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# Convergence

*A publication for students and alumni of DePaul University's MALS and IDS Programs*  
**Spring/Summer 2011**

## Building Our Community: MALS/IDS Gatherings

Susan Jacobs, Associate Director

Since MALS and IDS graduate students are very busy with their highly individualized programs, we offer informal social events each quarter to bring our students and DePaul resource people together. DePaul offers expansive academic and professional development support both online and in person. Our gatherings also spotlight our students' wonderfully diverse academic and professional accomplishments. We schmooze, we eat, we share great finds.

For our Autumn Gathering, Career Center Specialists Melanie Murray and Donna Del Giudice shared their expertise with our students. Melanie talked about maximizing social networking tools, specifically, LinkedIn, to improve professional visibility. She stressed the importance of achieving 100%



Jane Bohnsack, Professor Tirres, and Cristina Rodriguez at our 2011 Winter Tune-Up.

profile completeness and finding the exact key words to bring potential employers to your individual sites.

Donna Del Giudice shared her perspec-

tive not only as a Career Center Advisor specializing in Adult Career Changes—but also an adult career-changer herself. Donna has worked in HR for major corporations,

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### 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>.

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# Director's Letter



### Graduate Liberal & Interdisciplinary Studies in an Uncertain Economy—A National Perspective

This past October I became the president of the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs, the umbrella organization for programs like our MALS Program. I had already served for a previous term as a board member and a term as vice president/president elect. In these roles, I have frequently been called upon to review graduate liberal studies programs around the country. It has been fascinating to see firsthand how other programs work, and to hear directly from administrators, faculty and students what they think these kinds of programs should be aiming for.

I am frequently struck by DePaul's unique position in the spectrum of GLS Programs. Typically, a program will be entirely or mostly self-contained: Students take courses only within the program, an approach that allows the student's educational experience to be tailored to adult learners. Often these programs are housed within divisions of continuing studies, and are the only degree-granting program in their division. It's somewhat rare for students to be allowed access to a wide range of advanced undergraduate and especially graduate courses in departments and schools across the university, but this is what we offer here at DePaul in MALS and IDS.

For adult learners, how does this broad access translate into opportunities for intellectual growth and career advancement? Traditionally, graduate liberal studies (MLS) programs were thought of as cultural and academic "enrichment" programs for adults established in mid-career. Even our IDS program in the years before it joined MALS was largely oriented toward the interdisciplinary liberal arts. But since the late '90s more students have come to both programs with specific vocational goals in mind. Some have sought to gain mastery of content areas in the humanities and social sciences, while others seek specific professional skills in business, computing and digital me-

dia, communication or education.

We provide those opportunities, but we also challenge our students to develop graduate-level intellectual competencies that will help them excel, whether their goals are moving into an advanced graduate program or making that sought after career move. Among these are the ability to read challenging material with deep comprehension and to understand the history of ideas on which the author's perspective rests, the ability to write across a variety of academic and professional styles, the ability to communicate orally with clarity and persuasion, and the ability to conduct research in diverse fields.

Some graduate liberal and interdisciplinary programs are able to draw student audiences that are professionally and financially comfortable with promises of a great intellectual and cultural adventure. This is of course to be treasured, but we at MALS and IDS know that this is not enough for many of our students. This is where the distinctive nature of our program becomes an advantage. Access to graduate courses in all but a few of the university's many divisions means that our students are receiving the best quality education taught by leaders in their respective fields.

Our students are challenged to step up to the level of performance expected of students who were admitted to the many programs with which we cross-list, and this can translate to a degree that, with the right strategic leveraging, can help a MALS or IDS student move to the next stage of their lives. Further, we are committed to giving our students regular career-oriented enhancements, along with their course work, as you've read about in Susan Jacobs' article on our gatherings. I'm very proud of the program, and gratified to be able to help our students realize their goals.

