

EDITED BY BEKA PATTERSON AND DR. JEREMY WALLACH

Graduate Program Notes



First-year M.A. class, from left to right, front:
Kayla Pruitt, Alex Lester, Nicole Drew, Katelyn Balkum; back: Dr. Jeremy Wallach, Dr. Esther Clinton, David Aldrich, Philomena Offiong, Ryan Monk, Tricia Ennis, Anna DeGalan

Last spring under the leadership of president Courtney Bliss and treasurer Joyce Okango our grad student organization—the Popular Culture Scholars Association (PCSA)—hosted monthly colloquiums and co-hosted the annual 2017 Ray Browne Conference on Cultural and Critical Studies. The conference theme was Intersections of Identities: Difference and Coalition in a Transnational Context and the PCSA keynote speaker was Laurenn McCubbin. Some of our graduate students presented during the three day

conference: Alex Fisher, "Towards a New Theory of Video Game Study: Hardwired Identities & Undead Engineers"; Courtney Bliss, "Hawkeye's Magic Ears: Narrative Prosthesis in Marvel Comics"; Robin Hershkowitz, "A Hostel Environment: Horrors of Post-Colonial Revenge"; Katelen Brown, "Jimmy Stewart, Plinko, Type2: How Jam Band Stats Tracking Can Promote Class Gatekeeping in the Scene"; Trinidad Linares, "Not Your House Asian: Margaret Cho and Drop Dead Diva."

Congratulations to Amira Hassnaoui, Martin Muthee, Courtney Bliss, and Joyce Okango who earned their Masters in Popular Culture in 2017. Amira is attending UCLA in the Ph.D. program for World Arts and Culture/Dance, Martin is earning his Ph.D. in African Cultural Studies at the University of Wisconsin, and Courtney was admitted to the American Culture Studies Ph.D. program at BGSU. Joyce Okango is still in the United States and currently doing Optional Practical Training (OPT).

In August, the Popular Culture Master's program welcomed a cohort of nine students—Kayla Pruitt, Alexander Lester, Philomena Offiong, Patricia Ennis, Ryan Monk, Anna DeGalan, Nicole Drew, Katelyn Balkum, and David Aldrich. Special thanks to 2nd year masters' students Robin Hershkowitz and Jason Maageria for helping to organize the Graduate Student Orientation this year and hosting our new students during their first week on campus.



Borders and Borderlands

April 6-8, 2018

Visit the website for more details:
www.bgsu.edu/raybrowne

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Researching the Romance Conference

April 13-14, 2018

See conference information on page 8.

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2016-2017 POPC Research Fellows: Lynn Bartholome/Summer Library Research Institute

Being a research fellow in the Center for Popular Culture Studies during the 2016-17 academic year was an amazing experience, one which I will remember always. During my time in Bowling Green, I met some incredible people who quickly became friends, researched in the best popular culture collection in the country (and perhaps the world), and was part of a collaborative effort to create a new and productive rapprochement between the BGSU Popular Culture Department and the Popular Culture and American Culture Association.

I must admit, I was apprehensive when I arrived in Bowling Green in October 2016; however, my fears were soon allayed. Everywhere I went, people greeted me with smiles and enlightening conversation. This BGSU was the same place I remembered—the same delightful campus where I visited Ray Browne so many years ago when I was president of the Popular Culture Association. The Department of Popular Culture faculty and staff greeted me as if I were a longstanding colleague; they were also extremely helpful. Old PCA friendships, such as the one I had more than a decade ago with Angela Nelson, were rekindled, and new relationships evolved. When I went home on weekends, my husband listened to many anecdotes about my adventures in Bowling Green the previous week.

During my tenure in Bowling Green I also conquered a bad case of "writer's block." Many years before, I had begun a research project on the Second Generation of popular culture scholarship, which remained unfinished. I had already secured a publisher and a large percentage of the work was finished; however,

this incredible inertia set in and I just couldn't bring myself to complete the project. Being in a supportive environment with colleagues who understood my plight, incredibly skilled librarians who assisted me with my research work, and the most outstanding popular culture collection in the country, helped me to overcome this inactivity. I am now almost finished with my book; it will be published sometime this year. I will then move on to my next project--a collection of essays on Ray Browne and the "Bowling Green Method."

The highlight of my year at BGSU was planning and facilitating the second joint PCA-BGSU Summer Research Institute along with co-chairs, Jeremy Wallach and Esther Clinton. At the end of May 2017, 23 scholars, carefully chosen from a large pool of applicants, traveled to Bowling Green to research individual projects at the Ray and Pat Browne Library for Popular Culture Studies and the Music Library and Bill Schurk Sound Archives. The institute is a fully cooperative effort between our institute partners: the BGSU Department of Popular Culture, BGSU University Libraries, and the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association. Many PC department faculty members participated in roundtable sessions. Without them, the institute would not have been the incredible success that it was. My wholehearted thanks goes to Chuck Coletta, Becca Cragin, Matt Donahue, Tiffany Knoell, Montana Miller, and Angela Nelson. You made the day—your inspiring words of wisdom provided direction to the scholars on both their individual projects and their professional lives. A special thanks also goes to Jeremy and Esther. Although you were not able to attend, your influence and efforts were part of everything that



we experienced during this inspiring week. Thanks also to Kristen Rudisill--your unfaltering support, both departmentally and through your participation, is sincerely appreciated. I trust your sound judgment and look forward to working with you on future projects. A final thank you goes to the PC department staff members and the library staff—especially Lisa Tatham—who made our jobs so much easier and the week so special for all of us. I could also never forgot the dedication of our collection heads—Susannah Cleveland and Nancy Down. Thank you, thank you, thank you. During the past two years, the BGSU Department of Popular Culture and the Popular Culture/American Culture Association have embarked on a new collective journey. We expect to undertake future joint ventures and establish an even closer, stronger relationship. I hope to be part of this effort. Stay tuned...

Thank you all for a wonderful, fulfilling, insightful year. I look forward to seeing you soon.

Lynn Bartholome

Editor's Note: Lynn has been appointed incoming Executive Director of the PCA/ACA and plans to relocate the organization headquarters to BGSU.

45th year Celebration POPC/ACS Reunion | November 2-3, 2018

Need a reason to return to Northwest Ohio? Are you interested in seeing all the changes to the BGSU campus since you graduated? Can't wait to take a trip down memory lane and reconnect with your old classmates or faculty? Then get your calendar out and mark "Save the Date" for November 2-3, 2018 for the big ACS & POPC Reunion!

