



### Adult Student Affairs

Bernadine Thomas,  
Assistant Director of  
Adult Student Affairs  
**Page 4**



### Study Abroad

Dr. Sharon Nagy,  
Director of DePaul's  
Study Abroad Program  
**Page 5**



### First Person Discoveries

Frank Chaten, MALS  
Student  
**Page 8**



# Convergence

*A publication for students and alumni of DePaul University's MALS and IDS Programs*

**Spring 2012**

## It's all connected: Interdisciplinary Studies

Susan Jacobs, Associate Director

When we explain MALS and IDS to prospective students, we describe our programs as self-constructed interdisciplinary graduate programs. Often, the response is "So, this is the program where you can do whatever you want?" Our answer is as varied as the inventive programs our students propose and pursue. MALS and IDS are not randomly assembled surveys of many subjects; our programs encourage and demand rigorous explorations of related disciplines. Sometimes, the connectivity between subjects is obvious; other times, our students make surprising and life-changing discoveries.

What makes these paths interdisciplinary? MALS and IDS have different levels of structure built in to their possibilities. The titles of our MALS core courses seem general at first glance, but each course explores distinct emphases that stretch across multiple disciplines. For instance, MLS 401, "Perceptions of the Self,"

PHOTO COURTESY OF AGLSP



MALS/IDS Director David Gitomer and Associate Director Susan Jacobs travelled to Gideon Putnam State Park in Saratoga Springs, NY for the annual AGLSP meeting. Participants shared best practices, and learned about the geology, sociology, and economy of cultures that consciously (or not) rely on and care for the water supplies that allow us to thrive.

might survey how different literary genres define the concept of "Self." Those explorations might also include a look at cultural differences, scientific parameters, and socio-

economic factors. MLS 409, "Environment and Society," might look at urban farming in tandem with industrial land use, public policy and how different education systems

*Continued on page 3*

### Get Involved in the AGLSP

DePaul University's MALS/IDS Program is a member of the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs (AGLSP), an international organization of over 120 institutional members

that share a common interest in graduate-level liberal education primarily serving adult students. The Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs is a forum for the exchange of

information and ideas among Graduate Liberal Studies Programs, their students, their alumni, and other programs of related curricula and goals. DePaul's MALS/IDS Director David Gitomer

currently serves as the AGLSP President. For information regarding AGLSP activities and publications, go to **<http://www.aglsp.org>**.

## MALS / IDS Contact Information

**Mail:**

2327 N. Racine Ave.  
Office 202  
Chicago, IL 60614

**Phone:**

(773) 325-7840

**Fax:**

(773) 325-8306

**Websites:**

las.depaul.edu/mals  
las.depaul.edu/ids

**Blog:**

densejoyousmodern.  
com

## Staff Contact Information

**Director:**

David Gitomer, Ph.D.  
(773) 325-7840  
dgitomer@depaul.edu

**Associate Director:**

Susan Jacobs  
(773) 325-8689  
sjacobs@depaul.edu

**Program Assistant:**

Angelina Mendez  
amendez1@depaul.edu

**Student Assistant:**

Lauren Dorman  
ldorman@depaul.edu

## Convergence

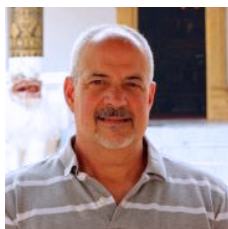
*A publication for students and alumni  
of DePaul University's MALS and IDS  
programs*

**Editor:** Susan Jacobs

**Design:** Lauren Dorman

**Writer/Editor:** Angelina Mendez

# Director's Letter

**You Are Now Here!**

Those who read *Convergence* faithfully may recall a photo of me standing before the temple of Angkor Wat in Cambodia a few years back. Our Associate Director, Susan Jacobs, has selected this photo of me in Luang Prabang, Laos, in March, 2012, for this issue. My return to Southeast Asia was exciting on a personal level, but it also contributed to my growth as a scholar, since the bulk of my teaching is in the religions and cultures of the larger region. Luang Prabang was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site because of its intense Buddhist monastic culture and its irresistible combination of traditional Lao and French colonial architecture. The town lies on a high peninsula only about five streets wide and a couple of miles long, astride the Mekong and its tributary Nam Khong. One of my most enjoyable memories from the trip is crossing the Nam Khong on a bamboo foot bridge to eat in an open air restaurant nestled in the hills on the river bank opposite the town. Sipping Beerlao with Lao barbecue and sticky rice is heaven!

