

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

From Glen Elder, Department Chair

This semester the Department received approval from the College of Arts and Sciences to establish a new curriculum. This is the first major overhaul of the curriculum in almost 20 years and while courses have obviously changed during that time, the structure of the major and minor have remained fairly consistent.

Geography is a resurgent discipline in the Academy. There has never been a more important time for us to have a sense of the world as a global entity made up of lots of localities and how those two (the global and the local) interact. Furthermore, the wonderfully exciting growth of theoretical innovations, the power of modeling and computer-aided mapping techniques has radically altered the power of geographers to make predictions, add insights to policy and re-examine the past.

What's New in the 'New Curriculum'?

Beginning Fall 2008, we will offer a 33-credit major. Students will take a broad range of required introductory courses that introduce them to Human Geography, Physical Geography, Geotechniques, and the Geography of Race and Ethnicity in the United States. The perennial favorite, World Regional Geography, will still be offered as an elective at the introductory level. Building on this solid liberal foundation to geography, we continue with a set of intermediate courses that build on at least four fields in geography: critical human geographies, physical geographies, geospatial technologies, and regional geographies. Tracking through one or two of these specializations, students will be required to take two upper-level courses in the areas in which they have developed expertise.

The Department is particularly excited by the launch of the new curriculum, in part because it allows for the depth of newer faculty's scholarly expertise to be reflected in the teaching mission of the Department, but also because the new curriculum puts our Department on par with other nationally-recognized programs who have similarly adapted their curricula to reflect the changing contours of the discipline.

What's New in the Department?

• INTERIM CHAIR

DR. BEVERLEY WEMPLE will be assuming the responsibilities of Department Chairperson in an interim capacity starting Fall 2008. This is the first time that a physical geographer has chaired the Department. Dr. Wemple has agreed to undertake this work while I will be taking on the responsibilities of Interim Associate Dean for the College of Arts and Sciences.

• NAVIGATORS

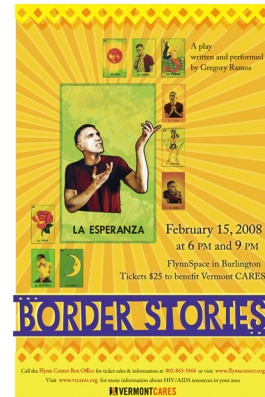
This semester we launched a new initiative in Geography. The Navigators are a committed group of students in the Department who represent the Department at official events across campus, including student admission days. The inaugural cohort include AMNA AL-ARFAJ, JOSEPH COSMIDES, PAMELA DICKMAN, ABBY FRAZIER, KATELYN REILLY, AND EMILIE SZAKACH.

Honors-Awards-Notables

As has become a rite of Spring, we will take time out later this semester to recognize the excellent students who will graduate with a Geography major in May. This year we have awarded our **Outstanding Undergraduate Student Award** to ABBY FRAZIER. Her strong academic performance and her commitment to Department service will be recognized at the College of Arts and Sciences Award Ceremony on May 16th. We are also pleased to present this year's **James Wilson Globe Award** to AMNA AL-ARFAJ, PAMELA DICKMAN, BRIAN OLSEN, and EMILIE SZAKACH. The Globe Award acknowledges students who have demonstrated academic excellence and geographic leadership through community service and activism. All awardees and graduating geography seniors will be celebrated at the Department Awards Dinner on April 10th 2008.

Departmental Happenings:

• GEOGRAPHY AND THEATER



Collaborating with the Department of Theater, Geography at UVM put together a program at the Flynn Theater as a fund raiser for Vermont CARES, a Vermont-based HIV/AIDS service organization. GREGORY RAMOS (Theater) and GLEN ELDER

(Geography) collaborated on a work entitled "Border Stories." Glen Elder introduced Ramos' dramatic impersonation of more than 20 people living on the southern border. The presentation explored issues surrounding AIDS stigma, immigration, identity, and life on the border. For more info, see <http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmpr/theview/article.php?id=2609>.

• DEPARTMENT COLLOQUIA

The Department hosted a broad range of interesting guests over the course of the academic year. RASHAD SHABAZZ (University of California) gave a lecture on "Carceral Geographies and Carceral Masculinity." RATEB ABU RHMA (lecturer at Al-Quds Open University, Palestine) and KOBİ SNITZ (lecturer at Bar Ilan University, Israel) gave an account of their peace work in Israel/Palestine entitled "Non-Violent Struggle Against the Wall and the Settlements." BEVERLEY MULLINGS (Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada) spoke about "Disapora Strategies, Skilled Migrants and Shifting Landscapes of Power in Jamaica," and KEN BAUER (University of Vermont) gave a guest lecture to faculty about his use of remote sensing technology in order to understand land use patterns among Pastoralists in Tibet. SARAH ELWOOD (University of Washington) who is collaborating on a book project with DR. MEGHAN COPE presented her thoughts

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<http://www.uvm.edu/~geograph>

Visit the Department website regularly for information about our community and for updates on current activities and news events.

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on “Participatory GIS and Qualitative Geovisualization as Social Science Research Methods,” and DR. SHARLENE MOLLETT (Dartmouth College) presented work about Race and Property Rights on the Honduran north coast. Finally, CAROLYN FINNEY (University of California, Berkeley) lectured on Climate Change, Race Privilege and Consciousness.

What’s Happening in the Classroom and Field this semester?

• EMBODIED GEOGRAPHIES

Recently hired PROFESSOR ORZECK and PROFESSOR ELDER have been leading a seminar this Spring on the geography of the body. Steeped in structuralism and post structuralism, the class examined topics ranging from the history of incarceration and torture, the Geneva Convention, transgender politics, debates around extraordinary rendition, animal cruelty, along with war and genocide in the twentieth century.

• SNOW HYDROLOGY

PROFESSOR WEMPLE is leading a seminar this semester on current research in the field of snow hydrology. Eight undergraduate students enrolled in the class are engaged in



readings of current research on topics that include impacts of climate change on global snowpacks, spatial controls on snow distribution, physics of snowmelt processes, and dynamics of runoff produced from snow. In addition to seminar sessions, students have completed three field excursions to view sites of on-going research on snow dynamics and to learn techniques for the measurement and mapping of snowpacks. The course website is located at www.uvm.edu/~bwemple/SnowHydro/.

UVM at the Association of American Geographers 2008 Annual Meeting, Boston

The Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers attracts geographers and related professionals from around the

world. The meeting forum stimulates discussion about research, education, accomplishments, and developments in geography. The 2008 Annual Meeting was held in Boston, Massachusetts. Faculty in the Department at UVM made the following paper presentations: PABLO BOSE: “Mapping marshes and interpreting condos: nature, space and identity in the East Kolkata Wetlands.”

MEGHAN COPE: “Adulterist Urbanism: ‘The City’ Visualizes ‘The Child’ vs. Real Children Visualizing Their Cities.”

CHERYL DUNKLEY: “Wilderness and the Production of Civilized Identities.”

GLEN ELDER chaired and discussed a series of sessions about transnational South Africa (with former graduate student Max Andrucki).

SUSANNAH MCCANDLESS: “Spaces of fear and security: Migrant farmworkers in Vermont’s conserved landscape.”

REECIA ORZECK: “Hunger as political speech.”

SHELLY RAYBACK: “Using dendroclimatology and stable isotope techniques to reconstruct past climate on Mount Rainier, Washington.”

BEVERLEY WEMPLE: “Spatial patterns of snow distribution in a northern New England mountain landscape and implications for runoff production.”