The event will mark the 45th anniversary of the Department of Popular Culture and the 40th anniversary of the American Culture Studies PhD Program. Please help us by updating your contact information with the Miletí Alumni Center or directly with the Popular Culture Department popc@bgsu.edu or American Culture Studies Program acsprogram@bgsu.edu. We

want to find out about all the great and exciting things you've been doing since graduation!

We are in the initial planning stages now so help us spread the word to any old friends and colleagues from your BGSU days about our reunion! We would like to display any photographs or memorabilia from your time on campus either at the reunion or online, so please look through any favorite items you may have.

More information will follow so be on the lookout and make your plans to attend the big ACS/POPC Reunion!

Lara Mendoza Of Halloween and Ohio Cornfields

It is no coincidence that the request for me to reflect on my Fellowship year with the Popular Culture Department at Bowling Green State University comes on Hallow's Eve in the United States and All Saint's Day in the Philippines. Between the flurry of costumes, trick or treating, sweets and parties that stretch across both cultures, there is also the fervent devotion of Filipinos to their dearly departed, which renders Manila a virtual ghost town as droves of city dwellers flock to the province and pay homage to relatives by camping out beside graves or within the relative comfort of mausoleums.

How I ended up at BGSU POPC is a tale of serendipity coupled with the unfailing fortuity and auspiciousness of grace. *For all is grace*, goes an adage that I've learned to embrace in more than two decades of work in a Jesuit university in the Philippines. In a land torn by political strife and saddled with all-too present and unending poverty that numbs, befuddles, and kills, rays of sunshine are blessings in the form of unexpected smiles, kind acts of generosity from strangers and friends alike, and simple daily expressions of appreciation, whether facetious or genuine.

The fellowship was surely a drop of grace cooked in the bowl of friendship between my two advisers, University of Pennsylvania-minted social scientists Jose Buenconsejo (Sir Jojo) and Jeremy Wallach. If and when I get my doctorate, these two men will forever be the spiritual and mental fathers of my growth as a scholar, while also being true, eternal friends who mince no words and pull no punches when the going gets tough and the tough need to get going. With Sir Jojo's insistence that I get my papers and requirements in order so that I could fly to the United States where "your fellowship has been waiting for several years already," and Jeremy's sedate, patient, gentle, and grave remonstrations for me to take no shortcuts and put to use all the gifts that life has bestowed upon me by circumstance or by nature, I carved out what is possibly the best pumpkin of home in my life.

While it took me several months to accustom myself to Bowling Green's endless horizon of yawning cornfields and a belated realization that I could actually throw a bowling ball from Whittaker Field that would roll its way effortlessly to my office at Shatzel Hall, these outposts of my life at BGSU, bounded by the T-scheme of Wooster and Main Streets, gave me the space to grow and find my



place in the order of things. Far from all that I was accustomed to, far from the madding crowd of Manila's 24/7 traffic, my heart and mind settled into the quiet, comforting grooves of BG's rustic bars, cavernous supermarkets cum shopping centers, and Midwestern "y'all are welcome" cadence of everyone I met, from the shuttle drivers to the salon masseuses and hair stylists to the student union cashiers with whom I had the honor of working beside for five months.

"The fellowship was surely a drop of grace cooked in the bowl of friendship between my two advisers..."

I learned patience wrought by nine months of living with only the sound of my thoughts to keep me company, the discipline of keeping still enough to read the journal articles that Esther (Clinton) and Sidra (Lawrence) painstakingly uploaded for our convenience on Canvas, and the assertiveness needed in order to stake my claim in the world of social thought and ever-present discrimination that is no stranger to visiting students, especially when they are not American.

I have only gratitude for everything that I experienced in the U.S., and BG was the home base where I was given the time and space to take root and sprout some buds of learning and wisdom. Tears, laughter, beer, wine, humongous portions of anything (from burgers to salad to drinks to fruits); all these coalesced into one, joyous tapestry of memories that will be with me always. While Ohio's infamous flatlands and unpredictable weather will forever be etched in my heart, it will be the faces, voices, and touch of the people who loved me in their own special ways that are tattooed indelibly onto my soul. From Manila to Bowling Green, I write this: I miss you and I love how you welcomed me, however briefly, into your lives. Come to the Philippines any one of these days and I will make sure to meet you at the airport before the crazy overcharging taxi drivers do.

*Mabuhay**, y'all!

Lara Katrina T. Mendoza

* All about *mabuhay* here:
<https://www.tagaloglang.com/mabuhay/>

Dr. Rudisill's Excellent Asian Adventure

By Dr. Kristen Rudisill

During Fall 2016 I was on a faculty improvement leave, and spent the semester doing fieldwork for my book project on Tamil film dance as well as a few side projects. The dozen countries with the highest Tamil populations are India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Canada, the United States, Singapore, France, Reunion, Fiji, and Australia. Since returning from this trip, I have conducted interviews with Tamils in eight of those countries and have started to see my book project take shape.

My trip began at the Association for Asian Performance conference in Chicago, which was stimulating as always. I then flew with my family to Tokyo, and spent six weeks in Japan, where I mostly worked on getting a book proposal submitted (now under review with SUNY Press!). The last week I was there I conducted research for a paper on the Namaste India Festival, which this year is celebrating its 25th year in Tokyo. It was fascinating to talk to groups where members had spent time in India or who had studied with teachers in Japan who had come from India as well as those who learned straight from YouTube and Bollywood films. There are very few Indians in Japan, but the connection between the two countries is strengthening and the cultural exchanges are fun and creative.

From Japan we flew to Singapore, where I interviewed a number of dancers and dance teachers about the Indian dance scene there and learned about the investment the government is making in the health of its citizens by sponsoring dance classes. Many Singaporeans practice dance for fitness and free classes are often offered in public spaces.

Singapore borders Malaysia, my next stop, where I worked with several dancers from the Indian Temple



of Fine Arts, which mostly offers classical music and dance, but has now started Bollywood classes, and with fans of London-based choreographer Jeya Raveendran, with whom I have worked extensively. (He visited BGSU two years ago and presented workshops for our faculty and students.)

