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MIT's Henry Jenkins to Discuss New Media Literacy and American Politics on Election Eve



From left:
Henry Jenkins,
William the
Snowman, and
Casey Knowles,
the "3 a.m. girl"

How have YouTube, Facebook, mobile phones, Wikipedia, blogs, and "The Daily Show" transformed the landscape of American presidential politics? Will participatory culture give rise to a more participatory democracy? Or has the expansion of the media landscape given rise to a meaner and more superficial campaign

than we deserve? What factors are leading to increased voter interest and participation, especially among younger citizens? What lessons can we take from the study of virtual communities which might help us enhance civic engagement at the local level?

These are some of the questions that MIT Professor **Henry Jenkins** will address when he visits campus this fall as the first of two 2008-09 O'Fallon Lecturers. Jenkins (originally scheduled to speak at the UO in January 2008) will give a talk entitled "**Talking Snowmen, Moose Stew, and the 3 a.m. Girl: New Media, Popular Culture, and American Politics 2008**" on **Monday, November 3 at 7:30 p.m. in 180 PLC.**

In this highly topical presentation, Henry Jenkins, author of *Convergence Culture: Where* *continued on page 2*

Environmental Activist Annie Leonard to Speak about her Short Film, "The Story of Stuff"

The OHC is pleased to collaborate with the Environmental Studies Program to co-sponsor the campus visit of filmmaker and environmental activist **Annie Leonard** in October 2008. In addition to meeting with ENVS faculty and students and speaking at their fall convocation, Ms. Leonard will be the concluding keynote speaker at the First Annual OUS Sustainability Conference. Her public talk and a screening of her 20-minute film, "**The Story of Stuff**," will take place on **Friday, October 24th, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. in the EMU Ballroom.**

"The Story of Stuff" takes viewers on a provocative and eye-opening tour of our consumer



driven culture—from resource extraction to iPod incineration. Leonard, an activist who has spent the past ten years traveling the globe fighting environmental threats, narrates "The Story of Stuff," delivering a rapid-fire, often humorous, and always engaging story about "all our stuff—where it comes from and where it goes

when we throw it away." Leonard examines the real costs of extraction, production, distribution, consumption and disposal, and she isolates the moment in history when, she says, the trend of consumption mania began. "The Story of Stuff" examines how economic policies of the post-

continued on page 2

Jenkins *continued from front page*



The 1960 Nixon/Kennedy debate.

Old and New Media Collide (2007) and co-Director of the MIT Comparative Media Studies Program, offers a report card on the role of media (new and old) in what appears to be one of the most trans-

formative elections since the 1960 Nixon/Kennedy race demonstrated television's increased centrality to American politics.

Jenkins is the Peter de Florez Professor of Humanities and the author or editor of more than twelve books on various aspects of media and popular culture. He is also a Star Trek fan (he owns his own Klingon weapon) and an active and prolific blogger. (You can visit his site at www.henryjenkins.org). An eccentric and popular figure on the MIT campus, Jenkins describes himself as an "aca-fan"—which, he explains, is the cross between an academic and a fan—who “boldly goes where no humanist has gone before.” However one describes him, Jenkins is at the forefront of exploring how digital technologies are reshaping culture, including politics, education, and religion.

The lecture, sponsored by Betsy Mayer and the O'Fallon family, is free and open to the public. For more information, or for disability accommodations (which must be made by October 27th), please call (541) 346-3934.

Leonard *continued from front page*

World War II era ushered in notions of “planned obsolescence” and “perceived obsolescence”—and how these notions are still driving U.S. and global economies today.

Written by Leonard, the film was produced by Free Range Studios, the makers of other highly popular web-based films such as “The Meatrix” and “Grocery Store Wars.” Funding for the project came from the Sustainability Funders (The Funders Workgroup for Sustainable Production and Consumption) and Tides Foundation.

Ms. Leonard's visit to campus is made possible in part by the OHC's **Endowment for Public Outreach in the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities**. The screening of the film and Leonard's talk are free and open to the public. For more information, please call 346-4883.