Warm Regards,

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



*A publication for students and alumni  
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**Design:** Joe Andrukaitis

**Research:** Jane Bohnsack



## Building Our Community *continued from page 1*

completed SNL undergrad and PPS graduate degrees at DePaul, and actively explores improv comedy training, fiction writing, and public speaking opportunities. In Donna's view, when you walk out the door each morning, be ready to present. The more preparation and experience, the better.

For our Winter Tune-Up, we expanded our conversation to explore ways our students can use social media to share academic work. MALS/IDS interdisciplinary explorations don't fall into neatly categorized or traditional venues. Doug Miller, Career Center Specialist, discussed using social media to publish academic and professional projects. He recommends using a blog site like Posterous for publications as well as individual blog development. Doug stressed that new media encourages a more outward process—we publish to share communication interactively, not necessarily house our ideas in traditional print collections. MALS and IDS has joined this interactive forum; check out our program blog at [densejoyousmodern.com](http://densejoyousmodern.com).

Heather Jagman, DePaul's head of Library Instruction, showed us the Library's new Via Sapientiae, [via.library.depaul.edu](http://via.library.depaul.edu), DePaul's new online Institutional Depository. Dissertations and faculty publications are quickly making their way to this site; more than 80,000

faculty publications have been transferred to the site, and soon, Via will house all of DePaul's dissertations. This tremendous resource will link to social media platforms as well as traditional online databases; scholars will have wider audience potential and researchers will have easy access to the immense bibliographic data contained in these publications.

Lastly, alumni Cristina Rodriguez shared her impressive final IDS presentation. Combining event planning and marketing, Cristina landed an internship with Chicago's Mayor's Office of Special Events, working on Navy Pier event planning for the summer. For her Independent Study, Cristina observed and documented 12 events and produced a survey of how these events are designed and implemented. Her work translated into a position at University of Chicago as an event planner. Cristina's presentation illustrated the successful synthesis of personal drive coupled with effective use of academic, professional and cultural resources.

Whether the turnout for our events is large or small, those who attend enjoy good conversation and inspiration. We are a group that's not a group, which makes these gatherings so important and interesting. Do plan to join us at our next gathering!



From Top: Melanie Murray and Donna Del Giudice, Career Center; Doug Miller, Career Center; MALS student Erin Weber and friend; an invitation to our 2011 Winter Tune-Up.



PHOTO BY DAVID GITOMER

**"MALS students have a hunger for learning. It's very rewarding to be a part of the journey."**

Prof. Frida Kerner Furman leads students in MLS 405: Representations of the Body.

## Faculty You Should Know: Frida Kerner Furman, Ph.D.

Joe Andrukaitis, Program Assistant

Many of our MALS students have already had the chance to interact with Professor Frida Kerner Furman, Ph.D. in the core course MLS 405: Representations of the Body. However, some of you may not know about Prof. Furman's background, which has made her an ideal choice to lead our students in interdisciplinary study. After a childhood in Chile, Prof. Furman moved to Los Angeles, where she received a BA in Sociology and an MA and Ph.D. in Religion and Social Ethics from the University of Southern California. She then worked for several years in Portland, Oregon before joining the Religious Studies faculty at DePaul, where she specializes in Social Ethics.

Along with colleagues in the university's Communication and Anthropology departments, she developed the Representations of the Body course 15 years ago in response to the "explosion of interest in study of the body beyond physical reality." The course examines the ways in which the body is constructed and understood along the lines of race, gender, and disability. In one example, students look at the cultural and historical meaning of body modi-

fication practices such as tattoos and branding.

In addition to MLS 405, Prof. Furman also teaches REL 322/MLS477: Feminist Ethics, alternating between the two courses each year. Feminist Ethics represents "an effort to understand the moral experience of women in a world where traditional ethics have not placed women front and center." The course looks at themes of transforming social institutions not just in regard to the liberation of women, but other marginalized groups such as migrant domestic workers. In the process of investigating these complex topics, Prof. Furman's course employs the complementary disciplines of sociology, economics, and ethics.

