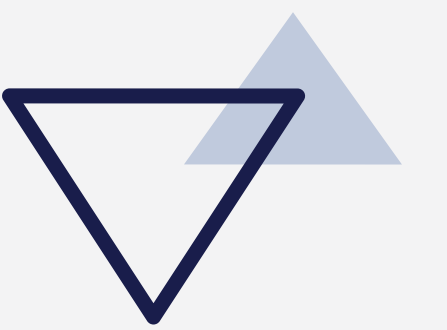
EUROPEAN STUDIES

Steve Zdatny, Professor of History and Director of European Studies, had a productive year. He published two book reviews and finished an article about hygiene in the nineteenth-century French countryside. He received a grant to spend the month of June in Paris, looking at documents on conditions in the homes of juvenile delinquents. In April he gave an invited talk on the "Hygiene Revolution in Postwar France" at the Business Faculty of the University of Lille-2. He continues to work on his book manuscript, a history of hygiene in France in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.



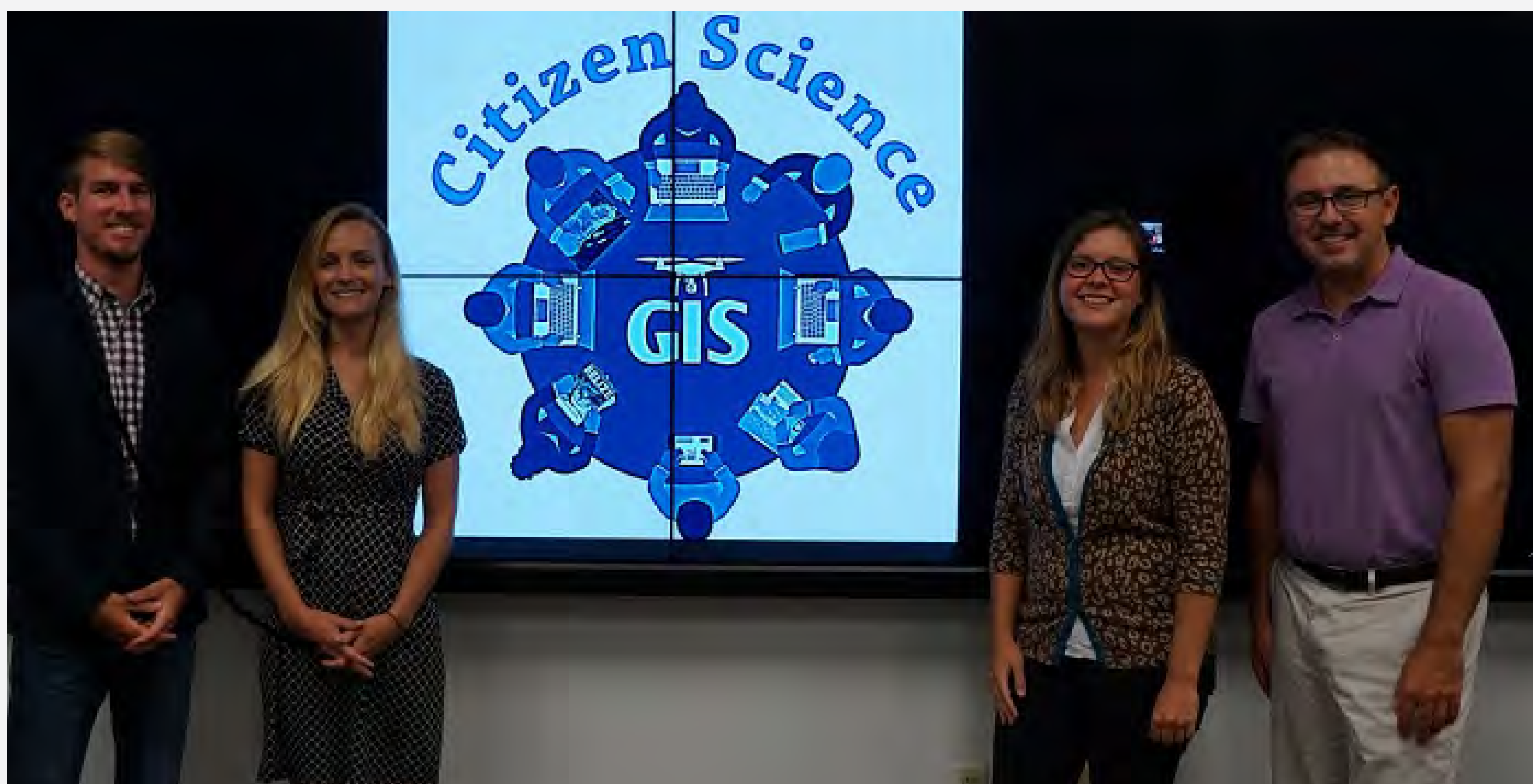
RUSSIAN & EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES

This year REES hosted its annual book group featuring the novel "A Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years" by Kyrgyz author Chingiz Aitmatov. Approximately 20 students participated in this one-time event featuring a semi-science fiction book set in the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic during the Cold War.



