



Bowling Green State University  
Canadian Studies Center  
Centre D'Études Canadiennes  
253 Business Administration Building  
Bowling Green, Ohio 43403-0260  
(419) 372-2457  
Fax: (419) 372-0457  
E-mail: cast@cba.bgsu.edu

## *Ohio Canadian Studies Roundtable*

### *Thirteenth Annual Report*

May 28, 2005

Dear Canadianist:

The thirteenth Ohio Canadian Studies Roundtable was held on March 25, 2005. The day-long event attracted thirty-three participants representing sixteen institutions from across Ohio and included individuals from Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, and West Virginia. For the first time, the event was held on the campus of Ohio Wesleyan University to very positive feedback from most of the participants.

This year's keynote speaker, Professor Roseanna Dufault, Ohio Northern University, discussed "Contemporary Trends in Québec Literature and Film." See inside for a summary of her presentation.

Summaries of each session follow. As you read through the report, consider how the Roundtable can renew itself. Please suggest topics and alternative formats for the next Ohio Canadian Studies Roundtable.

Best regards,

Mark J. Kasoff  
Canadian Studies  
Bowling Green State University

Enclosure



Several students attended the Ohio Canadian Studies Roundtable to help get prepared for their upcoming internships with the Canadian Parliament.

## Opening Presentations

### Academic Support

*Dennis Moore, Consulate General of Canada*

The Government of Canada holds this roundtable in high regard, because of the impressive degree of curiosity, commitment, and scholarship that every one of you devotes to the study of Canada. At a time when so many people around the world just don't seem to be listening to each other, you insist on attaching a high priority to Canada and the Canada-U.S. relationship. Whether you focus on border security, the parliamentary system, transportation, or the Stratford Festival, your contributions as educators and experts are immeasurable.

☞ The 2005-06 Canadian Studies Grant Guidelines are on the Embassy website <[www.canadianembassy.org/education](http://www.canadianembassy.org/education)>. Call me if you have an idea, no matter how far out of the box. And remember that I encourage you to send me your draft narrative and budget, so we can discuss and maybe tweak them before formal submission. Hints this year: (1) read the guidelines carefully, even if you're a seasoned veteran; (2) Don't leave anything out, incomplete proposals will not be considered; (3) Despite those two warnings, remember that the grant program is quite user-friendly.

- ☞ The Association for Canadian Studies in the United States (ACSUS) has a special program called the ACSUS Fund for the Arts. It allocates grants of \$500 or \$1,000 to institutions presenting cultural events during the 2005 calendar year. If you have something coming up, you might be able to get some dough from them. Be aware, though, that the submission deadline is March 31<sup>st</sup>. Get details from the ACSUS website <[www.acsus.org](http://www.acsus.org)>.
- ☞ When you come to the roundtable next year, bring a colleague. New faces are very important.

*Tim Rogus, Government of Québec*

To promote a better understanding of Québec in the United States, the Ministère des Relations internationales du Québec (MRI) offers a financial assistance program in Québec studies for the benefit of professors/researchers at American institutions of higher education. The MRI is particularly interested in projects that focus on Québec economics, politics, culture and society, as well as on Québec-U.S. relations.

The Québec Studies Program <[www.mri.gouv.qc.ca/usa/en/qsp/studies/index.html](http://www.mri.gouv.qc.ca/usa/en/qsp/studies/index.html)> has four components:

- ☞ Grants for professors and researchers,
- ☞ Matching grants for libraries,
- ☞ Grants for program enhancement, and
- ☞ Grants for guest speakers and writers from Québec.

Contact Tim Rogus for more information on how to apply.

## Keynote Presentation

### “Contemporary Trends in Québec Literature and Film”

*Roseanna Dufault, Ohio Northern University*

Roseanna Dufault began her keynote address on Québec culture by remarking on Montréal's powerful attraction for creative artists and noting that, in the space of just a few decades, Montréal has become an essential cultural center, a crossroads for many different disciplines, and a stage for major international events. She cited Dr. Richard Florida's “bohemian index,” which looks at the proportion of artists in a given city relative to the general population, as a measure of the city's creativity and vitality. Florida, a professor of regional economic development at Carnegie Mellon University, praises Montréal for its “tolerance, talent, and technology,” and ranks it as one of the most “bohemian” cities in North America. (For more information about Richard Florida's book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, see his website at <[www.heinz.cmu.edu/~florida/](http://www.heinz.cmu.edu/~florida/)>. For more about Montréal, go to <[www.creativeclass.org](http://www.creativeclass.org)> and click on “Montréal has it all.” Both websites include comparative rankings of other cities in the United States and Canada.)