But Luang Prabang is not an exotic paradise. There are no more secret Shangri-Las in our globalized world. When the UNESCO designation came, so did the tourists. As they have done for thousands of years, legions of saffron-robed monks stream from the monasteries at dawn to receive their day's food in their begging baskets from the Buddhist laypeople. But pull back just a few feet from the line of monks and you'll see hundreds of bare-skinned tourists with their cameras, despite polite requests everywhere in the town to dress modestly and stay across the street if you are not a Buddhist participating in the alms-giving. (I had my telephoto lens!) A few years ago, the monks became so fed up that they announced they were going to switch to another system of alms-giving, by which laypeople would bring their gifts to the

monasteries, as they do on other occasions. The government, fearing the loss of tourism, threatened to replace the monks with shaven-headed "re-enactors" in robes carrying begging bowls. The monastic authorities decided that putting up with being a tourist attraction was better than having their sacred tradition faked. My goal was to find out how the monks accommodated this new reality to their way of life—but I don't have enough space to go into that here!

The hilly region surrounding Luang Prabang looks verdant, and you see fish being hauled from the Mekong. But deforestation, illegal logging, depletion of fish, and controversial dams are hot topics of conversation away from the somewhat artificial serenity of this tourist haven. We Americans have actually long been involved in the political life of the region. During the Vietnam War and the larger Indo-China conflict, we recruited the ethnic Hmong people to fight for the US and they suffered retaliation from other groups. Large numbers of Hmong settled in the US, chiefly in the Midwest and California, while thousands still live in refugee camps in Thailand.

How to make sense of the real Laos, at once far-off and globally immediate? In this issue of *Convergence*, Susan Jacobs, our Associate Director, talks about interdisciplinary studies as interconnected studies. As a scholar and a tourist and (hopefully) a responsible global citizen, it's incredibly obvious that the interconnectedness of learning is not simply an idea. This is the vision of learning we promote in MALS and IDS, in every individualized program that our students pursue. We invite you to become part of that interconnected community of learners.

Warm Regards,

David Gitomer, Ph.D.  
Director, MALS/IDS



PHOTO BY DAVID GITOMER





Land Ethics Leaders contemplate the Baraboo Valley, WI.

## Interdisciplinary Studies *continued from page 1*

incorporate environmentalism within art and science programs. Once MALS students complete their core courses, they may choose their electives from many areas throughout the university.

IDS students create their own graduate programs; within our guidelines, they may take as many as six courses from most departments or programs, with the exception of Kellstadt Business School, which allows our students to take up to five course selections. So we have students combining courses from at least two or three areas. Students might combine courses from The School of Communication with New Media Studies, Public Administration and Political Science. Or Business Management, Writing in the Professions and PRAD. We've had wonderful programs created to combine Philosophy with the History of Theatre Arts, and History of Art and Architecture with Modern Languages, Fine Arts and Urban Studies.

These examples are not to imply that our students careen about the university without structure. Program proposals must follow our guidelines and students must have satisfied the prerequisites of the individual programs from which they draw their courses. Students must take courses at the graduate level, with

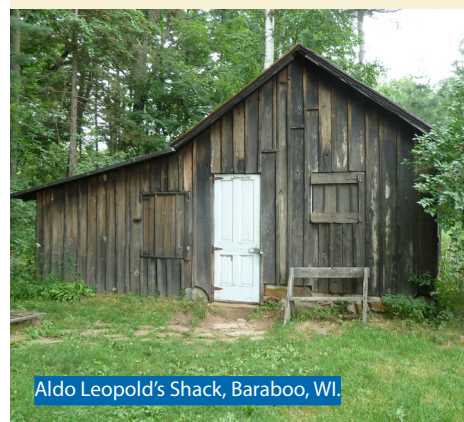
a few exceptions drawn from high-level 300 courses, and different programs have specific registration policies. That's where our academic advisers and Program Assistants help students navigate through sometimes complex university systems.

As you read this issue of *Convergence*, you'll see that incredibly imaginative work is well-supported throughout the DePaul community. As our students reach out to faculty across the curriculum to build their culminating projects, more and more faculty eagerly opt to work with our students in their interdisciplinary explorations. And more and more employers recognize the value of MALS and IDS graduates with finely honed critical thinking skills who gladly accept rigorous challenges in multiple disciplines.

One of our soon-to-be-graduates asked me during an advising session, "Do I really have to stop taking courses just because I have enough credits to graduate? I'm not through learning everything I want to know!" Our hope in MALS and IDS is that this desire to know more never quits, for any of us. Please enjoy reading our student, faculty and staff profiles; learn about where MALS and IDS can lead.