When asked about working with MALS/IDS students, she says the experience has been generally positive. Her cross-listed courses usually have both graduate and undergraduate students, and "the mix has worked really well." The difference in ages brings a "high level of discussion" to the classroom, and Prof. Furman finds that Women's and Gender Studies undergrads bring a tremendous amount of sophistication to complement the maturity of the adult learners. In MALS students, in particular, she sees a "hunger for learning"

and finds it "very rewarding to be part of the journey."

This past fall, Prof. Furman took an academic leave from DePaul to work with two peace-building organizations in Jerusalem, the Interfaith Encounter Association (IEA) and the Parents Circle-Families Forum (PCFF). The IEA is an Israeli organization that brings Jews, Christians, and Muslims together for dialogue around religious themes to develop trust and understanding across the political divides to create an infrastructure that can support peace. The PCFF is made up of 250 Israeli and 250 Palestinians families who have lost a close family member to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Prof. Furman conducted interviews and analyzed data as part of the groups' efforts towards promoting peace building and reconciliation. For more information please see [theparentscircle.com](http://theparentscircle.com) and [interfaithencounter.wordpress.com](http://interfaithencounter.wordpress.com).

Professor Frida Kerner Furman's work has been featured in the books *Telling Our Lives: Conversations on Solidarity and Difference* and *Facing the Mirror*.

# Try Something New with New Media Studies

Joe Andrukaitis, Program Assistant

As the Program Assistant for MALS and IDS, I thought it would be worthwhile to draw attention to some courses in my own graduate program, New Media Studies. Like MALS and IDS, ours is an interdisciplinary program that combines the worlds of web design, graphic design, business, and writing. MALS/IDS will occasionally cross-list some of these courses, but students are welcome to register for any NMS courses that have openings. Here are a few courses I've taken in the past that might be of some interest to our students.

## NMS 504: Text and Image

In Professor Michael Moore's classroom, we were encouraged to embrace our varying skill sets by forming our own "design agencies" based on professional experiences and learning goals. If you were a professional graphic designer by trade, you could become your team's Art Director. Or if you were a design novice who really wanted to learn some Photoshop and InDesign basics, you could volunteer to "work for" that Art Director. Students were able to play to their strengths, but also branch out into unfamiliar areas of interest.

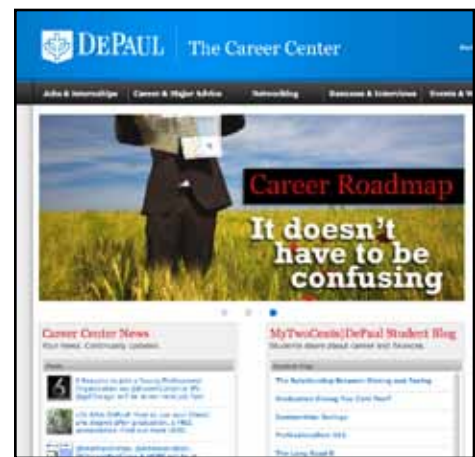
After the teams were assembled, we went out into the community to find clients in need of some pro bono design work. One team

worked with St. Joseph Services, a Chicago-based Vincentian charity, to deliver a revamped logo, new Graphics and Standards Manual, and a promotional YouTube video. The other team found a suitable client in City Farm Chicago, a one-acre sustainable produce farm in River North, for whom we designed new signage, produced an informational video aimed at volunteers, and educated the farm staff on mobile invoicing and social media marketing.

The most valuable takeaway from this course was to regard not just our teachers, but also our fellow classmates as valuable resources in our education. For any MALS/IDS students who would like to learn from their peers while also adding a design project to their portfolios, NMS 504 would be a great choice.

## NMS 509: Special Topics

As with other graduate departments at DePaul, the topics course in New Media Studies will vary from quarter to quarter, and are usually offered only once. These courses range from the practical, such as Web Scripting, to the theoretical, like The Films of Akira Kurosawa, or can combine elements of both, as in Database and Narrative. Keep your eye on the course listings for NMS 509: Special Topics in New Media Studies and you may find an interesting and unexpected addition to your interdisciplinary program of study.