Dufault continued with a discussion of two recent films, *Les Invasions barbares* (*The Barbarian Invasions*), and *La Grande Séduction* (*Seducing Doctor Lewis*). She cited a review by Leslie Blake, who states, “French-Canadian filmmaker Denys Arcand has caught the international zeitgeist of the boomer generation in his socio-political comedy, *The Barbarian Invasions*.” (Read the full critique at <[www.offoffoff.com/film/2003/barbarianinvasions.php](http://www.offoffoff.com/film/2003/barbarianinvasions.php)>.) Dufault attributed this film's

success to its blend of humor, poignancy, and irony, which saves it from becoming excessively maudlin. Further, the fact that it was made seventeen years after its prequel, *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* (*The Decline of the American Empire*) delights viewers who recognize actors from the earlier film who, like old friends, have aged believably.

*Seducing Doctor Lewis*, director Jean-François Pouliot's first film, was selected for several film festivals and won seven Jutra awards. Commenting on the film's profound look at rural values, Dufault compared it to traditional Québec literature, epitomized by Louis Hémon's famous novel, *Maria Chapdelaine*, in the sense that both reject city life in favor of a community of plain people who love the land.

Finally, Dufault discussed two recent novels by Québec authors, *Le Retour d'Afrique* by Francine d'Amour (2004), and *Route Barrée en Montérégie* by François Barcelo (2003). She observed that *Le Retour d'Afrique*, like the film *Les Invasions barbares*, is full of cultural, historical, and psychological resonances. It reflects current trends in Québec literature in that it raises difficult questions about the self and the world. Displacement is a common theme, along with a sense of gloom and pessimism concerning world affairs.

*Route Barrée en Montérégie*, like the film *La Grande Séduction*, takes a light-hearted approach to serious matters; it also reflects the same pride of place and appreciation for tranquil rural life.

To conclude, Dufault remarked that, as she was preparing her talk, she was fascinated by connections she discovered between seemingly disparate topics and works. Clearly themes of the past, present, and future are intricately linked in Québec's unique and original cultural productions.

## Morning Sessions

### Government and Politics

*Moderator: Donley Studlar, West Virginia University*

*Notes: Scott Piroth, Bowling Green State University*

#### Topics:

- ☞ Potential for a federal election.
- ☞ Provincial politics.

#### Highlights:

The discussion began with several questions. How is Prime Minister Martin's government performing? When is an election likely to be called? What will the major issue be in the next election? Who likely to win this election? And, what is going on at the provincial level in Canadian politics?

The general consensus was that none of the major parties was eager for a quick election. Both the Liberals and Conservatives are in debt from the 2004 election, and the polls show that the likely result of an election would be another Liberal minority government. Several participants speculated that a string of minority governments was a distinct possibility. In addition, the original Liberal budget seemed designed to minimize Conservative opposition and prevent a crisis that would lead to an election. (Note that the meeting occurred before the major

revelations of the Gomery Commission changed the political dynamics—leading to a sharp drop in support for the Liberal government and major changes to the budget.)

A discussion of the prospects of the Conservative Party under Stephen Harper followed. It was noted that many Canadians wanted to punish the Liberals in 2004 but were reluctant to vote for the Conservatives. Liberal attempts to portray Stephen Harper as too conservative were effective – particularly in Ontario. Furthermore, it remains unclear whether the new Conservative Party is truly a merger of the Progressive Conservatives and the Alliance or the latest incarnation of the Reform Party. Participants agreed that the next election would be critical for Stephen Harper’s leadership.

Although the major parties in Canada clearly differ on many issues, it was difficult to identify a single issue that was likely to shape the next election. Most media coverage in Canada is focused on the corruption issue, and issues like the Martin government’s decision not to join the U.S. ballistic missile defense program do not seem to arouse enough passion to have a long-term influence on the political fortunes of the parties. It was suggested that most Canadians are actually satisfied with the policies of the Liberal government even if they are dissatisfied with the Liberals for other reasons.