This November, MALS/IDS hosted a screening of the 2011 documentary *Greenfire*, which explores the life and work of the 20th century conservationist Aldo Leopold. Following the screening, participants were led in discussion by DePaul Prof. Randy Honold, MALS/IDS Program Assistant Joe Andrukaitis, MALS student Jeff Tangel and MALS/IDS Associate Director Susan Jacobs. Our interdisciplinary guests included folks from the Midwest Wetlands Project, staff from the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, and environmental science students from Loyola University. Readings from Leopold's landmark text *A Sand County Almanac* inspired our conversation to explore how the role of ethics, literature, philosophy, politics and science comprise the heart of Leopold's concept of the land ethic and responsible environmental stewardship.



Aldo Leopold's Shack, Baraboo, WI.

This summer, Susan Jacobs attended the Land Ethics Leadership Training Session at the Aldo Leopold Center in Baraboo, Wisconsin.

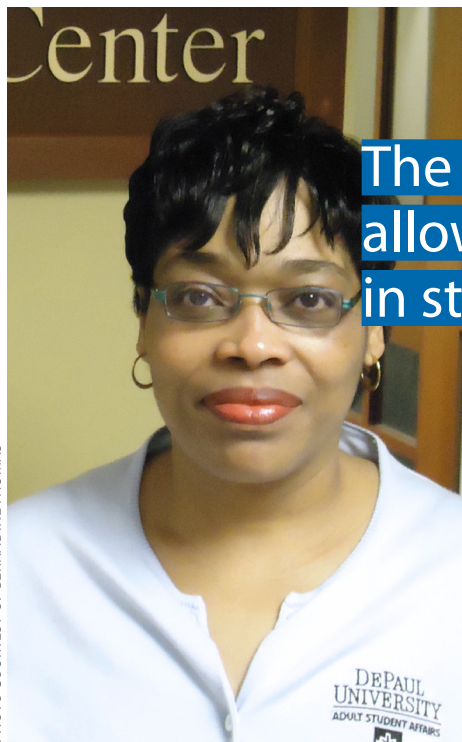


PHOTO COURTESY OF BERNADINE THOMAS

The services offered  
allow the office to invest  
in students' wellness.

Bernadine Thomas, Assistant Director of Adult Student Affairs.

## Adult Student Affairs

### Angelina Mendez, Program Assistant

Adult students can lead hectic lives, and they can sometimes feel like they have no home base where they are especially welcomed. Assistant Director of Adult Student Affairs, Bernadine Thomas, knows the pressures adult students face well. A former adult student and career changer herself, Bernadine has been with the office for nearly three years and strongly believes in its mission to help adult students in their transition to college life.

Bernadine's office describes adult students as undergraduate students who are 24 years of age and older and all graduate students, veterans, and professional students. The office focuses on student advocacy and helps students find the information they need. If students have questions about anything, from housing to health care to financial aid to academics, the office can help find answers and walk students through different processes.

Working with and teaching adult students at the Loop and O'Hare campuses, Bernadine recognizes that many adult students do not know what services and aid are available to them. Her advice is to ask questions to find out what is available, and this is where Adult Student Affairs comes in. She says that even

if students don't think they need the office's services now, they should become familiar with them so they can easily utilize them later.

The office also offers considerable outreach to students, including the quarterly New Adult Student Receptions, Meals & Massages for Midterms, and Fuel for Finals. These allow the office to "invest in students' wellness," as Bernadine says. Social events also allow students to build relationships with others in similar circumstances, as with networking wine and cheese events and, to include families, ice skating events. Writing and math tutors also offer academic help in the office Mondays through Thursdays.

Additionally, adult students can take advantage of applying for the office's quarterly scholarships for help with tuition and the professional development funding for help with attending conferences and obtaining membership in professional organizations. The Adult Student Association also offers ways to network with other adult students and to learn about opportunities that otherwise may go unnoticed.

Bernadine recently took part in a coaching program at Coach U, and enjoys applying the coaching and mentoring skills she learned about to her work in the office. She is

passionate about her efforts to help students who are in positions similar to the one she was in as an adult student. She sees the work as her calling, and is excited about continuing with that work in the office. Bernadine encourages students to visit the Adult Student Affairs office, located in the DePaul Center on the Loop campus, during regular office hours, 8 am to 8 pm, Monday through Friday. Students can learn about the services offered there or just study at one of the open tables, use the available computers, peruse the book library, or enjoy the free coffee and tea, and find the respite they're seeking in their busy lives.