From Malaysia, we went to India, where we spent two weeks in Chennai and one week in Hyderabad. In Chennai, I re-interviewed several people associated with the reality television dance competitions with which I'd been involved in 2012. I also met with the Film Dancers' Union in Chennai to answer some questions for an article on labor and the arts that will appear in an edited volume titled *Labour, Livelihood, and Creative Economies: South Asian Performers and Craftspeople*, edited by Anna Morcom and Neelam Raina. I also met again with Sandya Sridhar, founder of Pageturn Publishers, which publishes "desi romances." My article on this topic will be coming out in the *Journal of Popular Culture* hopefully in the spring to coincide with my new graduate seminar on



romance novels and the "Researching the Romance" conference I am organizing with Steve Ammidown from the Browne Popular Culture Library. In Hyderabad, I was a Visiting Fellow in the Department of English at the University of Hyderabad, where I presented a series of lectures on popular culture as well as a keynote talk titled "Graphic Novels and Pulp Fiction: Popular Literature and Its Publics" for their Graphic Novels Workshop. They reimbursed me for my local travel in cash, which was then rendered useless when the government implemented demonetization and declared that all 500 and 1000 rupee notes were no longer legal currency two days after I left for Colombo, Sri Lanka.

In Colombo, I participated in Wings: A Festival of Arts and International Conference on Arts in Reconciliation. This was an amazing experience,



thinking about ways that art and culture can strengthen bonds between communities in Sri Lanka, a country coping with the after-effects of a decades-long civil war, mostly between Sinhala Buddhists and Tamil Hindus, but also involving Muslim (mostly Tamil) and Christian communities as well. There were panels, performances, workshops, and films in English, Tamil, and Sinhala and speakers from all over the world. I spoke about the importance of Sri Lankan Tamil identity and its expression by young dancers in London, particularly the work of Jeya Raveendran. Other speakers brought arts-and-reconciliation expertise from places like Germany, Kosovo, Lebanon, Argentina, Nepal, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and South Africa. I was at the conference, and the only American in the room, when the 2016 US election results were announced. My time in Sri Lanka gave me an idea of where to go next with my project, and at some point in the next few years I'll be applying for a grant to spend more time there looking at popular dance practices in the Tamil community.

From Sri Lanka, we took a four-day beach vacation in the Maldives, which was beautiful and definitely someplace I'd love to revisit! We then went to Australia, where I worked with dance teachers in Melbourne and Sydney and was lucky enough to see a few performances, mostly for neighborhood Christmas celebrations. I even went to a school Christmas program in a very Tamil area of Sydney that had a Tamil language teacher. Interspersed with the English Christmas carols was a Tamil language song and dance performance. I presented my romance novels article in Melbourne and got some excellent feedback. This was really the end of the trip, with brief stopovers in Bali and Tokyo on the way back to Chicago and then to Ohio. It was a productive and amazing experience that will yield a lot of publications, but perhaps more important, ideas for future research.

Alumni Spotlight

Amira Hassnaoui

Interview conducted by Philomena Offiong

Can you give us a little background about yourself?

I grew up in the capital of Tunisia, that is, Tunis. I completed my undergraduate there in English Civilization and Literature and participated in a couple of exchange programs between Tunisia and the USA with the Department of State.

Eventually I went back to Tunisia to do my Professional Master's. My project was co-founding an organization to preserve cultural heritage. In 2014 I was selected to be a Fulbright scholar and worked as a language teaching assistant at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the Department of African Language and Literature. After my year as a Fulbright Scholar I applied and was admitted to the Master's in Popular Culture program here at BGSU.

Why did you choose BGSU?

As I was looking for programs, my office-mate Sarah told me about BGSU. I thank her so much for telling me about BG because it was really the opportunity of my life—opening doors, many other things. I was looking for something

where I would be able to write about what I really wanted and I felt like a lot of other fields were very limited. I found that the POPC MA involved everything I was looking for to study music and culture in Tunisia. I didn't know what to expect at first because I knew nothing about BG, to be honest, I am a city girl, I grew up in the city and I prefer the city but I'm like you know... I'll see.... Our program faculty treat you as a colleague and they value their graduate students. I felt welcomed and comfortable. The classroom was such a safe place to be. My time here shaped my understanding of theory and methodology and teaching the Introduction to Popular Culture class was just as much a learning experience for me as it was for our students. Of course there has been hardship—on a personal level with the weather and trying to navigate being in a different country and the expense of being in graduate school but other than that, this was such a fulfilling experience. This program has shaped who I've become in scholarship and academia. I learned so much here and I ended up being accepted to a PhD program at one of my dream schools – UCLA.

What will you be doing at UCLA?

I'm going to be a first year PhD student in the department of World Arts and Culture/Dance. The first quarter I will be just taking classes to understand the dynamics and in my second quarter I will be working as a Graduate Teaching Assistant.

How did the POPC MA program prepare you for this next step?

I feel I'm prepared because I got a good grasp of the material while I was at BGSU. The POPC MA program is one of the few that requires you to take a comprehensive exam in addition to writing a thesis. This program also offered me valuable experience teaching as an instructor of record.

Tell me more about your experience on campus here.

My stay on campus was very busy. I got really involved with a lot of organizations. My first year I was a TA, my second year, I was elected as the president of the Graduate Student Senate (GSS) which is an organization meant for speaking about graduate student issues and trying to find solutions and collaborating with other units on campus like Student Affairs, the Graduate College, and



Undergraduate Student Senate. I was also involved with the Graduate Women's Caucus. It was really a hard choice to make not to teach but I decided to do something different and try the administrative side of academia. I'm happy I did. I found myself using a lot of things we talked about in class like gender, ethnicity and race in my actual professional work space as the president of GSS advocating for ethnic groups, religious groups, and minorities in general but I also pushed for changes for international students because we have our own struggles being here.

I strove to find ways to help international students feel comfortable and welcomed especially with the way things were after the 2016 presidential election. I helped organize discussion groups, and helped make people feel comfortable coming to talk to me about their struggles especially if it was the same struggle as mine and to let them know they were not alone. So

in short I was using a lot of the discussion we had in the classroom in my actual work space which was fun because I am all about activism and advocating for minority groups.

Do you have any advice for anyone considering the Popular Culture program?

Join Popular Culture with no doubts no questions; the faculty and staff are so amazing, very helpful and supportive, they make you feel welcome and to be honest not all departments and schools are like that. In academia, there will be times where professors don't have time because they have their own lives too. But with the department of Popular Culture we were their priority. I will just mention their names because they mean a lot to me Dr. Jeremy Wallach (my thesis chair), Dr. Esther Clinton, Dr. Kristen Rudisill, Dr. Montana Miller, Dr. Becca Cragin, Dr. Jeff Brown. In terms of academia and scholarship it might be overwhelming at first with the amount of material that is covered especially for someone who is doing it for the first time ever. But don't forget to enjoy it. That is my advice right there. One thing about this department is that they do really care about what you are passionate about and they encourage you to work on it and help you navigate that. I am really not saying this because I am here but I really mean it. Our department offers a lot of opportunities and support for students to study culture in a variety of ways. Be yourself, ask questions at all times. It is not going to be easy, but that is just life.

