The Institute for the Humanities
At Montclair State University
presents

HUMANITIES IN THE SCHOOLS DAY

“Coming-of-Age: A Humanistic Perspective”

A half-day conference for high school students and their teachers

Thursday, December 3, 2009  9:00 AM to 12:30 PM

Whether celebrated at the arrival of puberty or later at eighteen or twenty-one, coming-of-age as the moment of transition from adolescence to adulthood has always been a celebrated rite of passage in human culture. Nearly all religions and all societies have invested the moment with its own symbolism and marked it with legal significance, while poets, artists, novelists, dramatists, and filmmakers are among those who have explored it creatively. This half-day conference for high school students and their teachers will focus on the theme of coming of age, and MSU faculty representing a spectrum of fields within the humanities will present some of the varied perspectives on this topic that cultures past and present have offered.

All of the morning’s events will take place in the MSU Student Center and University Hall

The Program:

- **8:30 AM to 9:00 AM**  
  Sign-in for schools and breakfast buffet, Ballrooms (lobby level)

- **9:00 AM to 9:15 AM**  
  Opening remarks and logistical information, Ballrooms (lobby level)

  You will be asked to choose one topic from 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 to 10:20 AM**  
  **SESSION A**

  “When Old Worlds Die: Coming of Age in the Emerging Nations of the Modern Middle East”
  Based on memoirs and interviews, this talk will highlight the voices of young women - and a few young men - as they struggle to create stable and meaningful identities for themselves during and after the fall of the Ottoman, French, and British Empires. Voices from Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, and Palestine.

  **Speaker:** Susan Hussein, Adjunct Professor, Department of Classics and General Humanities, MSU

  “Coming of Age on Broadway”
  With the assistance of some MSU actors, we will explore how the theatre dramatizes the transition from childhood into young adulthood—the comedy, the pain, and the shared humanity of family and growing up.

  **Speaker:** Eric Diamond, Chairperson, Department of Theater and Dance, MSU

  “Framing Youth: Coming of Age on Film”
  What is the connection between cinema and youth? Contemporary cinema privileges youth as its subject matter and is most popular among young audiences. This was not always the case. By looking at coming of age narratives in European New Wave films from the 1960s we can gain a better understanding of how and why this shift to more youthful subject matter occurred.

  **Speaker:** Alex Lykidis, Assistant Professor, Department of English, MSU

- **10:30 AM to 11:20 AM**  
  **SESSION B**

  “Coming of Age in Contemporary Literature and the Media”
  During this session, we will explore contemporary portrayals of tweens and teens in Coming of Age Literature and in the popular media. Through the use of visual images and textual passages, we will discuss how the Coming of Age genre engages readers of all ages and how these texts can serve as bridges to the Classics. Some of the texts to be discussed may include: Twilight, Harry Potter, The Golden Compass, Ender’s Game and Holes.

  **Speaker:** Laura Nicosia, Assistant Professor, Department of English, MSU
“Coming of Age in Jewish Tradition: Bar and Bat Mitzvah”
During this session we will explore the attainment and meaning of religious and legal maturity by young men and women of the Jewish faith. Bar/Bat Mitzvah literally means: "son/daughter of the commandments". There are a total of 613 commandments in Jewish tradition (although some of them are not practiced today because there is no Temple in Jerusalem at the present time.) The status of Bar and Bat Mitzvah is automatic upon a young woman reaching the age of 12 and a young man reaching the age of 13. However, in our time, a public occasion commemorates this, usually in the synagogue, followed by a special celebration.

Speaker:  Jay Braverman, Adjunct Professor, Department of Classics and General Humanities, MSU

“Myths of Initiation”
One of the traditional purposes of mythology is to depict and guide the transition from youth to maturity, from dependence to self-reliance, from innocence to experience. In this session, Dr. Gill discusses the initiatory function of mythology, its cultural role of dramatizing and facilitating the acquisition of wisdom.

Speaker:  Glenn Gill, Assistant Professor, Department of Classics and General Humanities

• 11:30 AM to 12:20 PM        SESSION C

“Innocence and Addiction in ‘Goblin Market’”
We'll take a look at how one of the great nineteenth-century poems, Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market" (1862) describes, through its fairy-tale-like storytelling, an ethical coming of age for Victorian girls. Coming of age in this case involves a confrontation with evil in the form of an addiction to a powerful drug. We'll also consider the structure of this original work of art. Please read the poem before the session: it is available at: http://plexipages.com/reflections/goblin.html

Speaker:  Lee Behlman, Assistant Professor, Department of English, MSU

“The Hero Breaks Out”
The theme of the emergence of the hero is one of the most basic and prominent examples of the “coming-of-age” concept. Heroes from Marduk and Moses to Superman and Luke Skywalker show us how the hero sets a standard for us all in both “coming-of-age” and preparing to face our destiny.

Speaker:  Paul Leggett, Adjunct Professor, Department of Classics and General Humanities, MSU

“Marking Transitions in the Caribbean before Columbus”
In this presentation, ancient rites, rituals, and religion are discussed in the context of Caribbean pre-Columbian archaeology. I will demonstrate how archaeological evidence from Puerto Rico is used to address Native American rites-of-passage, coming of age, and the spirit world.

Speaker:  Peter Siegel, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, MSU

Registration and Contact Information:  (Registration Deadline-Thursday, November 19th)
Pre-registration is required for all of our programs. After we receive your request we will send you an e-mail confirmation, along with directions to the campus and parking.

The registration fee for this program is $15.00 per student or teacher. Registrations will be accepted on a first come, first served basis. Pre-register your school group by returning the enclosed form. Mail your check and registration form to Montclair State University, Institute for the Humanities, Room 105 Dickson Hall, Montclair, NJ 07043, no later than THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19th. Make checks payable to: Institute for the Humanities/MSU. Registrations may be faxed to our office (973-655-7207) and check mailed under separate cover. Our office should receive all registration materials, by the deadline date. The Institute for the Humanities is an approved provider of the State mandated professional development hours. Teachers who would like to receive (3) three hours of credit for this program, add $20.00 to the registration fee (see form, below).

We do not bill schools for payment. PLEASE SEND A COPY OF THE REGISTRATION FORM TO US AND A COPY TO YOUR SCHOOL’S BUSINESS OFFICE TO ACT AS AN INVOICE.

Current and Future Program Information: http://chss2.montclair.edu/instituteforthehumanities/

Phone:  973-655-7516    Fax: 973-655-7207    Email: inst_hum@mail.montclair.edu
Address: Montclair State University, Institute for the Humanities, 105 Dickson Hall, Montclair, NJ 07043