The discussion of provincial politics focused on Ontario, Québec, and Alberta. The unpopularity of Liberal governments in Ontario and Québec was discussed, as was the reelection of the Ralph Klein government in Alberta. If current trends continue, the Parti Québécois is likely to return to power in Québec in two or three years—meaning the national unity question may once again be on the agenda. Conservative dominance in Alberta is likely to continue, but the likely departure of Premier Klein before the next election might bring less confrontational leadership into power in Alberta.

At the provincial level, several institutional reforms were noted. Ontario and British Columbia have adopted fixed-date elections, and a major reform of the electoral system in British Columbia is the subject of a May referendum. Nevertheless, participants did not see any momentum for electoral reform at the national level, and even reforms to how Senators and Supreme Court justices are nominated seem increasingly unlikely. Paul Martin’s promise to reform the operations of parliament also seems stalled in the current minority government situation.

## Literature and Film

*Moderator: Beth Casey, Bowling Green State University*

*Notes: Mary Jane Hahler, BGSU Firelands*

### Topics:

- ☞ Overcoming teaching challenges
- ☞ Materials recommendations

### Highlights:

The discussion of Canadian Literature and Film centered on a number of issues:

- A pedagogical issue: college students do not read for pleasure, so finding materials that appeal to them is a real challenge. Several students in the group commented that “talking” online takes up a lot of time and gets in the way of reading.

- In English Canadian literature, there seems to be an issue of constructing identity. From the Québec perspective, it seems that English Canada is in a crisis of identity.
- Regarding second language learning and use, there is an issue of Business Colleges vs. Arts & Science colleges. Business colleges want students to learn other languages, but they mean “Berlitz language,” then expect that all negotiation take place in English. One person lamented that in the U.S. “we have blinders on and see only Spanish as a valuable language to learn.” Further, in Canada, young people who expect to be leaders in their society expect to be bilingual. But not in the U.S., where “English Only” is a strong choice.

The discussion returned to the difficulty of reading among many young people, who expect fast-paced reading material and film. A suggestion was made that the work *The Englishman’s Boy* by Guy Vanderhaeghe works well with young students. In the book, there is tension over who has control of the story (Can./U.S.; European/Native; movie/book.)

Another teaching issue in literature is that of “The Diaspora.” Many Canadian immigrant authors write about the country from which they came, e.g. The Czech Republic, India, China, Haiti. Their issues and concerns seem to be in “the old country” and students sometimes have difficulty viewing these works as Canadian literature. One discussant suggested that many of the works are all about the tensions of empire. Political refugees have a base in Canada where they can talk about the breaking down of empire and nationalism and the rebuilding of identities.

A couple of recommended works: *The Secret Book* by Vincent Jhari (2004) and the recently republished novel *Rockbound*, a 1920s work by Frank Parker Day (recently featured on a CBC show on best Canadian literature.) A suggested film is a documentary by Thierry Le Breu on the “Je me souviens” motto, a powerful work in which many Québécois were interviewed.

As a wrap-up of the discussion, Dr. Casey asked the undergraduate students in the group what constitutes a good literature course. The response was that a good professor introduces different genres within a broad topic, “moves around a lot” (we think this means using a variety of materials, not pacing in the classroom,) keeps you focused, makes connections and provides cultural and historical connections. The students added that there is an overemphasis on grades, that professors provide a lot of predigested information and students learn how to play the game. Students “want the A the quickest way.” Higher education cultures have lost the goal of “furnishing your mind.”

## Social Policy

*Moderator: W. Randy Smith, The Ohio State University*

*Notes: Margaret Brooks-Terry, Baldwin-Wallace College*

### Topics:

- ☞ Changes in manufacturing in Ohio and Ontario
- ☞ Location incentive differences
- ☞ The energy sector

### Highlights:

Cliff Cook introduced the question of whether the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) appears to have handled the loss of manufacturing better than Ohio and Michigan. He was curious as to whether Canadians had made major changes in their educational system to support the recent

efforts to promote IT (information technology) development, pharmaceutical technology, etc. It was pointed out that Canada has provided grants to employers who send existing workers to college. Kasoff pointed out that a research proposal looking at how Ontario and Ohio differ in their response to the loss of manufacturing jobs would probably stand a good chance of being funded. Related to such research, we discussed the problem of comparing cities like Cleveland and Toronto or even Columbus due to the history of suburban development that can strangle geographic growth and social heterogeneity. It is difficult to convince U.S. citizens to get education for new jobs because old manufacturing industries are gone or will soon be leaving this area. Cook tells his students that they will some day come to work to find that they have been replaced by someone in Bangalore at ¼ the wages. New ideas need to be developed here before eventually moving offshore. An example of the generation of new initiatives is IDEO, a private think tank hiring engineers, social scientists, and others from a variety of disciplines. For more about IDEO, go to <[www.ideo.com](http://www.ideo.com)>.