Any bad experiences? (On campus or off campus)

Amira: One bad experience but not related to people is the weather. I just couldn't. It was too much, too much grey. I am not a snow person. I tried hard with managing the snow but I just couldn't. In my own way I tried to cope with the weather and that was to cook a lot of spicy food to keep me warm (laugh).

But seriously, I had a couple of incidents especially after the elections where we had a lot of radical behavior. We dealt with an increase in homophobia and islamophobia and there were racial slurs written in places on campus. That was really, really shocking but at the same time kind of expected, but unfortunately it shouldn't have happened. We organized as I mentioned earlier in the town hall discussion groups to provide safe places for those who were affected, especially

Alumni Spotlight Amira Hassnaoui

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international students who weren't sure what they would be facing on a national level with the threat of travel bans.

I also had a situation unfortunately regarding the work I was doing here with GSS and that happened just because others look at issues from a different perspective. I had to learn to work with people who were not on the same page in terms of ideas, and who had cultural differences and communication styles from my own. My advice when that happens is to keep an open mind and choose your battles.

So what were your best experiences?

My best experiences? Well I have so many. Umm... it was when I went back to Tunisia for my research which was my first time officially conducting fieldwork and I couldn't be more thankful and grateful for everything that Dr. Montana Miller taught me in the Folklore/Folklife class. Everything I learned in her class I was able to actually practice in my research. It was amazing. I just love fieldwork because I love to conduct interviews and love talking with people. The best feeling or experience I will say was when I finished my thesis.

Teaching was also one of the best experiences. It was very stressful at first but I was able to see some changes in my student's mind-set and their ideas throughout the course. It is just amazing to see how they develop critical thinking. As I was reading through their first exams to their second exams then their final papers it was great to see the transitions they were making as we covered the different modules like ethnicity, race, gender, and sexuality.

Also, working in GSS and empowering other people's voices to speak for themselves. That was like the worst and the best experience at the same time, if you know what I mean. It was the worst because of all the challenges I faced, trying to navigate my space as the person of color or I will say non-white and being in a leadership position and being a woman as well. And it was the best because, I got to meet a lot of people. I got to empower other people and help identify the things graduate students need on campus and help make a difference.

Any regrets?

No not at all, although I faced a lot of challenges and regret some of the things that happened here, I 100% don't regret coming here. I wouldn't have learned the things I learned or been able to explore so many possibilities. I wouldn't have been able to go conduct fieldwork or do a documentary about my thesis. I wouldn't have been able to apply to a school such as UCLA. I wouldn't have had the confidence to do all these things before coming here. I learned a lot of knowledge and information before but everything that the Popular Culture MA program provided me with just made me more comfortable in my scholarship. Of course there are a lot things I still don't know yet and I told Jeremy that I would love to attend our theory class again. I will never get sick and tired of that class. It was just wonderful. I learned so much. I just loved being in the classroom again. And so no, no regrets at all.

Undergraduate Student Spotlight Zane Garthee

Interview conducted by Philomena Offiong



Where do you come from?

I come from Jackson, Ohio, located in the Southern portion of the state.

Can you give a little background about yourself and your family?

I live with my father when not in Bowling Green. I participate in the band program, playing horn.

Why did you choose Bowling Green State University?

Bowling Green was one of the schools I was accepted to, and after attending an honor band clinic hosted by the College of Musical Arts I decided to come and give this university a try.

Why did you choose Popular Culture?

Popular Culture, and cultural studies as a whole, is a fascinating field in which I believe I can thrive. I am interested in the content of the major and the way the study allows analysis of the culture as a whole.

What have been your experiences in Bowling Green State University (good and bad alike)?

My experience at Bowling Green has been good for the most part. My major courses have been great, and while some of my courses outside my major have been lackluster, I am happy with what Bowling Green has to offer.

What is your final project going to be like?

For my final project I will be studying video game preservation, focusing on the role of academic institutions in the collection of games to use as research tools. Video games are valuable to the culture, but provide unique problems in terms of archiving, and I am analyzing how those problems influence how institutions go about making their collections.

What are your future plans, especially after school?

I hope to continue my studies into graduate study, with getting a doctorate my primary goal.

What are your interests and what do you do for fun?

I am interested in video games and play them often. I also listen to a fair amount of music and play the horn and mellophone in ensembles. I will occasionally read, mainly focusing on texts related to my interests, and, when in doubt, I sleep.

What is important to you?

I value education, especially an education based in the humanities. Learning different perspectives and the way they impact society is vital to understanding our culture.

What advice would you give to anyone interested in coming to Bowling Green or studying Popular Culture?

Do not be afraid to try it out. The humanities are often stigmatized due to the perception that they are a less valuable education than the sciences or business, but each field has their unique place within academia and the workforce. If Popular Culture sparks your interest, you can study it and get a career, you just need to know what you wish to focus on and what your overall plan is. If you find that Popular Culture, Bowling Green, or college itself is not meant for you, at least you gave it a try.

Thank you very much for your time.

You are welcome.

Little Axe - One Man-One Night

by Dr. Matthew Donahue

I recently finished producing and releasing a live album by one of the "Godfathers of Rap/Hip Hop," music legend Skip "Little Axe" McDonald, who also goes by the stage name "Little Axe." Titled *One Man-One Night*, this album captures Skip McDonald in a solo live performance at Grounds for Thought in Bowling Green, Ohio in March 2015.

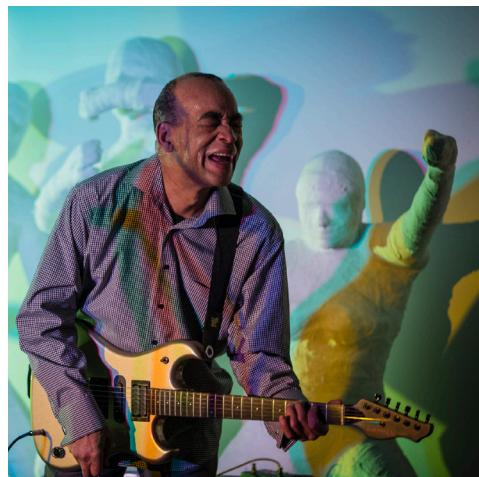
Skip is originally from Dayton, Ohio, where he cut his teeth on the blues, rhythm and blues, jazz and gospel. He was instrumental to the development of funk music in the late 1960s and early 1970s, then moved to the East Coast in the mid-1970s, where he was part of the early origins and creation of rap/hip-hop music, and he is now considered one of the innovators of this genre. McDonald was the session guitar player for the groundbreaking rap/hip-hop record label Sugarhill Records and part of what was called the "Sugarhill Posse," who were the studio musicians for the label, consisting of Skip on guitar, Doug Wimbish on bass and Keith LeBlanc on drums. While at Sugarhill Records, McDonald performed on some of the now legendary hits associated with rap/hip-hop's rise to popularity, such as "White Lines" and "The Message" by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five.