GLOBAL STUDIES

It has been a rich and productive year in Global Studies, with a substantial amount of activity in both the domains of programming and planning. A substantial restructuring—to entail a range of new offerings—was envisioned by the directors during and in the wake of a highly generative Academic Program Review, drawing external reviewers from Global Studies Programs at The New School and Miami University of Ohio. Global Studies also participated in a number of interesting campus events, most notably a large forum on comics and graphic novels as nonfiction, including as global journalism. This event included a Burack Speaker to which Global Studies contributed, the renowned comic journalist Joe Sacco, along with other well-known authors like Art Spiegelman of Maus fame. Global Studies also co-sponsored the “Spirited Things: Religious Objects and Embodied Practices in the Black Atlantic” lecture series held at the Fleming Museum, organized by Vicki Brennan, and featuring Randy Matory; and a visit by Geographer Timothy Hawthorne, entitled “Citizen science, community geography and critical geographic information systems (GIS),” among a number of other events. This year’s end-of-year honors were given to Michaela Hooper for Top Scholar, Sarah Barrett for the Community Engagement and Activism Award, and Colin Rugg for the Benedict Prize in International Affairs. Kudos to all 2018 graduates in Global Studies!



LATIN AMERICAN & CARIBBEAN STUDIES

The Latin American and Caribbean Studies Program supported an art exhibit, a panel discussion on the Mexican elections, two dance performances, and an interdisciplinary Latin American faculty reading group. In the fall of 2017, LACS worked with the Lane Series to co-sponsor Brazilian dancer Cyro Batista's performance and arranged for him to give a presentation in Paula Higa's Brazilian Dance Class. The LACS program also provided funds and support for Professor Vicki Brennan's project *Spirited Things: Sacred Arts of the Black Atlantic*. Professor Brennan generously included Latin American Studies students in her events and a number of our students had the opportunity to meet with Marsh Professor J. Lorand Matory and Willy Zapata, a Cuban-American altar builder who installed an altar at the Fleming Museum for the exhibition. During the spring semester Professor Sarah Osten organized a panel discussion about the Mexican presidential elections. Dr. Michael Lettieri from the University of San Diego joined UVM Professors Beer, Waldron and Osten to discuss the July 2018 Mexican presidential elections on April 26, 2018. Paula Higa from the Dance Program organized Miguel Peña's Traditional Mexican Dance Master Class on March 27, 2018. Professor Osten organized an interdisciplinary Latin American faculty reading group. The group brings together Latin American Studies faculty in the region to read and discuss important new books about Latin America. In addition to faculty from UVM, we have faculty from Harvard, Dartmouth, and SUNY Plattsburgh participating in our reading group. We are hoping to get faculty from St. Michael's College and Middlebury College to join as well. We met three times during the 2017-2018 academic year and read three books: *The Return of Comrade Flores Magón* by Claudio Lomnitz, *Picturing the Proletariat: Artists and Labor in Revolutionary Mexico* by John Lear, and *Out in the Periphery: Latin America's Gay Rights Revolution* by Omar Encarnación.



MIDDLE EAST STUDIES



Mideast faculty members had a productive academic year with lots of major publications. Highlights include (chronologically):

- ★ Peter S. Henne, *Islamic Politics, Muslim States and Counterterrorism Tensions*, (Cambridge University Press, 2017)
- ★ Ilyse R. Morgenstein Fuerst, *Indian Muslim Minorities and the 1857 Rebellion: Religion, Rebels, and Jihad* (I.B.Tauris, 2017)
- ★ Febe Armanios and Bogaç Ergene, *Halal Food: A History* (Oxford University Press, 2018)

Mideast Studies sponsored a major campus event that drew over 80 audience members. Dr. Megan P. Goodwin (Northeastern University) gave a public lecture titled "Covering Women: Race, Religion, and Resistance," on April 5, 2018.