More information on Adult Student Services can be found here: <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/adultstudentservices/>

The Adult Student Center is located in 11017 DePaul Center. You can also contact the Adult Student Center office by phone at 312-362-6216 or by email at [adultstudents@depaul.edu](mailto:adultstudents@depaul.edu)

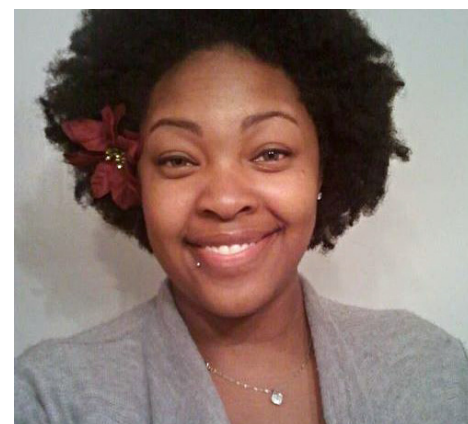


PHOTO COURTESY OF ZELLENCIA HARRIS

Zellencia Harris, Adult Student Affairs Department Assistant and MALS Student.



# Study Abroad

Jane Bohnsack, Convergence

Doctor Sharon Nagy, who was the director of DePaul's Study Abroad Program from 2007 through September 2012, was raised without a concept of foreign boundaries. Dr. Nagy spent much of her childhood in Europe and the Middle East due to her parents' international careers. Growing up overseas informed both her life and her academic interests – as a cultural anthropologist, Dr. Nagy studies the region. And it is because of her personal history living abroad that she feels participating in a Study Abroad program is the best manner in which a higher educational experience can be supplemented, no matter the student's age.

According to Dr. Nagy, the benefits of studying abroad are myriad. She feels both undergraduates and graduate students will gain similar benefits. It's never too late to gain international experiences, and really, it is the number of times one travels across borders, rather than the age of the traveler, that matters. Experiencing cultural differences and assessing cultural boundaries are ageless opportunities. This is not to say that one can't experience similar opportunities while remaining within the U.S. But why not travel abroad through school when you have the chance?

There are a variety of ways study abroad opportunities at DePaul can be tailored to fit the profile of an adult graduate student. Traditionally, most study abroad programs

have been created for undergraduate students. Over the past several years, MALS/IDS has worked with the Study Abroad Program to create more opportunities tailored to our adult student's busy lives. MALS/IDS students have traveled to Ireland, India, Vietnam, Argentina, Germany, Japan and Peru just within the last academic year. Here are some tips to finding a study abroad program that suits your needs:

- Work with faculty to establish international projects or internships
- Get creative! Look for volunteer organizations that offer course credit
- Look into programs that travel over winter or spring vacations

It may be more challenging for a graduate student to study abroad, but it's certainly not impossible, and the benefits are manifold. Be sure to watch the Study Abroad website, because locations and opportunities are always changing. There might be something new that's perfect for you.

More information on DePaul study abroad programs can be found here: <http://studyabroad.depaul.edu/>

The Study Abroad Center is located at 990 W. Fullerton, Suite 1200. You can also contact the Study Abroad office by phone at: 773-325-7450



PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. SHARON NAGY

Dr. Sharon Nagy, former Director of DePaul's Study Abroad Program.

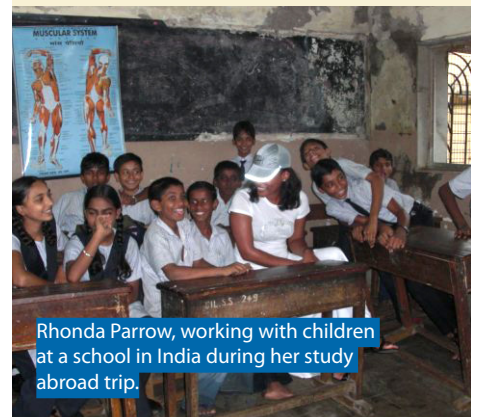


## Study Abroad with DePaul!

Apply to study abroad online at <http://studyabroad.depaul.edu>

The Study Abroad website provides great information on Graduate Fellowships and funding.

The deadline for Fall 2012 and Academic Year 2012-2013 is May 15, 2012. Apply now to be considered for the Study Abroad Program.



Rhonda Parrow, working with children at a school in India during her study abroad trip.

PHOTO COURTESY OF RHONDA PARROW

## Rhonda Parrow, Graduating IDS Student

"In addition to gaining a broader knowledge base through graduate coursework, I have also been able to participate in three study abroad international business courses in India, Ireland and Japan; they afforded me practical knowledge related to the dynamics of conducting business across continents."



PHOTO BY LAUREN DORMAN

I took the plunge, like many MALS and IDS students and became an adult student in the midst of a career change.

Angelina Mendez, Program Assistant.

## MALS/IDS Program Assistant: Our Resident Graduate Studies Expert

Angelina Mendez, Program Assistant

As we grow older, we sometimes speak about the lives we've led, in which we acted as different people, played different roles, or experienced different events. Though I'm not very "old" yet, I do feel like I'm living a second life. Most of my life is the same (my husband, cats, home, family, and friends). But I couldn't have moved on without changing at least my direction.