During the 1980s, a chance meeting with On-U Sound Records label owner and music producer Adrian Sherwood led Skip to move to England, where he currently resides. Adrian Sherwood's background as a producer goes back to the reggae, punk and electronic crossover scene in the 1970s, working with such luminaries as Lee "Scratch" Perry, The Clash, The Slits, Bim Sherman, Primal Scream, Sinéad O'Connor, Peter Gabriel and many others. With Adrian Sherwood at the mixing desk, Skip McDonald, Doug Wimbish, and Keith LeBlanc formed Tackhead, a groundbreaking musical super-group that incorporates electronic, funk, punk, rap, reggae, rock and other styles into their sound, releasing numerous albums, and 12" singles. The group still records today.



Skip "Little Axe" McDonald performs at the Black Swamp Arts Festival

Skip "Little Axe" McDonald performs at BGSU



Skip has worked on and continues to work on recordings with Adrian Sherwood and his On U Sound record label and other labels worldwide. He has shared a stage and or worked on music productions with the likes of Robert Plant from Led Zeppelin, Peter Gabriel, Sinéad O'Connor, Lee "Scratch" Perry, Dub Syndicate, Audio Active, Living Colour and countless others and has over 348 album credits to his name.

My connection with Skip McDonald happened through an introduction coordinated by producer Adrian Sherwood, with whom I had worked in the mid-1990s with my band Universe Crew. Universe Crew was a music and art collective who were signed to Green Tea Records, a subsidiary record label of Sherwood's On-U Sound Records. After Universe Crew disbanded, I maintained a friendship and creative working relationship with Adrian Sherwood.

When the Electric Guitar in Popular Culture Conference was being organized and performers were being considered to play at the conference, having Skip McDonald perform was a no-brainer, as he is such an influential guitarist and musician of so many different genres, including jazz, funk, soul, gospel, rap/hip-hop, reggae and electronic, to name a few. Skip describes his music as "21st century blues music" and as Little Axe he has released numerous recordings worldwide and is credited with melding blues music with the genres mentioned above.

For the live recording, a date was booked at Bowling Green's coffee shop and music venue, Grounds for Thought, which has a history of live music recordings being made there. The sound recording, titled *One Man-One Night*, captures Skip "Little Axe" McDonald in his one-man show featuring Skip on guitar and vocals, backed by drum and bass loops made on his loop station. His flawless performance was recorded on audio and video with spectacular results.

Adrian Sherwood, Matthew Donahue and Skip McDonald at On U Sound Recording Studios in Ramsgate, England



Skip "Little Axe" McDonald interviewed by WBGU Blues Breakfast radio host Don Smith at the Black Swamp Arts Festival

Realizing this amazing performance was something special, I teamed up with music producer, engineer and BGSU alumnus, Walter "Mac" McKeever. We worked countless hours getting the sound just right for this recording. Other team members on the project were photographer Giles Cooper and videographer and BGSU alumnus, Josh Lightle. For graphics and album art, longtime music illustrator and artist Steve Szirotniyak was brought in. All were involved in the creation of *Little Axe's One Man-One Night*.

Two music videos were created from songs on the album: "Grinning in Your Face" and "Seeing Red." Both videos can be seen on YouTube at MAD 45 TV. The album is currently available worldwide through Amazon.com. After the recording Skip has traveled back and forth between England and Bowling Green, Ohio to perform at the Black Swamp Arts Festival and work on recording projects in the area. He has a new album coming out on Echo Beach Records titled *London Blues* and our collaborative album is in the works. Long Live Little Axe.....

Dr. Donahue Exhibits Pop Culture Photography Artwork in Area Exhibitions and Receives Award from the Bowling Green Arts Council for his work titled “Celebration Bowl”

Over the past year I have exhibited my pop culture based photography artwork at art exhibitions in the area, including the invitation-only exhibit “Undisclosed,” at the Porter Gallery at the Toledo School for the Arts. I also received an award for best work from the Bowling Green Arts Council for my piece titled “Celebration Bowl,” which was exhibited at the 9th Annual NOWOH Community Art Show at the



Dr. Matthew Donahue and his award-winning artwork titled “Celebration Bowl”



Dr. Matthew Donahue and his artwork titled “Starving Artist Theory”



Dr. Matthew Donahue’s artwork “War, What is it Good For?”

BGSU Fine Arts Gallery, sponsored by BGSU and the Ohio Arts Council. I also exhibited my piece “Starving Artists Theory” at the Concourse Gallery at the City of Upper Arlington’s Municipal Gallery Space for their “Celebrating UA” exhibit. My anti-war statement art piece titled “War, What is it Good For?” was exhibited at the Arts Commission of Greater Toledo sponsored pop-up exhibit titled, “Work That’s Funny.” In May of 2018, I will be doing a “commercial archeology” photography project in the city of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. I will continue to create my pop culture based art work over this next year with further exhibitions planned.

“Researching the Romance” Conference – April 13-14, 2018

In 1997, the Browne Popular Culture Library at Bowling Green State University held one of the first academically oriented conferences on the genre of popular romance fiction. Titled “Re-Reading the Romance,” the event included authors and academics from around the country sharing their experiences and love for the genre. A follow up conference titled “Romance in the New Millennium” was held in 2000, featuring even more thoughtful looks at romance.

In the years since the last conference at BGSU, the romance industry has grown to more than \$1 billion per year in sales, and the study of popular romance has grown by leaps and bounds along with it. And we think it’s high time we reconvene in Northwest Ohio to talk about it.