The discussion turned to the comparison of U.S. tax abatement schemes to provincial tax policies in Canada. Do Canadian tax policies allow the provinces to be more creative in the incentives they can offer businesses? In regard to tax support of schools, in Canada the provinces distribute to the school districts. In Ontario, there are only 72 school districts compared to over 600 in the state of Ohio.

Still on the topic of social policies, we discussed the fact that Canada is using the U.S. health system to address its backlog of patients. Canadians often wait much longer for non-emergency treatment than do Americans who have health insurance. But Canadians may become less tolerant of the wait as they look across the border to the U.S. system. Medical imaging companies in Detroit are advertising directly to Canadians in the Windsor news media, encouraging them to turn to the private medical market to avoid the wait for National Health Care. (Most Canadians, however, including business leaders, would not want to trade their system for the U.S. system, it was pointed out.)

The final topic was oil, and the possibility that the rising cost of crude on the world market might make it economical to further develop the tar sands of Alberta. The resource is known to be extensive, but the technology required to extract it is still too expensive at current values per barrel (not to mention environmental concerns).


## **Afternoon Sessions**


### **Québec Studies**

*Moderator: Roseanna Dufault, Ohio Northern University*

*Notes: Donley Studlar, West Virginia University*

#### Topics:

 Culture

 Linguistics

#### Highlights:

The discussion was wide-ranging. It began with consideration of notable literary and cinematic contributions reflecting issues in the province such as hyphenated identities, generations, and the rural/urban divide. There was also recognition of the growing cultural and

ethnic diversity of the province and Montréal as a global city. Yet the publishing industry has difficulty in appealing to readers outside Québec.

Linguistic issues featured prominently. The audiences of the English-language and French-language media in the province are not necessarily receiving the same news. There also was discussion of lessening tensions along the English/French divide, relations of Québec with Francophones elsewhere in Canada and in France, and the relationship of dialect to class and region. Many of the language comments were put into a comparative perspective with similar issues in English and in relation to other countries, especially the U.S., France, and Britain. In Ohio, the reputation of Québec as a French-speaking province inhibits business connections even though at the executive level English is the *lingua franca*.

## Teaching Canada

*Moderator: Bruce Way, Owens Community College*

*Notes: David Jackson, Bowling Green State University*

### Topics:

- ☞ Interest in teaching Canada among faculty
- ☞ Concepts and assignments

### Highlights:

The conversation began with discussing of the level of interest in courses with Canadian content, and it appeared that BGSU leads the way with a boom in enrollment in the Canadian Studies (CAST) 201 course. Interestingly, 30 graduate students took a summer course at BGSU on how to teach about Canada. It was reported that Baldwin Wallace College has no courses on Canada, while Canadian History at University of Akron attracts 25 students every two to three years. Unfortunately, little appears to be going on regarding Canada at the community colleges of Michigan and Ohio. In law enforcement and security this may be changing, as the U.S. has recently become more interested in border security. Ohio State reported a lull in interest in Canada among faculty, so the conversation turned to how to solve this problem.

Is there a bias against Canada in academia? Political scientists agreed there was no bias in their discipline, but the jury remains out on others, especially history. Will one get tenure at a good U.S. university if one's major research area is Canada?

The conversation then turned back to the nature of the courses we actually teach. The most difficult concepts to get across to undergraduates include the fact of real cultural and political differences between the U.S. and Canada, how the parliamentary system works, and the differences among Canadian political parties.

Compliments were offered for the interdisciplinary nature of the CAST 201 course at BGSU and how that serves as a good introduction to many more advanced and discipline specific courses. What kinds of assignments ought we to give? An annotated bibliography on a subject of the student's choosing was suggested as a good assignment to get students thinking and writing about Canada.

## NAFTA

*Moderator: Mark Kasoff, Bowling Green State University*

*Notes: Elizabeth Hedler, Ohio Historical Society*

### Topics:

- ☺ Has NAFTA been fair to Canada and Mexico?
- ☺ Have these countries benefited as promised by the U.S.?
- ☺ How are the benefits/drawbacks for Mexico—U.S. different from those between Canada—U.S.?