OHC Welcomes New Director and Four Faculty Advisory Board Members

This fall, in addition to welcoming our new **Director, Barbara K. Altmann**, we are pleased to introduce four new members to the Oregon Humanities Center's Faculty Advisory Board. The new members for the three-year term beginning in 2008-09 are: **Lowell Bowditch**, Classics; **Gina Psaki**, Romance Languages; **Bill Rossi**, English; and **Richard Taylor**, Physics.



Barbara K. Altmann

We would like to thank the outgoing members of the board for their service: **Amalia Gladhart**, Romance Languages; **Michael Hames-Garcia**, Ethnic Studies/English; **Anne Las-kaya**, English; **Deb Morrison**, Journalism and Communication; and **Andy Schulz**, Art History.



Lowell Bowditch

Advisory Board members are nominated by peers and formally appointed by Vice President Rich Linton and the Director of the OHC to serve a three-year term. Board members assist the director and associate director with several important OHC functions including reviewing fellowship applications, advising on policy issues affecting the Center, suggesting lecturers and conference topics, and helping distribute information and announcements to other humanities faculty and graduate students.



Gina Psaki

The Faculty Advisory Board is vital to the effective functioning of the Center. We seek nominations for the board each year in May. We encourage faculty to nominate colleagues or to consider serving on the board themselves. (Self-nominations are accepted.) For more information about the OHC Advisory Board, please contact Julia Heydon at 346-1001.



Bill Rossi



Richard Taylor

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OHC Fellow Enthusiastic and Recharged by Residency

The panoramic view from my temporary PLC office was “bookended,” as it were, by the university art museum and the research library. As an art historian, I found this to be the perfect metaphor for my experience as a fellow in the OHC last fall.

The OHC fellowship allowed me to make accelerated progress on my book project, *Screen Subjects: Screen Spectatorship in Contemporary Art*. Located at the convergence of art history and film/media studies, the book is a spectatorship study of European and North American screen-reliant media installation art works from the 1960s to the present. Media screens—film, video, and computer—have become increasingly pervasive in artistic production since the 1960s, reflecting concurrent changes in media technologies. The book explores the nature of viewing installations made with screens in order to offer a new theoretical model

for thinking about this pervasive mode of artistic production. Moreover, through case studies of exemplary media art works, the book considers what artistic experimentation with media screens might reveal about the changing relationship between humans and technology.

While in residence at the OHC, I completed a chapter entitled “Body and Screen: The Architecture of Screen Spectatorship.” It scrutinizes how media objects and their customary viewing regimes actively define the relationship between bodies and screens. Through close readings of influential closed-circuit video installations, including Frank Gillette and Ira Schneider’s pioneering *Wipe Cycle* (1969), Bruce

Nauman’s series of corridor works (1969–72), and Dan Graham’s *Present Continuous Past(s)* (1974), this chapter analyzes how certain media art works employ two

apparently contradictory processes. Artists attempt to draw attention to the coercive nature of screen-based viewing, for example by varying the arrangement of cameras and monitors, combining live and pre-recorded feedback, inverting viewers’ images, divorcing cameras from their monitors, introducing time delays, and so on. Simultaneously, however, the screen-reliant technologies themselves

impose precise kinesthetic and psychic effects upon their audiences. I explain how this discrepancy between active and passive viewership presents an unresolved paradox for the art form’s criticism.

The interdisciplinary audience assembled at my OHC work-in-progress presentation in October generated a lively exchange of ideas that informed my subsequent work on the chapter. One of the unsung benefits of OHC fellowships is the requirement that fellows present their work outside of a strictly academic context at some point during the fellowship year. I plan to present my research to a general audience in the near future, hopefully at the university art museum where I can introduce my work in the company of actual art objects.