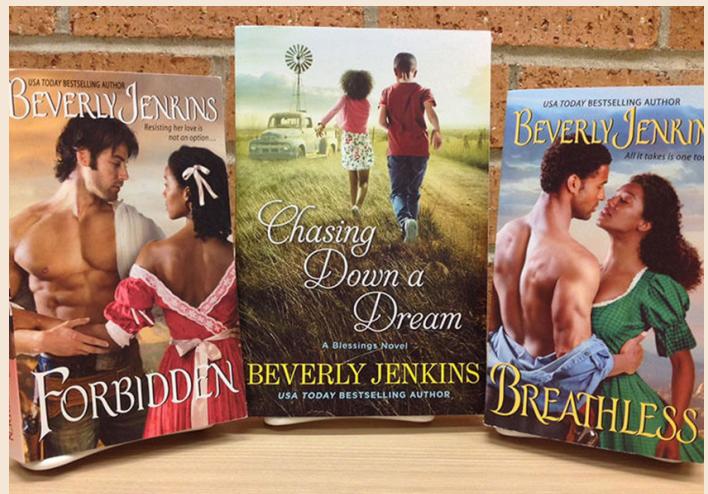
The conference will be held in two locations over the course of the weekend. Most of the sessions will be held in Jerome Library on BGSU’s campus, while Saturday afternoon’s events will be held at the Wood County District Public Library in downtown Bowling Green.

Our Guest of Honor for the conference will be 2017 RWA Nora Roberts Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient Beverly Jenkins. Ms. Jenkins has published more than 30 novels, and is well-known for the level of detailed research she puts into each of her books, making her the perfect guest for this conference.

Our Friday lunchtime keynote speaker will be Dr. Kate Brown, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Huntington University in Huntington, Indiana. Dr. Brown is a 2017 recipient of the Romance Writers of America

Academic Research Grant for her work, which explores how English common law and constitutionalism give fundamental structure and substance to the historical romance genre.

Dr. Eric Selinger, Professor of English at DePaul University and Executive Editor of the *Journal for Popular Romance Studies*, will be in conversation with Beverly Jenkins on Friday afternoon. Dr. Selinger has a long history of research in romance fiction, and has frequently taught courses using Ms. Jenkins’ work.



Faculty Notes

Jeffrey Brown

Journal Articles:

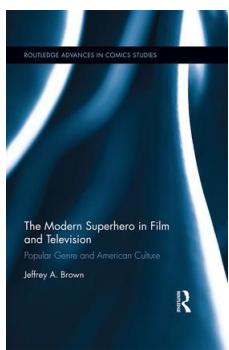
(2017) "#wheresRey: Feminism, Protest and Merchandising Sexism in *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*," *Feminist Media Studies*.

(2017) "I'm the Goshdarn Batman!" - Affect and

the Aesthetics of Cute Superheroes," *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*.

Book:
The Modern Superhero in Film and Television: Popular Genre and American Culture, (2016)

Routledge Press, New York: NY



Esther Clinton and Jeremy Wallach

In order to save space, Esther Clinton and Jeremy Wallach have decided to combine their blurb. Here's a bit of what they've been up to:

Panel Discussion:

"Folklore and Popular Culture" (Panel Discussion). Future of American Folklore Conference, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana; May 2017.

Publications:

Moser, Sarah, Esther Clinton, and Jeremy Wallach. "Leisure Activities in Southeast Asia." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Leisure Theory* (Karl Spracklen, Brent Lashua, Erin Sharpe, and Spencer Swain, eds.). Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 107-125, 2017.

Wallach, Jeremy. Review of *Gongs and Pop Songs: Sounding Minangkabau in Indonesia* by Jennifer A. Fraser (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2015). *Indonesia* 102, 121-123, 2016.



Drs. Clinton and Wallach with participants at a presentation/seminar at a café in South Jakarta, July 2017.

Wallach, Jeremy. *Musik Popular Indonesia 1997-2001: Kebisingan dan Keberagaman Aliran Lagu* [Indonesian-Language Edition of *Modern Noise, Fluid Genres*]. With a New Preface. Depok, Indonesia: Komunitas Bambu, 2017.

Wallach, Jeremy and Esther Clinton, "The Horror and the Allure: Metal, Power, Gothic Literature, and Multisubjectivity." In *Connecting Metal to Culture: Unity in Disparity* (Miko Elovaara and Bryan Bardine, eds.), Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, pp. 99-118, 2017.

Last summer Esther and Jeremy traveled to Indonesia to mark the publication of the Indonesian edition of Jeremy's book *Modern Noise, Fluid Genres: Popular Music in Indonesia, 1997-2001*. Jeremy gave a presentation sponsored by the American Embassy in Jakarta with old friends Wendi Putranto (Rolling Stone Indonesia), Arian Tigabelas (Seringai, Puppen), ethnomusicologist Dr. Rebekah Moore (US Embassy) and Indonesian industrial metal legends Koil.

Jeremy is also pleased to report that the volume he co-edited, *Metal Rules the Globe: Heavy Metal Music around the World* (Duke University Press, 2011) has entered its second printing. In Spring 2018 he is giving two invited research presentations and his 41st academic conference paper.

Charles Coletta

This past summer (2017) I was a guest lecturer for several sessions at the BGSU Summer Alumni



Dr. Charles Coletta with participants at a presentation/seminar at a café in South Jakarta, July 2017.



College and also participated in the Popular Culture Research Institute for visiting scholars. I also traveled to California to meet with BGSU alum Eva Marie Saint (Oscar winner for *On the Waterfront*).

In December I presented a guest lecture at the Hancock Historical Museum in Findlay, OH discussing the 1980s Xmas film classic "A Christmas Story," both the writer Jean Shepherd's original short story and the movie. I have included a link below. <https://visitfindlay.com/event/brown-bag-lecture-series-2017-12-07/2017-12-07/>

In March 2018 I will be presenting a guest lecture at BGSU Firelands' Elder College. My topic will be "Superman's 80th Anniversary: The Evolution of an American Icon."

Currently, I am working with the Browne Popular Culture Library to develop a Digital Galleries project in two of my courses this semester. One is looking at the place of romance novels in pop lit. The other is tied to Superman's 80th anniversary next year.

Finally, I recently recorded an interview for the Film & Water podcast discussing Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*.