## Financial Fitness at the Career Center

The Financial Fitness Program is one of the best resources The Career Center has to offer. The program is an excellent opportunity to meet with an advisor and talk about your current financial situation, from creating a budget, to the post-graduate economy, to deciding what type of loan is best for you. A financial advisor is there to work with you and to help your goals become economically feasible.

"The Career Center can be more than just a middle-man between education and career," says Michael Elias, Assistant Director of Full Time Positions and Internships. It's important to note, career advisors are there for you, and their experience is vastly wider than just information pertaining to a specific professional area. Career Advisors will work to help you hone your interdisciplinary education, in order to develop a coherent academic image to present to a future employer. Career Advisors can also help you tailor your professional goals to your degree, and assist with any transition you're making, whether it be into a new career, or a strategic move from academia to a profession. You can set up an advising appointment with Michael or stop in The Career Center with any questions you may have. The LPC and Loop Career Centers are open from 9-5:30, M-Th, and 9-5 F.

<http://careercenter.depaul.edu>  
<http://financialfitness.depaul.edu>



PHOTO BY MICHAEL MOORE

PHOTO COURTESY OF LAURA UPTON



A sense of community was exactly what she found when she decided to continue her education in the MALS program.

Lauren Upton, an academic advisor in the College of Communications and MALS alum.

## Student Spotlight: Lauren Upton, MALS

Jane Bohnsack, Student Assistant

Lauren Upton is both an alumnus of the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program and a DePaul employee. Lauren currently works as an academic advisor in the College of Communication. Lauren has utilized her MALS degree for professional development, but she began her time here at the DePaul in a very different vein. Initially recruited for the women's basketball team, Lauren found a home in the athletics department, while also discovering an academic niche, double majoring in Communication and Psychology. One of Lauren's major reasons for continuing at DePaul was the sense of community she developed here. That sense of community was exactly what she found when she decided to continue her education in the MALS program.

Lauren's own academic interests expanded extensively during her studies at DePaul. "DePaul education makes you well rounded," Lauren says. She began here with very little experience in interdisciplinary critical thinking, and wound up loving it so much she decided to continue her education and her career in

that style of academia. Her undergraduate experience set the bricks for discovering the MALS program, where interdisciplinary values form the basis of the curriculum. Lauren described herself as simply "narrow minded" before she began her education, with only limited experiences under her belt, but the curriculum and her graduate education have really made it possible for her world view to broaden, enabling her to truly combine her professional and academic lives.

Lauren really felt she benefitted from MALS' core curriculum. As a student athlete, Lauren never had the opportunity to travel outside of the U.S. or experience a study abroad program, so she was incredibly excited, but also a bit intimidated, by the required MLS 406: Exploring Other Cultures course. Lauren took an Asian Cinema Studies class in the final quarter and fell in love with the class. Her last required course ended up being a personal favorite, and indicative of exactly how she's experienced DePaul—a close knit, communicative family.

# Elizabeth Zak, MALS

Jane Bohnsack, Student Assistant

Elizabeth Zak, a recent graduate of the Masters of Liberal Studies program, is currently a Ph.D. candidate at Dominican University, specializing in Library and Information Science. As an undergraduate student, Elizabeth found herself inspired by the connecting threads of interdisciplinary study, earning a degree in journalism with a concentration in magazine writing and publishing. Those threads continue to inspire Elizabeth's time at Dominican, where she maintains an interest in issues that are interdisciplinary at their heart. "I am very interested in epistemology, and how we create, reinforce, and change knowledge, and what it means to be informed," Elizabeth says.

Elizabeth cites her time as a graduate student here at DePaul as having a significant influence on her final decision to pursue a Ph.D. Elizabeth feels that the level of academic autonomy offered to MALS and IDS students enabled her to feel confident beginning research in several areas of knowledge. "Without the freedom and trust afforded me in the MALS program, I would not have been able to complete coursework in several areas of study, ranging from sociology to art history, and I would not have the theoretical foundation necessary to pursue my research interests."