As a full-time academic, it is a rarity to have time to devote oneself exclusively to one’s own research. The OHC fellowship offers not only time, but also, perhaps even more importantly, provides a stimulating yet relaxed environment in which to work surrounded by warm and generous colleagues and staff. The end of my residency found me recharged and enthusiastic to embrace the full load of teaching and administrative responsibilities that fellows are asked to put on hold temporarily. Due to the OHC’s generous support I anticipate finishing my book manuscript ahead of schedule. Thank you for this opportunity.

Kate Mondloch,
Assistant Professor, Art History



Recent OHC Research Fellow Receives Book Contract and National Science Foundation Award

During my tenure at the Oregon Humanities Center, I worked on my book manuscript entitled *The Political Economy of Shame: Gender, NGOs and Micro-credit in Bangladesh* (University of California Press, forthcoming 2009).

This book is an ethnographic study of globalization at the grassroots which examines the techniques, tactics, programs, and procedures set in place through micro-credit NGOs to shape the “conduct of conduct” in both rural and urban spaces in Bangladesh. It provides a critical analysis of the current debate regarding microfinance as a transnational phenomenon initiated in Bangladesh in the 1980s with the global transition to neo-liberalism. As the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the Grameen Bank shows, microfinance is widely credited as being the key to alleviating poverty for women in developing countries. My book addresses the humanistic implications of these transformations from the paradigmatic site of micro-credit, Bangladesh, and the paradigmatic institution of micro-credit, the Grameen Bank.

During my OHC fellowship term I

also worked on an NSF grant application. In 2008, I received an NSF Award for my project “Law, Democracy and Religion: The Case of Bangladesh.”

In Muslim societies, democratization has unleashed multiple contradictory forces, with both Islamists and secularists laying claim to the state and to the roles of women in it. In this struggle over reshaping Islamic societies, feminist groups have emerged as one of the strongest advocates of democracy in what is termed gender jihad, i.e., Muslim women’s struggle for equality. My project examines the roles of two contradictory groups—secular feminists and Islamic female missionaries—in garnering rights for Muslim women in Bangladesh.

Lamia Karim
Assistant Professor, Anthropology





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Upcoming W.I.P.s

We continue our series of **work-in-progress** talks by University of Oregon faculty and graduate students on their current or recent research on **Fridays at noon** in the Humanities Center Conference Room, **159 PLC**. Brown-bag lunches are welcome!

October 10

Michelle McKinley, Law, speaking on "The Unbearable Lightness of Being: Hybridity and Racial Identity in Colonial Lima."

October 24

Alisa Freedman, East Asian Languages and Literatures, speaking on "From Modern Girls in Motion to Figures of Nostalgia: Twentieth-Century Japanese Bus and Train Conductors in the Popular Imagination."

November 14

Deborah Hurtt, Art History, speaking on "Contested Territory: Architecture and Modernity in Interwar France."

November 21

Daniel Pope, History, speaking on "Who Was James Rorty? His Memoirs and His Life."

All faculty and graduate students are encouraged to attend. The conference room seats eighteen; early arrival is recommended.

The University of Oregon is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution committed to cultural diversity and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. To arrange disability accommodations for Humanities Center events or to obtain this newsletter in an alternative format, call 541-346-3934.

2009-10 OHC Faculty Fellowship Applications Due October 27th

Don't miss the opportunity to apply for a Humanities Center fellowship!

The deadline for submission is **5 p.m.** on **Monday, October 27, 2008**.

Research Fellowships for Faculty

- a term free of teaching to focus on research

Teaching Fellowships for Faculty

- \$3,000 summer stipend to develop a humanities course
- up to \$1,000 per course for course enrichment may be requested
- \$4,000 additional course support may be awarded through the Wulf Professorship

Coleman-Guitteau Teaching-and-Research Professorship

- \$4,500 summer stipend to develop a humanities course
- \$2,500 additional course support available
- a term free of teaching to focus on research

Graduate Research Fellowships for doctoral students (Application deadline: Monday, February 9, 2009)

- for those expecting to graduate by June 2010
- up to \$750 in dissertation support

For questions about any of the OHC fellowship programs, please contact Julia Heydon at 346-1001.