### Highlights:

- In Canadian politics, now, little resistance to NAFTA.
- Initially Canadians feared NAFTA would allow U.S. businesses to swallow up Canadian companies.
  - Whereas in effect, NAFTA has provided Canadian firms with a much larger market and one easier to reach.
  - One drawback is that it creates a vulnerability in Canada, access to the U.S. market is now crucial to the overall Canadian economy.
- Initial fears for NAFTA, namely, that companies would move plants to Mexico in large numbers for cheap labour—essentially didn't happen.
- Discussion of South America in negotiations for free trade with U.S.
- U.S. is demanding share in medical patents and changes in judicial systems in order to grant free trade.
- Problems of bilateral trade agreements with U.S. for small countries can result in hub and spoke arrangements.
  - For small countries, multi-national agreements might be better.
- NAFTA has encouraged business integration across the border with companies operating in three countries, locating production where it makes economic sense.
  - Parts move across borders.
- Problem of allowing Mexican trucks to drive in U.S.
- Some NAFTA issues driven by politics, for example, mad cow disease.
- How have fears of terrorism and need for Homeland Security affected NAFTA?
  - Has had an effect on illegal immigration and thus on U.S. agriculture.
  - Probably necessary to free up immigration within NAFTA and implement a common security perimeter.
- Environmental issues and NAFTA common security perimeter—if you really had one that worked—would not need border stations and checks.

## *Participant List*

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### **Vanessa Astraitis**

The Ohio State University  
42 W. Oakland Avenue, Apartment # 35  
Columbus, OH 43201  
440.339.8073  
setter1022@yahoo.com

### **James Baker**

Department of History  
Canadian Parliamentary Internship Program  
Western Kentucky University  
335 Sumpter Avenue  
Bowling Green, KY 42101  
270.745.5741  
fax: 745.2950  
james.baker@wku.edu

### **Margaret Brooks-Terry**

Department of Sociology  
Baldwin-Wallace College  
Carnegie Hall  
275 Eastland Road  
Berea, OH 44017  
440.826.2144  
fax: 826.6804  
mbrooks@bw.edu

### **Heidi Bruns**

The Ohio State University  
1406 Bayshore Drive, Apt. C  
Columbus, OH 43204  
bruns.65@osu.edu

### **Beth Casey**

Department of English  
Bowling Green State University  
412 East Hall  
Bowling Green, OH 43403  
419.372.9189  
bcasey@bgnet.bgsu.edu

### **Clifford G. Cook**

Department of Economics  
Ohio Wesleyan University  
Delaware, OH 43015  
740.368.3539  
fax: 368.3551  
cgcook@owu.edu

### **Christine Drennen**

Canadian Studies Center  
Bowling Green State University  
253 Business Administration Building  
Bowling Green, OH 43403-0260  
419.372.0431  
fax: 372.0457  
cdrennen@cba.bgsu.edu

### **Roseanna Dufault**

Department of Modern Languages  
Ohio Northern University  
525 South Main Street  
Ada, OH 45810  
419.772.2116  
fax: 772.1932  
r-dufault@onu.edu

### **Stephanie Fitos**

The Ohio State University  
111 East Norwich Avenue, Apt. E  
Columbus, OH 43201  
440.823.4993  
Fitos.1@osu.edu

### **Elizabeth Forester**

Canadian Studies Center  
Bowling Green State University  
253 Business Administration Building  
Bowling Green, OH 43403-0260  
419.372.2457  
fax: 372.0457  
eforest@cba.bgsu.edu

## *Participant List*

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### **Mary Jane Hahler**

Humanities & Romance Languages  
BGSU Firelands College  
One University Drive  
Huron, OH 44839  
419.433.5560 or 372.0616  
fax: 433.9696  
mhahler@bgnet.bgsu.edu

### **Elizabeth Hedler**

Ohio Historical Society  
Ohio Historical Center  
1982 Velma Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43211-2497  
614.297.2538  
fax: 297.2546  
ehedler@ohiohistory.org

### **Shannon Herzog**

The Ohio State University  
4615 Queen Mary Drive  
South Euclid, OH 44121  
216.577.9562  
herzog.31@osu.edu