Because of Elizabeth's unique perspective as an alumnus and a continuing scholar, in hindsight she feels several resources specifically helped cultivate her studies while at DePaul.

"I believe some of the best resources available to MALS students are faculty, and the peer-to-peer networks that they should be forming. Dr. Gitomer always made himself available to me, whether I needed advice, or simply wanted to express my concerns as a student. It showed me that he had a real interest in my success in the program." Additionally, as simple as it may seem, Elizabeth found the library and librarians here at DePaul essential to her courses and research. "I think students take the library for granted with the advent of internet searching and Google, and they need to realize the wealth of information you can find in the library, and that some of that information may never be available online."

But practical experiences are meaningless without also maintaining the joy of learning in any form. Elizabeth's favorite memory of her time as a MALS graduate student was completing her thesis—"Talking Playgrounds: Communication Via Graffiti and the Creation of Alternate Spaces." Elizabeth spent time photographing playground graffiti, and many of those photos served as a major source for her thesis. "As you can imagine," Elizabeth says, "the content of those photographs made for some interesting conversation between my thesis advisor, Prof. Blackhawk Hancock, and myself." But those kinds of conversations, access to resources, and development of relationships during Elizabeth's time at DePaul have allowed her to move into an area of study that she both loves and at which she excels.

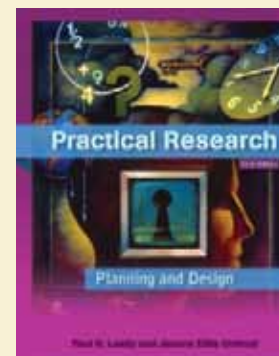


A selection from Elizabeth Zak's thesis, "Talking Playgrounds: Communication Via Graffiti and the Creation of Alternate Spaces."

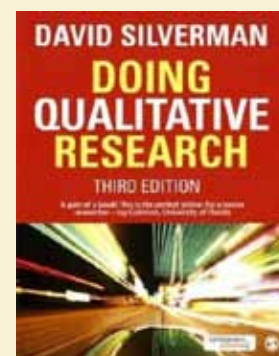
## Elizabeth Zak's Recommended Research Books



**Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches, 3rd Edition** by John W. Creswell



**Practical Research: Planning and Design, 9th Edition** by Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod



**Doing Qualitative Research, 3rd Edition** by David Silverman



PHOTO COURTESY OF KEENA LEMONS

"I told my employers this was a preparation for lifetime learning." The company agreed to pay her full tuition.

Keena Lemons, MALS student, at work.

## Keena Lemons, MALS

Joe Andrukaitis, Program Assistant

Keena Lemons will be finishing up the MALS program with Professor Frida Furman's MLS 405: Representations of the Body. For Ms. Lemons, who started her college career in her late thirties, the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies degree will represent the culmination of a long educational journey with DePaul that began with a Bachelor's Degree from the university's School for New Learning.

While taking classes at DePaul, Keena has also been working full-time at federal mortgage agency Fannie Mae for over five years, starting out as an administrative assistant and rising within the organization to her present-day role as Customer Sales Support Specialist, where she educates lenders and account managers on the company's software products.

After researching Chicago's various MBA and graduate Finance programs, Keena discovered DePaul's Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program, and "found a lot of positives in a liberal studies degree." She informed her employers that several well-known historical figures, including past presidents, held liberal studies degrees, and made a case that the writ-

ten and verbal communication skills gained from a MALS degree would be permanent, whereas the technical skills of an MBA or Finance degree are likely to become obsolete in a few years. "I told them this was a preparation for lifetime learning." Keena was so successful in convincing her supervisors of the program's merits that Fannie Mae agreed to pay her full tuition, a rare story in today's economic climate.