Matthew Donahue

Dr. Matthew Donahue has been very busy with many academic and creative projects... This past year he produced and released a live album by one of the godfathers of rap/hip hop, music legend Skip "Little Axe" McDonald, titled *One Man-One Night*. This album was recorded at Grounds for Thought Coffee Shop in Bowling Green, Ohio and released worldwide and is available on Amazon.com. Additionally, he produced two music videos for songs off of this album, one for the song "Grinning in Your Face" and the other for "Seeing Red"; both can be found on his



Dr. Matthew Donahue as Guest Coach at BGSU's Homecoming

Faculty Notes

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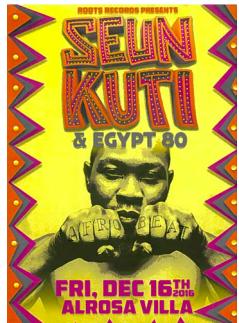


*Dr. Matthew Donahue at Chagrin Arts Commission
Sponsored lecture on banned popular music*

YouTube channel, MAD 45 TV. Dr. Donahue also helped to coordinate Skip McDonald's performance at the Black Swamp Arts Festival in Bowling Green, Ohio. Dr. Donahue is currently working on a studio album with McDonald tentatively titled "Seduction of the Message Beat," set for release in 2018. Dr. Donahue was honored for his work with BGSU student athletes and was given the distinction of being a "Guest Coach" at BGSU's Homecoming. He was invited to exhibit his pop culture inspired artwork in a number of exhibitions throughout Ohio, including the "Celebrating UA" art exhibit at the City of Upper Arlington, Ohio's Concourse Gallery, the "Undisclosed" exhibit, an invitation only exhibition at the Porter Gallery at the Toledo School for the Arts and also exhibited three pieces of artwork at the BGSU Fine Arts Gallery at BGSU's, NOWOH 9th Exhibition.



*Dr. Matthew Donahue and African musician Seun Kuti,
the son of Fela Kuti*



*Poster for African
musician Seun Kuti,
show worked on by
Roots Records assisted
by Dr. Matthew Donahue*

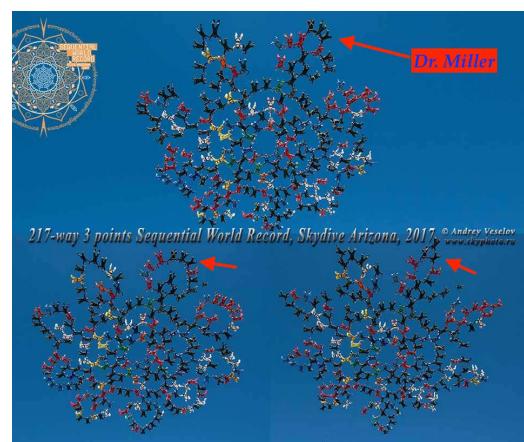
Dr. Donahue also teamed up with Columbus based record store and concert production company Roots Records/Roots High Power and was brought in to assist with concert productions of many of today's top reggae and African music artists and legends including Third World, Sean Kuti, Salif Keta, Chronixx , Jah 9, Protoje and Grammy Award winning artist Youssou N'Dour. Dr. Donahue was invited to speak on "banned and controversial popular music" by the Chagrin Falls Arts Commission at their Chautauqua in Chagrin Speaker Series in June. Thanks to a grant from the Stoddard-O'Neill Fund he was able to pursue producing/creating a documentary on the Souvenir T-Shirt in Amsterdam. Titled "The Amsterdam T-Shirt Project," this 30-minute documentary highlights the souvenir t-shirt culture in Amsterdam and souvenir creators and vendors in the booming souvenir t-shirt scene in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. This documentary features music by Skip "Little Axe" McDonald and two BGSU alumni are also part of the production, videographer Joshua Lightle and music engineer Walter McKeever. This film will be presented to the public in Fall 2018. Dr. Donahue also discussed his research at the "Interpreting Everyday Life" roundtable at the 2017 PCA-BGSU Summer Research Institute.

Montana Miller

Dr. Montana Miller was the keynote speaker (presenting her research, "Playing in the Dark: Ambiguity and Conflict in Studies of Belief, Drama, and Death") for The Association for the Study of Play's 43rd International Conference on Play, in Rochester, NY on April 7, 2017. The previous month, she was an invited speaker at Harvard University's Folklore & Mythology program's 50th Anniversary Symposium, at which she presented "The Evolution of Aerial Storytelling in Context" and spoke on a panel about "Folklore and Our Lives." At the Western

States Folklore Society annual meeting in Eugene, Oregon, in April 2017, Dr. Miller organized and co-chaired a panel entitled "Folk Resistance to the Ascendancy of Donald Trump." In January, she had presented her ongoing research into skydivers' beliefs and attitudes about death ("Going In: A Trauma-Informed Methodology for Ethnography among Skydivers") at the 29th Annual Ethnographic and Qualitative Research Conference, in Las Vegas, Nevada. Dr. Miller also performed her aerial storytelling act (on the roman rings) last winter and spring—first at the ArtsX public performance event at BGSU (along with a lecture on aerial arts) and then at the opening weekend of the Indianapolis Children's Museum's Circus Exhibit, for which she was a key advisor and creative/design consultant this past year. Dr. Miller also spoke and moderated panel discussions at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival's 50th Anniversary (centered on Circus Arts) in July 2017, joining other circus scholars, performers and directors on the "Narrative Stage."

Dr. Miller's 8-way skydiving team, Blocksmiths, won the silver medal in the advanced division at US Nationals in Formation Skydiving (Perris, CA) in September 2017. Blocksmiths is the only all-female 8-way team competing in this heavily male-dominated sport, and Dr. Miller is the team's founder and captain. One month later, she was one of 217 elite skydivers from 28 different countries who set a World Record in Eloy, Arizona, with a 3-point sequential formation, exiting from 10 planes at 20,000 feet. After 20 attempts, the skydivers achieved the World Record on their last chance—and best of all, with no major injuries or fatalities.



*Dr. Miller's 8-way skydiving team, Blocksmiths, won the silver
medal in the advanced division at US Nationals in Formation
Skydiving (Perris, CA) in September 2017.*

Faculty Notes

continued

Angela Nelson

During Fall 2015 and Spring 2016, I was Interim Chair in the Department of Ethnic Studies and I served as a member of the conference committee for the National Association for Ethnic Studies. I was a participant in the Bowling Green Leadership Academy during Spring 2016. I presented a talk, "'Everyday Jesus': Black Gospel Music, Kingdomology, and the 'Black Lives' Struggles of the 2010s," for the Africana Studies Speaker Series, sponsored by the Department of Ethnomusicology at BGSU, on April 8, 2016. Also, I was invited to give two presentations ("I Don't Want to Do Wrong!": Religion and Black Stage Plays" and "'It's Super Man!': Superheroes and the Kingdom of God") at the Society for Values in Higher Education National Conference on July 14, 2016. The 2016-2017 academic year was an action-packed year as I was Acting Director of the School of Cultural and Critical Studies and, again, Interim Chair in the Department of Ethnic Studies. I presented my research ("Hallowed Sites, Sacred Songs: The Black City Church and Black Gospel Music in Conflict") at the Association for the Study African American Life and History Annual Meeting in October 2016 and was an invited presenter for the BGSU Firelands Campus Community Dialogue Series on February 15, 2017. My presentation was "Gospel Celebrities and their Impact on Christian Living." On May 23, 2017, I was a roundtable discussant ("Interpreting Everyday Life") with my Popular Culture colleagues for the PCA/ACA Summer Research Institute held at BGSU. In July