A native of Chicago, I saw DePaul as a place to get a great education, and I did. I received my degrees in the English department's Combined BA/MA program, and worked as a tutor at the Writing Center here. The experience was rewarding and my education was fulfilling. I felt I was going places; my first full-time job, at an educational publishing company, came right after my last quarter here. I checked facts in textbooks. After five years there, I was laid off with hundreds of others. Then I took contract positions and freelanced. Those weren't fulfilling, so I had to change my focus.

Family and friends always told me I'd be a good teacher, but I never thought so, feeling

I lack patience. But last winter, I started thinking more about it. I looked into the programs in Chicago and found the Early Childhood Education program here fit my life. So I took the plunge, like many MALS and IDS students, and became an adult student in the midst of a career change.

This Spring Quarter is my fourth quarter in the program, and I'm still excited. In the fall and winter, I learned so much about child development and early literacy. I completed 65 clinical hours, working in infant, toddler, Pre K, and Kindergarten classrooms. In the spring, I look forward to working with more Pre K students.

While stressful, my studies have opened me up to a world of possibility. I'm nervous for the future, but am assured that I can be successful and that all I'm learning will help me. Teaching is still my main goal, but I'm very intrigued by developmental therapy with kids one-on-one. My next classes will teach me about this option.

The stress from school is mitigated by my work schedule. Working in the MALS/IDS program has helped me get back into the swing of things at school. This office has been so

welcoming and comfortable in my short time here. Learning about the programs has been interesting, and I still have so much to learn. Being on campus, around academics, puts me at ease; I feel supported in my studies and am able to focus much easier.

In my new position, I feel I have so much to offer. From my time in publishing, I have a good eye for editing and can understand all kinds of writing. I have so much life experience, and that lets me put things in perspective. My tutoring background will also help me in this position and my future as an educator. I spent much of my college life working with other students, and I'm confident continuing to do so. (If any MALS or IDS students need assistance with papers, essays, or research, I'm available to help. My email address is [amendez1@depaul.edu](mailto:amendez1@depaul.edu).)

My new life has already come full circle and I've only been living it a short time. While situations, places, people, my focus, and my goals have changed, I'm still the same person, and even stronger for the things I have been through. With a new direction, I look forward to not only growing older, but also growing confident in my life.



# Eileen Seifert, WRD Professor

Jane Bohnsack, Convergence

Eileen Seifert has taught at DePaul for 25 years. Today, she is the Associate Director of the First-Year Writing Program and a full time professor in the Writing, Rhetoric, and Discourse (WRD) department. While she currently teaches writing, she has a background in literature. Professor Seifert received her graduate degree in Renaissance Literature, focusing on the early writing of scientists and politicians. Graduate school, however, bored her. Professor Seifert was one of the few women in her program, and had even fewer female professors. And she had already cultivated an interest in expository writing, but at the time, there were few graduate degrees focusing on writing communication. After graduating, Professor Seifert wrote professionally for health and human resource publications. Despite working in her field of choice, Professor Seifert was drawn to university culture and teaching. When she received an invitation to teach at DePaul, she jumped at the chance, and has been here ever since.

In Winter Quarter 2012, Professor Seifert taught an exciting, interdisciplinary course called "Topics in Professional Writing: Health Care Writing." She says the course assignments were not limited to writing by medical professionals, but aimed at addressing the need for accessible medical writing that could reach a variety of audiences. But health and wellness are issues that affect everyone, and this course

addressed health care and writing about health care in such a broad manner. Professor Seifert's course looks at the writing of patients and medical professionals, research from medical journals, and the writing found on blogs and popular magazines. The course moved beyond just addressing major health issues such as cancer or autoimmune diseases, but rather looked at health as a whole body issue. The course examined issues of child and teen wellness, reproductive health, and nutrition. Additionally, Professor Seifert's course could be tailored to accommodate the specific interests of each student, allowing them to focus on an area of health that may interest them or something that may be affecting someone in their family.

Be sure to keep an eye out for Professor Seifert's courses through the WRD department and cross-listed as MLS courses. Professor Seifert has had the pleasure of teaching MALS/IDS students in previous courses, and she feels they bring a lot to the table. And Professor Seifert brings a lot to her classrooms. Her professional interests are wide ranging, from health care writing to Chicago architecture (she is currently researching and writing about Marion Mahony, one of the world's first licensed women architects and co-designer of the capital of Australia). If you're interested in learning more about Professor Seifert's work, teaching, or upcoming courses, you can email her at [eseifert@depaul.edu](mailto:eseifert@depaul.edu).



