In this hundredth year of Montclair State University's founding, the Institute for the Humanities will take the centenary's motto, "Carpe Futura," as the inspiration for a half-day conference for high school students and teachers on visions of the future. Futurism was an intellectual movement that flourished in the early twentieth century, but since long before as well as after that humanists of all kinds have pondered what the future holds, and created scenarios both optimistic and pessimistic. MSU faculty representing a broad spectrum of disciplines within as well as outside the humanities will explore some of these utopic and dystopic visions as they have expressed themselves, and continue to do so, in the art, architecture, literature, philosophy, political science and science of both the western and non-western world.

The Program:

8:30 AM to 9:00 AM  Sign-in and breakfast buffet, MSU Student Center Ballrooms (lobby level)
9:00 AM to 9:15 AM  Opening remarks and logistical information, Student Center Ballrooms

9:30 AM to 10:20 AM  SESSION A

1. Native American Artists: With the Past into the Future

   Around the turn of the 19th to the 20th century many attempts at “cleansing” American Indian culture were made. However, Native Americans made every attempt to retain their culture and—if need be—reconstruct it. Native American artists were among the most successful preservers of Native American cultural identity and a number of them have reached national and international acclaim as artists who reach out into the future without leaving their cultural identity behind. This topic includes a general segment in which we will explain that that a “museal” culture—i.e. a culture that does not change—is no longer alive

   Speaker: Susi Colin, Associate Professor, Department of Art and Design, MSU

2. Que Sera, Sera! Or Will it?

   At this session we will play the game of “Slaps” and examine it in light of some important results from the exciting new field of Experimental Philosophy that suggest although we don’t have free will we perhaps still have "free won’t."

   Speaker: David W. Benfield, Professor, Department of Philosophy and Religion, MSU

3. Tales From the Ice: Antarctic Sediments Reveal Earth's Past Climate and Predict the Future

   The news is full of reports of large chunks of ice the size of Manhattan or Connecticut breaking off Antarctica and floating out to sea. Is that normal? Should we be concerned? How can we know if ice sheets grow and shrink normally and naturally? Dr. Stefanie Brachfeld of Montclair State University and colleagues in the
U.S. and abroad use mud in deep ocean as a tape recorder of Antarctica's past climate cycles, with an eye towards predicting the ice sheet's future behavior and the consequences of that for us.

_Speaker:_ Stefanie A. Brachfeld, Associate Professor, Earth and Environmental Studies, MSU

4. **Looking Back at Things to Come**

A fascinating account of the birth and challenges of Utopia is found in the movie “Things to Come” (William Cameron, director, 1936), based on the novel by H.G. Wells. In that future history the aerial bombing and gas and germ warfare of World War II destroyed world civilization, which is restored by a society of scientists who create near utopia in enclosed cities. But, even in utopia there is a conservative reaction as mobs try to thwart an attempt to travel to the moon in 2036. The ideal is eternal progress, summed up in the final question “…the Universe or nothing—which shall it be?”

_Speaker:_ Jean Alvares, Chairperson, Department of Classics and General Humanities, MSU

10:30 AM—11:20 AM **SESSION B**

1. **Learning from the Future: Dystopias in Science Fiction**

The societies in Orwell’s _1984_ and Huxley's _Brave New World_ presented two future visions of the world. How can we prevent some of those darker predictions from coming true -- or have they already done so?

_Speaker:_ David Galef, Professor, Department of English, MSU

2. **The Apocalyptic Vision: Symbolism and Revelation in the Western Imagination**

Perceptions of utopic and dystopic futures coincide and collide in the vision of an apocalyptic end to time that has consistently haunted the western imagination. In this presentation, visions of apocalypse in western mythology and religion are explored through an examination of their predominant images and symbols, and a consideration of why the apocalyptic event itself is typically presented in symbolic terms.

_Speaker:_ Glen Gill, Assistant Professor, Department of Classics and General Humanities, MSU

3. **Time Forward! Artists of the Russian Revolution**

In the wake of the 1917 Revolution, a generation of Russian artists was inspired not only to depict the future society being forged in the new Soviet Union, but also to contribute its creative talents to the cause of making this future a reality. This session will explore the experimental art of such painters, photographers, and architects as Malevich, Rodchenko, and Tatlin, as well as the rewards and dangers facing Soviet artists in the 1920s.

_Speaker:_ Jefferson Gatrall, Assistant Professor, Department of Modern Languages and Literature, MSU

4. **The Future of Science**

Current debates over scientific activities (expensive mega-projects examining the obscurely ultra-microscopic; teaching evolution or legislating global warming) seem more important than ever, but science is becoming ever more specialized and remote from everyday experience. Where does the public fit into all of this? We don't all need to become specialists ourselves, but we do need to learn more about the philosophy or foundations of science—how science is done, its limitations, its strengths—in order to evaluate the worth of scientific projects and their appropriate role in our future.