Ms. Lemons' biggest takeaway from the MALS program is an increased awareness of the world around her. "I had so many stereotypes and myths," she said, and credited courses like Shu-Ju Ada Cheng's SOC 470: Gender and Society for breaking down some of her cultural assumptions. David Gitomer's MLS 406: Exploring Other Cultures course opened her eyes to the traditions of India, after which Ms. Lemons experienced a newfound sense of camaraderie with her Indian-American co-workers. "I'd like to go to India one day," she continued, exhibiting a spirit of adventure that has no doubt been strengthened by her time in the MALS program.

# First-Person Discoveries

## Everything Is Connected

Jeff Tangel, MALS

In the last century I graduated with a degree in Philosophy and spent my entire adult life arguing with anyone who bought into any kind of dogma. Since I spent the bulk of my “career” in the trading pits in Chicago, economics and social justice became the center of my attention. Living in the citadel of free market ideology provided plenty of opportunity for a hyper-active, pugilistic and somewhat anti-social person to bang heads with true believers. Moreover I was drawn to a ten year battle against the siting of a dozen garbage burning incinerators in Illinois. Since trading itself was combative, and the true believers were as steadfast as the anti-environmental powers, I lived a fairly seamless life of contest.

Then I got tired. But I realized I had accumulated a substantial knowledge base about economics, politics, and the environment. I was a voracious reader of three daily newspapers, two weeklies, numerous newsletters, documents and government reports and many, many half-books. My daughter used to tease me that I’d never finish them! Well, I got what I needed, I said. But she was right.

I decided that what I needed was a deeper understanding and the discipline and a process that would shape and meld my varied learning into some sort of cohesiveness. That’s why I enrolled in DePaul’s MALS program. I saw the four core classes as an exciting opportunity to widen my knowledge base—reading Homer

and Dante, Raymond Williams and Bruno Latour, Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. DuBois, and Thich Nhat Hanh and Dogen were just what I needed to connect with broad cultural ideas that I had missed or only encountered superficially. And choosing eight electives was like being a kid in a candy store.

All of this appears to be coming full circle because I find myself working with DePaul’s Institute for Nature and Culture to help broaden people’s understanding of how those two forces interact and what can be done to improve that process. With the ongoing financial crisis (it’s only over for the top 10%) and the growing threat posed by climate change, this work is timely. I am deeply appreciative of the people that work at the INC, deep thinking scholars who are endlessly curious and who inspire me to be the same.

I was asked to write about an “a-ha!” moment. This is it: everything is connected. Everything. And opportunity is everywhere to employ that understanding. This is the benefit of a MALS degree. Without reservation, all of the professors I have had have been emblems of continuous exploration, of disciplined thinking and examined lives of purpose. My instinct to pursue a MALS degree was right. By immersing myself in broad subject areas I have achieved an ongoing and always developing cohesiveness which enables a sense of purpose that I hope to employ towards radical system change, perhaps less pugilistically, but forthrightly nonetheless!

## MALS Alum Danielle Eiseman Launches Non-Profit Organization

As developed nations adopt new restrictions on pollution, newly developing nations are left with little options. Many wealthy governments fail to consider the impact of world-wide regulations on the poorer ones. Nations that have been slow to develop manufacturing, now have the potential to sell carbon credits through reforestation and agricultural projects. Developing nations have large areas of farm land that are available for carbon credits. By trading on the carbon emissions market developing countries can acquire income instead of debt. The agriculture projects can provide food for those who go without it, and high polluters can offset their emissions. Wealthy nations such as the those in the EU do not want to participate in this type of trading scheme. The EU would rather see developing nations receive aid for new greener technology in industry, leading to further debt and exploitation of indigenous people.

Danielle developed the idea for CODI while writing her master’s thesis on the carbon offset market and submitted the plan to an international social enterprise competition. Her plan was picked as a semi-finalist. Through research she realized developed countries have the opportunity to take part in this emerging multi-billion dollar market. Meanwhile, developing nations that struggle with economic stability are left out of the market place. This market has the ability to promote social change and economic development in the areas that need it the most. Together we can fight climate change and enable small communities to establish green technology, whether that is in agriculture, manufacturing, or energy. Find out more at [www.codicarbon.com](http://www.codicarbon.com)

**"Quite quickly everything came together and suddenly I knew what I was looking for and how my personal views and experiences of history, politics and traveling could be expressed in creative ways."**



PHOTO COURTESY OF VESNA LAZAR

Vesna takes off on her Harley.