PHOTO COUTESY OF EILEEN SEIFERT



*Visit our blog at*  
**[densejoyousmodern.com](http://densejoyousmodern.com)**

# First-Person Discoveries



The MALS program has challenged me to choose unanticipated paths of study.

## Dr. Frank Chaten

### Frank Chaten, Graduating MALS Student

The first book I read in the MALS program, nearly five years ago, was Homer's *Odyssey*. A major theme of this book is that of "the journey," a very appropriate description indeed of this masters program. Why did I undertake this particular type of journey? After almost twenty years of practicing pediatric critical care medicine, I decided that parts of my brain needed to be reawakened by studying issues apart from my narrow field of work. It hasn't really been a surprise to me that I enjoyed my time at DePaul as a Liberal Studies student. After all, the courses I enjoyed most in my undergraduate years were in history, art history and literature. But the DePaul program allowed me the flexibility to study not just the classics in literature and philosophy. It also challenged me to choose unanticipated paths. A philosophical approach to environmentalism, current issues in globalization, the modern city, and the historical relationship between Christians and Muslims were just a few of the journeys I was

not expecting. While lifelong self-learning is of great value, one of the benefits of the masters degree has been simply in the suggested course list every quarter for MALS students. There, I invariably came across a topic that I would not have even considered in the world of self-learning. The World of Wine? Hmmm, sign me up! Modern Irish Literature? One of the best courses I've taken.

But like Odysseus, I find myself returning home at the end of my journeys. My thesis will explore an issue in organ donation. Specifically, is it really an ethical requirement for humans at the end of their natural lives to donate their vital organs only after they've been declared dead? This so-called "dead donor rule" has underpinned the organ donation process from the beginning of organ transplantation in the 1960's. Yet, many cultures and religions have difficulty with untraditional definitions of death, especially the concept of brain death. These untraditional definitions of death, necessary because of the dead donor rule, may actually be hindering, not helping, the

organ donation process. My thesis, under the guidance of Thomas O'Brien, Ph.D. in the Religious Studies Department, will argue that Proportionalism, a moral philosophy rooted in the Catholic tradition, allows patients to consent to organ donation at the end of life (or during the process of death), and physicians to assist them in organ recovery, even though this act would lead to their deaths in the traditional sense. This approach, outside the realm of traditional secular bioethics, would not have occurred to me had I not pursued the MALS program.

I've met lots of interesting people along the way and developed some friendships I otherwise would have missed. It's been lots of fun and lots of work, especially the writing in virtually every course. But it's been one of the more rewarding things I've done, leading me to unexpected places both personally and professionally.



# Dana Turner

## Dana Turner, Graduating IDS Student

It has been rewarding journey researching and writing for my thesis project as my final year in the graduate IDS program comes to an eventful close. Looking back to when I first began the program, I never imagined such wonderful opportunities would be in store for me as a student. However, because of the array of many resources available to graduate students with interdisciplinary interests, I was able to turn my research inquiries into a dynamic, satisfying pursuit for knowledge. Most importantly, through these experiences my life was enhanced for the better, impacting my life professionally as a student, providing me with the necessary tools and confidence to meet with scholars from all over the world as I prepare to attend an international conference on narratology in Paris, France.

Under the direction of my thesis advisor Dr. Francesca Royster, I wrote and submitted my paper on land, narrative and identity to the Narrative Matters 2012 conference "Life and Narrative" sponsored by The American University of Paris, The University of Paris Diderot-Paris 7 and the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Narrative at St. Thomas University. These institutions invited scholars from all disciplines to reflect upon the productive interplay between life and narrative.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DANA TURNER

The conference takes place May 29-June 1 on the campus of The American University of Paris where I will be presenting my paper in the "Narrative and Culture" workshop. I am honored that my paper was selected out of 613 scholars (with a 48% acceptance rate) from around the world.

Specifically, I am participating in the "Narrative and Culture" workshop discussing how my paper relates to cultural anthropology and ethnography in narratology studies. Here, I will speak on my ideas and experiences as well as results, problems, and questions that surfaced in my work. As stated by the conference organizers, "Narrative has a profound impact on our understanding of what it means to be human; of the choices we make as persons; of the nature of health and wellness, teaching and learning; of the meaning of history; of how social groups work through conflict; and of how the cultural and political world is ordered." This has been my core understanding of the field of narratology as well. And, so, it was natural for me to use the field as a means to explore the many questions I had surrounding rural southern culture, land, and its impact on the construction of identity. Land and geographical place remains to be an important theoretical consideration among narratologists; it was my hope that I could perhaps contribute my ideas in a meaningful way.

It means a lot to me that I was able to finally address some of the questions that have, I believe, helped shape my identity and also a community and generations of people. It has confirmed for me that I am making the right decision to apply to Ph.D programs next year. I am so thrilled to attend this conference in Paris; it will truly be an experience of a lifetime! So much hard work and dedication has gone into my thesis project; I couldn't have asked for a better way to end my studies at DePaul.