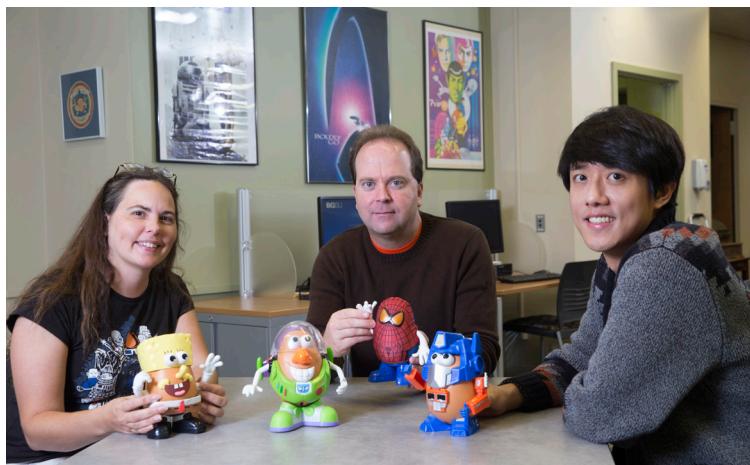
2017, I was selected by the BGSU Provost's Office to be one of three participants in the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity's Faculty Success Program during Fall 2017. I am Interim of the Department of Ethnic Studies again this year and I presented a paper ("Critical Pedagogy and Black Popular Genres") at the Association for the Study of African American Life and History Annual Meeting in September 2017 and another paper ("The Black Female Gospel Singer's Ethics of Accountability") at the "This Is Not Your Grandfather's Black Studies: Anti-Respectability as Methodology" Conference at the University of Missouri—Columbia in October 2017.

Kristen Rudisill

Kristen Rudisill has published one article and one book chapter since the last newsletter. "Storytelling for Change: Women's Activism and the Theater of Pritham Chakravarthy." In *Women and Asian Religion*, Zayn Kassam, editor. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2017: 169-183. And "Evolution of the Mahalakshmi Ladies Drama Group 1989-2015." In *Samyukta: A Journal of Women's Studies*, special issue on Women in Indian Theatre (Volume XVI, Number 2, July 2016): 134-156. The first issue of the *Indian Theatre Journal* has come out and she is working on the second issue with the other editors. In addition, Dr. Rudisill has been investing a lot of time in developing leadership skills lately. Spring 2017 she participated in the Bowling Green Leadership Academy and she is currently part of



the Executive Leadership Program cohort. Over the summer, the College of Arts and Sciences sent her to the two week long HERS Institute at Bryn Mawr College with other women leaders in higher education (SCCS Director Susana Peña has also participated in this program) to develop personal leadership and networking skills as well as more institutional awareness. As part of her homework for the program, Dr. Rudisill had the opportunity to interview former President Mazey and her cabinet members, and in the process learned a lot about the university and how it operates.



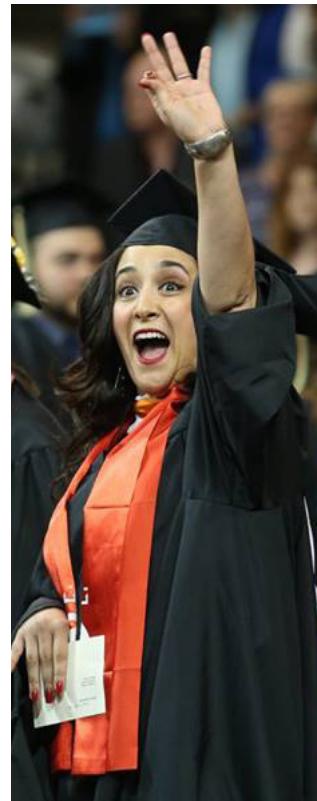
POPC Faculty Kristen Rudisill and Matt Donahue with POPC Grad Student Wonseok Lee in the Ray Browne Popular Culture Library Archives



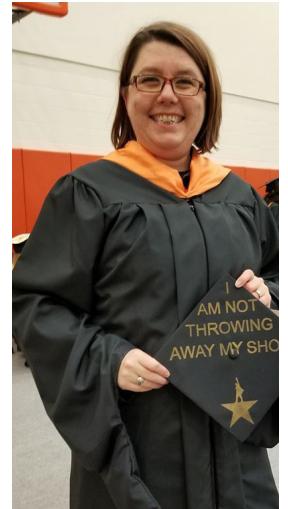
Chuck Coletta, Matt Donahue, Tiffany Knoell, Katelyn Balkum, Jo Wilson, Esther Clinton, Kristen Rudisill, Jeremy Wallach, Wonseok Lee

The Year in Photos

Joyce Okango and Martin Muthee received their Masters in Popular Culture degree at the August 2017 Commencement



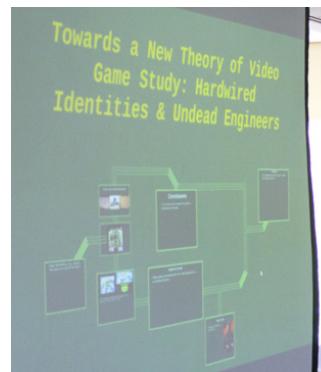
Amira Hassnaoui received her Masters in Popular Culture degree at the May 2017 Commencement



Courtney Bliss received her Masters in Popular Culture degree at the December 2017 Commencement



Alex Fisher presenting "Towards a New Theory of Video Game Study: Hardwired Identities & Undead Engineers" at the 2017 Ray Browne Conference



Dr. Miller's Spring 2017 Folklore Seminar



▲
Second year MA Graduate Assistants Katie Brown and Wonseok Lee



▲
Dr. Kristen Rudisill, Philomena Offiong, Dr. Becca Cragin, Katelyn Balkum and Logan Smith enjoy playing games during the department ice-cream social in October.

Dr. Angela Nelson, acting SCCS director, presents Dr. Kristen Rudisill a certificate of recognition for her recent publications and work as a visiting fellow in India.



Lara Mendoza presents her research at the POPC Colloquium.