## The "A-ha" Moment of the Adventurous Mind

Vesna Lazar, MALS

I am exactly like everyone else. I am preoccupied with adventure. Many of my adventures happen in my apartment, which is a large one, but so crammed with books that when I eat there I have to hold the salad bowl in my lap. All desks and tables are taken. That's the way I like it—I navigate between the innumerable possibilities for excitement every day. All I have to do is look around and spot a book that somehow escaped being read or needs to be read again and off I go to China, England, Bolivia, or the Congo, 13th, 15th, 18th, 20th century—like a bird.

My other adventures consist of travelling to places I have read about or have been told about. These trips are usually just the starting points toward the discovery of the unknown and unpredictable things and places, situations, and experiences. The initial reasons for my travels vary and are not always obvious to everyone around me. For example, several years ago my sister doubled over in laughter when I told her that I was going to Jamaica, for I neither swim nor can stand to sit in the

sun. But I had to go and see Bob Marley's village and the house where he was born—it was a missing piece in my long-term love affair with reggae music. As a Dostoyevsky character would say, "That's the way I am." Most of the books I read turn out to be very exciting trips, while very often after returning from a trip (and sometimes while still there) I feel as if I have read a book.

Sometime in my teenage years I started to express my reading and traveling experiences in creative ways and continued to do so throughout my entire life; I wrote poems, diary entries, essays, one-act dramas, painted, and drew. I enjoyed each of these artistic expressions immensely, but somehow perceived them as just a search for the form of expression that would let out whatever I was holding inside of my "heart and soul" that begged to be set free. Not just years, but decades went by, and I failed to notice and observe what now might seem obvious: patterns and habits that pointed toward the answer.

I applied to the MALS program at DePaul University believing that more studying and learning was my last chance to discover the

form of expression that I was looking for. It turned out that my intuitive decision to aim for DePaul University—out of stubborn conviction that DePaul was the solution, I did not apply at any other school—was correct. From the beginning I ended up in classes that strengthened the weak points in my writing and spotlighted my interests: Feminist Ethics, Urban Essay, Multicultural Rhetoric, Visions of the Self, The City, as well as Study Abroad trips to Chile, Argentina, and Germany. Quite quickly everything came together, and suddenly I knew what I was looking for and how my personal views and experiences of history, politics, and traveling could be expressed in creative ways through personal travel essays that included everything in the wide range of fields that I was interested in.

I suspect that it was the way it had to happen, and that even searching and finding the art form that suits me could not have been a simple affair for me. It had to be a long-term adventure.

# Lost, Then Found

Rodrigo Therezo, IDS

I was very much lost when I came to the MALS/IDS Programs at DePaul University. I simply had no idea what exactly I wanted to do with my life in terms of having a career to pursue. Prior to my coming to the program, I had just decided that the life of a professional pianist was not for me. But deciding to put an end to a career path does not necessarily imply that one knows what to do next. And it was precisely this “not knowing what to do next” that brought me to the MALS/IDS Programs. I needed a program which would allow me to do exactly whatever I wanted and needed in order to figure out what academic career, if any, suited me best. After spending two years in the program, you could say I have found my way. Let me try to explain how this happened.

In my very first quarter as a MALS graduate student I took three courses which had, strictly speaking, nothing to do with each other. They were: “Visions of the Self,” “Egypt After the Pharaohs,” and “Daoism: China’s High Indigenous Religion.” The goal was to try my hand in fields that interested me and see where I could best develop my intellectual skills. Right away I noticed that literature attracted me the most. And so I decided to follow my nose as it were and took a course on literary theory and Roland Barthes. That was it! I had found what I wanted to do, both professionally and intellectually speaking. I just knew that my heart was set in becoming a literary reader of texts. The field of Comparative Literature then, seemed to be just right for me, for a Ph.D.



in Comparative Literature would allow me to keep my interdisciplinary interests while narrowing my area of intellectual research.