## Congratulations to Our MALS/IDS 2012 Graduates

Princess Beck  
Kate Camarano  
Frank Chaten  
Mary Edwards  
Amelia Garcia  
Zellencia Harris  
Keena Lemons  
Laura McLaughlin  
Amy Moncher  
Rhonda Parrow  
Paulette Pierre  
Michael Rast  
Jeff Tangel  
Dana Turner

"This has been one of the most challenging things I've ever loved!"

- Linda Habjan, MALS

Graphic from Narrative Matters 2012 Conference.



## Narrative Matters 2012 Life and Narrative

The American University of Paris  
May 29 - June 1, 2012

As a larger city, Chicago has more opportunities to foster my new endeavor.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANNA KAMELHAIR

## Student Anna Kamelhair Builds Her Program

Anna Kamelhair, IDS

I didn't fully understand what my degree in Psychology would prepare me for. After graduating with a BA from UNC Asheville, I began working in healthcare IT. I knew that if I wanted to do anything with my background I would need to continue my education, but none of the prescribed uses for a Psychology degree beckoned to me. Yet, I still personally loved pursuing it. At some point I discovered cognitive psychologist Donald Norman, who writes extensively on the concept of human-centered design. This really grabbed my attention; I had found an intellectual niche where my interest and knowledge of psychology could be applied to my long-standing love of design and creativity.

Both Chicago and DePaul's IDS program were the perfect fit. Chicago has a strong design community and the IDS program would allow me to tailor a unique curriculum. I dreamed of being in Chicago and felt that it had more opportunities; a larger city would foster my new endeavor and my desire to grow personally. Originally from Atlanta, I lived in Asheville, North Carolina, for the previous

six years and got used to the "easy" lifestyle in that laid-back mountain town. Moving to Chicago has been a huge readjustment, but it is important to stretch your comfort zone. It is easy to become complacent, and I am invigorated by the prospects of a challenge; it helps me remain flexible and mentally agile.

My proposed list of courses looks like a smorgasbord, but all are integral to my curricular concept. Fall quarter, I took classes in Psychology, Marketing, and New Media Studies. It was exciting to see how these cross-departmental classes play off of and reinforce one another. Winter quarter, I was enrolled in Usability Engineering, Qualitative Research Methods, and Consumer Behavior and have found the themes more interrelated than I anticipated. I see this as "connecting the dots"; grasping the interrelatedness of concepts is one of my skills.

My ultimate goal is to work as a design researcher or consultant. In studying the human-factors component of design, my aim is to consult with companies to develop their products toward increased usefulness, as well as aesthetics. Everything has psycho-anthropological derivatives, and we can use

our understanding of these concepts to solve everyday challenges intelligently and efficiently. One thing I particularly enjoy about this field is that design is a broad and varying concept and has a multitude of applications. I think the construct of user-centered design is how to frame problems differently and see them from the reference point of those affected while maintaining a global perspective.

An important aspect of the IDS program is taking responsibility for your education and aspirations. You have to clearly define what you want to accomplish and accept the challenges that come with creating your own academic identity. As an IDS student, you're not going through this process with a set of peers working toward the same goal, so there is the responsibility of making yourself and your mission known. I can be quite shy in new settings and I've had to fight that here. Tapping into available resources and some not-so-shameless self-promotion are essential to IDS survival. Any student who takes on the designing of their own curriculum must have the skills and motivation to do so. It's pretty nifty that DePaul University puts so much faith in its students.



# Laura McLaughlin

Laura McLaughlin, Graduating IDS Student

My original Statement of Academic Purpose outlined my desire to take a deeper look at the idea of organizational culture and the impact that it plays, both in the context of an organization as well as in the larger context of community. As with many Interdisciplinary Studies students, my curriculum became quite dynamic and the idea of organizational culture spanned into the disciplines of Human Computer Interaction, Marketing, Public Relations and Advertising, Sociology and Communication. I became aware that the methods in which we choose to communicate can have as much of a bearing on the cultures we find ourselves working in as some of the theoretical perspectives that drive the dialogue of organizational culture.

HCI (Human Computer Interaction) taught me the importance of communicating in visually impactful ways based on how we, as consumers of information, decide what we will look at and how we take in and process the information we see on the screens that have become a prevalent part of our lives. This was reinforced with the New Media Studies and Writing and Rhetoric classes taken through the School of Communication. The Marketing, Organizational Culture and Ethics course work

taken through DePaul's Kellstadt School of Commerce taught me that there is, in fact, a method to the seemingly mad way we act as consumers and as participants in the larger context of the organizations that we work for. Add to this the sprinkling of Sociology and how we define and live in our own individual spaces that we share with each other to form community, and my studies at DePaul have given me much more insight into the idea of Organizational Culture than I could have imagined.