### **David Jackson**

Department of Political Science  
Bowling Green State University  
107 Williams Hall  
Bowling Green, OH 43403  
419.372.2922  
fax: 372.8246  
jacksod@bgnet.bgsu.edu

### **Mark J. Kasoff**

Canadian Studies Center  
Bowling Green State University  
253 Business Administration Bldg  
Bowling Green, OH 43403  
419.372.2457  
fax: 372.0457  
mkasoff@cba.bgsu.edu

### **Melinda Kemplin**

Morehead State University  
P O Box 717  
128 E. Church St.  
So. Charleston, OH 45368  
937.925.2376  
mindy\_kemplin@hotmail.com

### **David Lincove**

University Libraries  
The Ohio State University  
Room 226, Main Library  
1858 Neil Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43210  
614.292.2393  
fax: 292.7859  
lincove.1@osu.edu

### **Justine Magsig**

Environmental Programs  
Bowling Green State University  
250 Shatzel Hall  
Bowling Green, OH 43403  
419.372.7158  
fax: 372.7243  
jmagsi@bgnet.bgsu.edu

### **Judith Makens**

Department of English  
Mount Union College  
1972 Clark Avenue  
332 Chapman  
Alliance, OH 44601  
330.823.3173  
makensja@muc.edu

### **Elizabeth Mancke**

Department of History  
University of Akron  
Akron, OH 44325  
330.972.4908  
fax: 972.5840  
emancke@uakron.edu

## *Participant List*

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### **Dennis Moore**

Public Affairs Officer  
Consulate General of Canada  
600 Renaissance Center, Suite 1100  
Detroit, MI 48243-1798  
313.446.7039  
fax: 567.2164  
dennis.moore@international.gc.ca

### **Scott Piroth**

Department of Political Science  
Bowling Green State University  
112 Williams Hall  
Bowling Green, OH 43403  
419.372.7268 or 419.874.5392  
spiroth@bgnnet.bgsu.edu

### **Patricio Plazolles**

Ohio Wesleyan University  
The Woltemade Center  
61 S. Sandusky Street  
Delaware, OH 43015  
740.368.3550  
fax: 368.3551  
pfplazol@owu.edu

### **Michele Puglisi**

University of Akron  
278 Villa Street  
Rittman, OH 44270  
330.608.1335  
theteachmichelepug@yahoo.com

### **Randall Ripley**

Department of Political Science  
The Ohio State University  
1010 Derby Hall  
154 North Oval Mall  
Columbus, OH 43210-1316  
614.292.7689  
fax: 292.9530  
ripley.1@osu.edu

### **Timothy J. Rogus**

Public Affairs Officer for the Midwest  
Gouvernement du Québec  
444 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1900  
Chicago, IL 60611-3977  
312.645.0395 Ext. 228  
fax: 645.0542  
timothy.rogus@mri.gouv.qc.ca

### **Linda Rouillard**

Department of Foreign Languages  
University of Toledo  
5190D University Hall  
2801 Bancroft Street  
Toledo, OH 43606-3390  
419.530.2029  
linda.rouillard@utoledo.edu

### **Brian Rubel**

Wendy's International, Inc.  
One Dave Thomas Boulevard  
Dublin, OH 43017  
614.764.3471  
fax: 764.3243  
brian\_rubel@wendys.com

### **Jessica Schlegel**

The Ohio State University  
6108 Abbotsford Drive  
Dublin, OH 43017  
schlegel.30@osu.edu

### **Virginia Shea**

JD/LLB Program  
University of Detroit Mercy  
University of Windsor  
651 E. Jefferson  
Law Campus  
Detroit, MI 48226  
sheavj@udmercy.edu

## *Participant List*

---

### **W. Randy Smith**

Department of Geography  
The Ohio State University  
203 Bricker Hall  
190 N. Oval Mall  
Columbus, OH 43210  
614.292.5881  
fax: 292.3658  
smith.70@osu.edu

### **R. Bruce Way**

Division of Arts and Sciences  
Owens Community College  
P.O. Box 10,000  
Oregon Road  
Toledo, OH 43699-1947  
567.661.7545  
fax: 662.2670  
bway@owens.edu

### **Donley T. Studlar**

Department of Political Science  
West Virginia University  
P.O. Box 6317  
Morgantown, WV 26506-6317  
304.293.3811 Ext. 5269  
fax: 293.8644  
dstudlar@wvu.edu