DePaul University has a spectacular Philosophy Department featuring internationally acclaimed scholars such as David Krell, Michael Naas, William McNeill, just to mention a few. In my view, every MALS student is more than justified in taking one or more courses from the philosophy department which is very interdisciplinary in the courses that it offers. I benefited immensely from a course on Derrida I took with Professor Michael Naas, who is nothing less than one of the most brilliant Derridean scholars in the world today. I learned so much from the course that it gave me enough confidence to apply to Comparative Literature Ph.D. programs across the country. Professor Naas helped me with my writing sample and kindly agreed to write a recommendation letter on my behalf. So when I received the great news in early February that Emory University had accepted me into their prestigious Comparative Literature Ph.D. Program, I knew how much I owed my acceptance to Professor Michael Naas and to the MALS and IDS Programs for providing the opportunity to experience Derrida by the hand of one of his best inheritors. Being about to close my academic story at DePaul, I must say that I am incredibly pleased with my trajectory, and I can only hope that other MALS and IDS students are as fortunate as I was during their graduate studies at DePaul University.

Rodrigo will be presenting his culminating project, “In Between Singing, Playing and Acting: A Musical Performance of Homer’s Iliad,” on Friday, June 10 at 7 p.m. at DePaul’s Cortelyou Commons.



Joe Andrukaitis and Jane Bohnsack

## Congratulations To Our Staff

This June, MALS and IDS is happy to congratulate our staff’s academic achievements at DePaul.

Our Program Assistant, Joe Andrukaitis, graduates with a Master’s Degree in New Media Studies. Joe will continue sharing his expertise with MALS/IDS part-time while doing web application design at a Chicago-based spend-management consulting firm.

Jane Bohnsack, our Student Worker, graduates with her Bachelor of Arts in English with a Concentration in Literary Studies. She will be leaving our program later this summer as she enters the work force full-time.

Both Jane and Joe have made invaluable contributions in representing our programs in print, online, and at university events. More importantly, Jane and Joe have created and maintained a welcoming office for our new and continuing MALS and IDS students. You can see evidence of their fine contributions to MALS/IDS in *Convergence* and our blog, **densejoyousmodern.com**. We wish them both the greatest success!

DEPAUL  
UNIVERSITY



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## Grant Opportunity from the National Endowment for the Arts

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) seeks to make the excellence and diversity of the arts widely available to the American public through every available media platform including television, radio, the Internet, interactive and mobile technologies, digital games, and satellite. By increasing the accessibility and impact of the arts, the Arts Endowment aims to strengthen the creativity of our nation.

Grants are available to support the development, production, and distribution of innovative media projects about the arts (e.g., visual arts, music, dance, literature, design, theater, musical theater, opera, folk & traditional arts, and media arts including film, audio, animation, and digital art) and media projects that can be considered works of art. The

NEA is seeking and will give priority to artistically excellent projects that have the potential to reach a significant national audience, through their primary platform, regardless of the size or geographic location of the applicant organization. Only projects of the highest artistic excellence and merit, in both media production and subject matter, will be funded.

Projects may deal with any subject matter or art form, and those targeted to children and youth are welcome. The agency encourages innovative, entertaining, compelling, and artistically crafted media projects that not only increase access to, but also enhance public knowledge and understanding of, the arts.

The range of awards is between \$10,000 and \$200,000. The submission deadline is September 1, 2011. For more information, visit

**[arts.gov/grants/apply/AIM/index.html](http://arts.gov/grants/apply/AIM/index.html)** or contact Laura Welsh, Media Arts staff at the National Endowment at **[welsh1@arts.gov](mailto:welsh1@arts.gov)**.

## 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)**

Institute for Nature and Culture  
**[las.depaul.edu/inc](http://las.depaul.edu/inc)**