_Speaker:_ Kirk McDermid, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy and Religion, MSU

11:30 AM—12:20 PM **SESSION C**

1. **Eco village Ithaca: Laboratory for Sustainability?**

Around the world people are organizing communities called "ecovillages" to maintain their current lifestyle while using less energy. Near Ithaca, New York a group is living a middle class life on 50% less energy than the rest of us. Could this be the wave of the future?

_Speaker:_ Richard W. Franke, Chairperson, Department of Anthropology, MSU
2. Ideas, Idealism, Ideality

From the time of Plato, philosophers have pondered whether and how our highest ideals might be put into practice. In the past hundred years, philosopher-activists like Jane Addams, Lucia Ames Mead, and Marietta Kies, envisioned a world without war or poverty. How close have we come to realizing their ideals of peace, harmony, and understanding? What can we learn from them to help build a future closer to their ideals? Or is their idealism—and ours—mere ideality, a set of principles that exist in idea alone?

Speaker: Dorothy Rogers, Chairperson, Department of Philosophy and Religion, MSU


The Latin American short story of the end of the 19th century shows a deep preoccupation for the future of men and women as the natural sciences and technological advances of the period attempt to explain life in a totally new way. The vision of life being controlled by forces beyond the physical space is replaced by a scientific approach that challenges that vision and presents life in a more tangible and to a great extent trivial manner. Life for these scientists, and writers, is a lab specimen that they can manipulate to discover its mysteries and to utilize in whatever manner they would like to.

Speaker: William Rosa, Professor, Department of Spanish and Italian, MSU

4. Language and Its Current and Future Usage: Corpus tools, IM, and Text Messaging

This presentation will discuss the form and function of language and possible developments in the future. In particular we will discuss Instant Messaging and Text Messaging, two current and popular versions of a "natural" language, and possibly "languages of the future."

Speakers: Eileen Fitzpatrick, Chairperson, Department of Linguistics, MSU
Susana Sotillo, Associate Professor, Department of Linguistics, MSU

**Registration and Contact Information:** (Registration Deadline—Tuesday, December 2nd)

Registrations will be accepted on a first come, first served basis. Pre-register your school group by returning the attached form. The registration fee for this program is $15.00 per student or teacher. Teachers who would like to receive 3 hours of professional credit for this program, add an additional $20.00 to the registration fee (see form below).

Registrations may be faxed to our office (973-655-7207), or sent as an e-mail attachment—check mailed under separate cover. They may also be sent via US mail to our address, below.

- **Make checks payable to Montclair State University (Institute for the Humanities in memo line).**

  After we receive your request we will send you an e-mail confirmation, along with directions to the campus and parking.

  **Our office should receive all registration materials, vouchers, or registration fees by the deadline date, December 2nd.**

- **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.**

Program updates and calendar of events—visit our web site:

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, Room 105 Dickson Hall, Montclair, NJ 07043
**Registration Form**

**Humanities in the Schools Day: Carpe Futura: Visions of the Future**

Friday, December 12, 2008

Complete this form and return to the Institute for the Humanities by the deadline, Tuesday, December 2nd.

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PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY. We will send an E-mail confirmation when we receive your registration information.

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Purchase Order Number: ____________________________

[ ] I would like to receive 3 hours of professional development credit (add $20.00 to the registration fee)  
Total Amount Enclosed: $__________________________

Make your choices, below. Next to each selection, write-in the number of students and teachers who would like to attend the presentation(s) in each session. **Groups of 10 or less** may stay together or divide to attend separate presentations. **Groups of 10 or more people** may have to split-up. Space is limited for each talk. We will try our best to give everyone their first choice selections.

- **9:30 AM — 10:20 AM**  
  SESSION A  
  Native American Artists: With the Past into the Future  
  Susi Colin  
  Que Sera, Sera! Or Will It?  
  David W. Benfield  
  Tales from the Ice: Antarctic Sediments Reveal Earth's Past Climate...  
  Stefanie A. Brackfeld  
  Looking Back at Things to Come  
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  Learning from the Future: Dystopias in Science Fiction  
  David Galef  
  The Apocalyptic Vision: Symbolism and Revelation in the Western Imagination  
  Glen Gill  
  Time Forward! Artists of the Russian Revolution  
  Jefferson Gatrall  
  The Future of Science  
  Kirk McDermid

- **11:30 AM—12:20 PM**  
  SESSION C  
  Ecovillage Ithaca: Laboratory for Sustainability?  
  Richard W. Franke  
  Ideas, Idealism, Ideality  
  Dorothy Rogers  
  Science and Literature: Cryogenics in the Latin American 19th Century & in the 20th Century  
  William Rosa  
  Language and Its Current and Future Usage:...IM, and Text Messaging  
  Eileen Fitzpatrick & Susana Sotillo