

THE INSTITUTE FOR THE HUMANITIES
Montclair State University
presents

HUMANITIES IN THE SCHOOLS DAY

“Old Made New: Dialoguing with the Past”

A half-day program designed for high school students and teachers

Friday, December 2, 2011 9:00 AM—12:30 PM

Humanities in the Schools Day will focus this year on the idea that every society engages in its day in a dialogue with the past, whether on the level of the arts and humanities or in the arenas of popular culture, such as those of fashion, music, advertising and politics. MSU faculty representing a spectrum of fields will present some of the varied perspectives on this topic.

The Program:

• 8:30 AM — 9:00 AM  Sign-in for schools and breakfast buffet, Ballrooms (lobby level)
• 9:00 AM — 9:15 AM  Opening remarks and logistical information, Ballrooms (lobby level)

You will be asked to choose one presentation to attend in each of the following three sessions. Mark your choices on the enclosed registration form. Large school groups may be asked to split up.

• 9:30 AM — 10:20 AM  SESSION A

“Fashion Design: Drawn from the Past”

Fashion draws new forms and innovations from multiple places, but the importance of the past as a source of inspiration often goes unrecognized by the average observer. We will examine specific fashions inspired by the past, from iconic goddess-style gowns that embody the aesthetics of the ancient world to the twenty-first-century designs of the late Alexander McQueen that drew upon key moments in British history. In the process we will reveal the deep interest fashion designers hold for artifacts of the past!

Speaker: Abby Lillethun, Department of Art and Design, MSU

“Everything Old is New Again”

How do the worlds of pop music and Broadway constantly reinvent themselves? From South Pacific to Spiderman, from the Roaring 20's to Lady Gaga and Celo Green, every generation expresses itself with a new sound and a fresh style. And yet "the fundamentals" do apply: catchy melodies, clever lyrics, and rhythms that make us want to get up and dance. Could it be that the more things change.... the more they stay the same?

Speaker: Eric Diamond, Department of Theater and Dance, MSU
“Masterpiece or Sacred Image? Russian Icons Rediscovered”

In the early twentieth century, icon experts, using the latest restoration techniques, scraped away centuries of dark varnish from a number of old Russian icons. What they discovered—to their great surprise—was a vibrant palette of colors: golds, bright reds, and azure blues. These ancient icons had always been, and still are, venerated by the faithful. But were the restorers now also looking at genuine works of art? That question, which our presentation will address, is still being debated today.

Speaker: Jefferson J.A. Gatrall, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, MSU

• 10:30 AM — 11:20 AM  

SESSION B

“Old, New, Borrowed, and Blue: The Marriage of Past and Present in Literature and Film”

Why do we feel attracted to some literary themes and enjoy their recurrence in literary works and films either as adaptations or intertextual references? What is the connection between this attraction and our longing for a lost “golden age”? With the aid of literary theory and the use of rhetorical devices, this presentation explores the role of intertextuality, nostalgia, and intercultural appropriations in fiction-to-film adaptations that borrow from the past to add new, revitalized meanings to the present.

Speaker: Raul A. Galoppe, Department of Spanish and Italian, MSU

“How to Be Righteous, and Why: Reinventing Ideas of Social Justice”

Our present ideas of social justice relate to and have been conditioned by those in the Hebrew Bible, notably in the prophets. Connections will be made with later rabbinic interpretation, the beatitudes in the New Testament, and the rhetoric of social justice in Martin Luther King.

Speaker: Lee Behlman, Department of English, MSU

“Television Stardom in a Post-Network Era”

Since the emergence of the post-network era at the turn of the century, the celebrity produced by television’s changing landscape has necessitated that we revisit past paradigms explaining contemporary stardom. Through an examination of The Real World, Top Chef and the Jersey Shore, we will explore how the celebrity created by post-network television is both novel and, in many instances, quite conventional. Although we will discuss a number of reasons for this ongoing shift, particular emphasis will placed on television's evolving production culture.

Speaker: Hugh Curnutt, Department of Communication Studies, MSU

• 11:30 AM — 12:20 PM  

SESSION C

“Old Religions in New Contexts: The Case of Crow Pentecostalism Today”

Pentecostal Christianity is a popular new religious movement on Montana’s Crow Indian Reservation. But ever since its arrival, sparks have flown between Native converts to this Christian faith and the Crows who practice the old tribal ceremonies like the Sun Dance and Vision Quest. Tribal traditionalists argue that this newly arrived religion threatens the survival of their old ceremonies, divides the reservation into warring religious camps, and replaces authentic Native identity with an outsider’s
(“white man’s”) culture. Meanwhile, Crow converts to Pentecostal Christianity argue that their newfound faith is actually older and more authentic than the tribe’s animistic religion, making them even more fully Indian than they used to be.

*Speaker: Mark Clatterbuck, Department of Philosophy and Religion, MSU*

**“The Assertive Brushstroke”**

In the seventeenth century artists such as Frans Hals, Rembrandt, and Velazquez began to make paintings displaying thick and obvious strokes of paint. Some eighteenth-century painters continued this practice, but later in the century and through the mid-nineteenth it was rejected in favor of smooth painting surfaces. Later it appeared in a new form in the work of the Impressionists and grew more striking in productions by later artists, including Van Gogh, the Fauves, and the German Expressionists. Ultimately it became the main element in paintings by mid-twentieth century Abstract Expressionists such as Willem de Kooning and Robert Motherwell.

*Speaker: Anne Betty Weinshenker, Department of Art and Design, MSU*

**“Philosophers on Happiness: Two Thousand Years Ago and Today”**

Many philosophers have asked what it means to be happy, or better, they have reflected upon the question, "What is a good life?" Philosophers make claims about what a good life consists of, and give reasons to support their claims; in other words, they create arguments. How would you answer these questions: Is happiness simply experiencing pleasure? Is happiness simply getting what you want? Can a person become happy by accumulating wealth? Can a person who behaves unethically be happy? We will consider the ways in which philosophers have addressed these questions, and we'll see that the arguments of today's philosophers are strikingly similar to those made by philosophers two thousand years ago.

*Speaker: Tiger Roholt, Department of Philosophy and Religion, MSU*