The classes that I chose followed a passion that I found intriguing and have become a great compliment to my professional background. Because of the flexibility of DePaul's Interdisciplinary Studies program I can now make contributions that come from a unique perspective that is grounded in methodologies from a variety of academic disciplines, while at the same time add possibilities of new perspectives and solutions not previously thought of. So "Thank You" DePaul, for such a great program that not only provides the opportunity for such a great learning experience, but for taking the chance on the creativity of the students that you teach. You truly do empower us all to make a difference.



Lauren Dorman and Angelina Mendez

## MALS/IDS Staff Updates

2012 brought many good changes for our program staff. Joe Andrukaitis completed his Masters in New Media Studies, and moved on to a full-time web development position. He continues to work with us as freelance web manager for the AGLSP site. Jane Bohnsack completed her BA in English, and secured a position as program assistant at Northwestern University School of Law. We appreciate the many contributions they have made to our programs, and congratulate them on completing their studies and moving forward professionally.

We are very lucky to have Angelina Mendez step in as Program Assistant; Angelina began working with us last year as a student assistant while she completes her MA in Ed degree; she completed her BA and MA in English here at DePaul, and brings excellent writing, editing, and fact checking skills from her professional work in publishing. Our new Student Assistant, Lauren Dorman, transferred to DePaul from University of Toledo, and is working towards her BA in Arts, Media and Design. We happily rely on Lauren's print and web design expertise, which will keep us looking good. DePaul students comprise an incredibly gifted talent pool!

You may contact Angelina Mendez at [amendez1@depaul.edu](mailto:amendez1@depaul.edu) and Lauren Dorman at [ldorman@depaul.edu](mailto:ldorman@depaul.edu).



PHOTO COURTESY OF LAURA M. CLAUGHLIN



To see Laura's business website, go to <http://theglassrooster.com> and to see her coverage on ABC's Chicago show "190 North," go to <http://190north.com/episodes/190-Big-Deal-The-Glass-Rooster-Canning-Classes/8364442>.

DEPAUL  
UNIVERSITY



 **Convergence**

**MALS/IDS Programs**

2327 N. Racine Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60614

(773) 325-7840

<http://las.depaul.edu/mals>

<http://las.depaul.edu/ids>

<http://densejoyousmodern.com>

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT NO. 7366  
CHICAGO, IL

Address Service Requested

## Online Resources

MALS/IDS Blog  
**[www.densejoyousmodern.com](http://www.densejoyousmodern.com)**

Via Sapientiae: The Institutional  
Repository at DePaul University  
**[via.library.depaul.edu](http://via.library.depaul.edu)**

The Career Center  
**[careercenter.depaul.edu](http://careercenter.depaul.edu)**

Financial Fitness  
**[financialfitness.depaul.edu](http://financialfitness.depaul.edu)**

University Center for Writing-based  
Learning  
**[condor.depaul.edu/writing](http://condor.depaul.edu/writing)**

Adult Student Affairs  
**[studentaffairs.depaul.edu/  
adultstudentservices](http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/adultstudentservices)**

Financial Aid  
**[depaul.edu/admission-and-aid/  
financial-aid/pages/default.aspx](http://depaul.edu/admission-and-aid/financial-aid/pages/default.aspx)**

University Counseling Services  
**[studentaffairs.depaul.edu/ucs](http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/ucs)**

LAS Graduate Office  
**[las.depaul.edu/people/  
graduateoffice](http://las.depaul.edu/people/graduateoffice)**

Alumni Association  
**[alumni.depaul.edu](http://alumni.depaul.edu)**

Alumni Sharing Knowledge (ASK)  
**[ask.depaul.edu](http://ask.depaul.edu)**

Study Abroad  
**[studyabroad.depaul.edu](http://studyabroad.depaul.edu)**

Student Legal Services  
**[sls.depaul.edu](http://sls.depaul.edu)**

University Libraries  
**[library.depaul.edu](http://library.depaul.edu)**

Office for Academic Advising Support  
**[oaas.depaul.edu](http://oaas.depaul.edu)**

Productive Student uServices (PLuS)  
**[studentaffairs.depaul.edu/plus](http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/plus)**

Course Catalog  
**[sr.depaul.edu/coursecatalog](http://sr.depaul.edu/coursecatalog)**

Campus Events  
**[events.depaul.edu](http://events.depaul.edu)**

Student Involvement  
**[studentaffairs.depaul.edu/  
involvement](http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/involvement)**