

College of Liberal Arts

AREAS OF RESEARCH STRENGTH BY DEPARTMENT

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Archaeology:

- The major research strength of the Anthropology is archaeology. Presently, there are 14 archaeologist (prehistoric, historic, and nautical (both Old World, and New World) and two Centers (Center for the Study of the First Americans, and Center for Maritime Archaeology and Conservation), both of which have endowments to support the associated faculty, graduate students, and research projects. Over the years, both Centers were responsible for groundbreaking archaeological research and have interdisciplinary connections with all four departmental programs, other departments and Colleges across the campus. The study of the peopling of the Americas, the study of indigenous cultures, and the rise of internationalism, trade, and technological developments will be the major emphases.

Biological Anthropology:

- Behavioral ecology and conservation of non-human primates, focusing on the relationship between group living and ecological pressures such as predation and the temporal distribution of resources, as well as primate conservation.
- Bioarchaeology, paleodiet and paleopathology of human skeletal remains, examining the relationship between culture and biology in ancient human societies through study of skeletal growth and development, health, and bone chemical analysis of diet.
- Paleoanthropological investigation of Pliocene and Pleistocene hominins, including Middle Pleistocene Homo in Europe and Asia as well as the South African australopithecines and their surrounding animal paleocommunities.

Cultural Anthropology Research Strengths:

- The field of human evolutionary ecology employs Darwinian logic to explore the behavioral, anatomical and physiological adaptations of humans and non-human primates to their social, ecological and physical environments.
- Broadly defined, globalization involves the movement of people, things, and ideas across political and cultural borders. As the global economy becomes more and more integrated, world-wide processes are affecting local cultures and societies in unprecedented ways. A number of faculty in the Department of Anthropology are interested in formulating a research agenda within the overarching topic of globalization that would focus (among others) on the cultural correlates of socio-economic development, transnational migration, the African diaspora, and cross-cultural gender issues within the globalizing process.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

Organizational communication

1. New organizational forms, new economy, and globalization through leadership, dialogue, and organizational rhetoric.
2. Construction of collaborative working relationships among organizational members that addresses challenges due to emotions and stress, the management of knowledge, and power.
3. Communication practices within fundamental social institutions such as family, schools, and social assistance organizations.

Health Communication

1. Communication and health disparities with respect to utilization of care, quality of care, and health outcomes
2. Communication and medical/health decision-making
3. Communicative dynamics of health care organizations and health care policy.

Rhetoric and Public Affairs

1. The history and practice of public speaking and debate as tools for active citizenship
2. The history of presidential discourse, especially on issues of race, gender, and immigration
3. The history and theory of the First Amendment, especially freedom of speech and freedom of religion
4. Women and citizenship, especially women and health care

Telecommunication Media Studies

1. Cultural and social approaches to media studies
2. Technology studies, including international, global, and comparative perspectives
3. Race and ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, and nationality

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

- Decision-making (theory/ behavioral economics)
- Econometrics/Statistics for Social Sciences
- Matching (e.g., employee-employer; dating; student-school)

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Under the rubric of **English without Borders**, the English Department at Texas A&M has begun to focus on the scholarly study of English literature and language as a global phenomenon. In this endeavor, we are participating in nothing less than a redefinition of our field, along the following lines:

- Within British literature and cultural studies, English without Borders includes postcolonial studies and diverse "literatures in English."
- In American literature and cultural studies, it emphasizes trans-Atlantic studies; North American, "New World," or hemispheric literatures; African American and other Diaspora discourses; and indigenous, immigrant, and ethnic writing.
- In rhetoric and linguistics, it encompasses non-western and minority traditions, as well as dialects and discourses from around the world.
- In the study of writing and literature in general, it involves new media, digital humanities, and the evolution of writing practices under cultural and societal pressures.

In general, it is the transnational study of literature, language, and cultural practices with special attention to contact zones and contested discourses. But it also leaves open the possibilities of studying borders or boundaries in the broadest, most metaphorical sense: as in studies of gender, sexuality, and race.

DEPARTMENT OF EUROPEAN & CLASSICAL LANGUAGES & CULTURES

- **European Totalitarian Politics, Ideologies, and Cultures and their Post- WW II Legacies**
Several faculty in the French, German, Italian, and Russian sections (Bracher, O. Cooke, Golsan, Harris, Hawthorne, Marchesini, Rich, Schoolcraft, and Shandley) specialize in the intersections of politics, culture, and aesthetics in Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, Vichy France, and Soviet Russia, as well as the cultural and aesthetic changes and controversies which have marked the demise of each. Specific areas of specialization include the memory of Nazi Germany in film, politics, and intellectual debates; fascist aesthetics in Italy,

Germany, and France; the Vichy Syndrome and crimes against humanity in France; and the Soviet cultural avant-garde and Russian literature after Glasnost. Faculty in this area, have received national research prizes (the MLA Scaglione Prize, Hawthorne) and received multiple grants from the NEH, the Library of Congress, and the US Holocaust Museum.

- **Post Classical Classical Studies**

Faculty working in this area include Ciccolella, Kallendorf, Lake, and Oberhelman. They specialize in Byzantium, the Late Middle Ages, and the Renaissance. Faculty in this area have received fellowships from the I Tatti Foundation and the Loeb Foundation, both at Harvard, and have been recognized nationally and internationally for their work in Vergil Studies, the transmission of Greek culture in the Renaissance, ancient medicine, and Latin Prose rhythms. Oberhelman and Kallendorf are Cornerstone Fellows, and Ciccolella is a Rothrock Fellow. Oberhelman is the editor of the top ten journal *Helios*, and Kallendorf has been elected VP of the Vergilian Society.

DEPARTMENT OF HISPANIC STUDIES

1. **Transnational and Transcultural Studies:**

This is a convenient umbrella category that includes all those faculty working in Hispanophone areas in Spain, Latin America, and Africa. There are at least nine or ten faculty whose research spans national boundaries and / or involves other cultures. For example, Brian Imhoff is working on the language of Colonial Spanish documents; Alain Lawo-Suwac specializes in Afro-Hispanic studies; Sarah Misemer has just finished a book on popular cultural icons such as Frida Kahlo (Mexican artist), Eva Peron (Argentinian politician) and Selena (Mexican-American singer); and Jose Villalobos researches the literature and culture of the US-Mexican border; Steve Miller and Tim Mitchell are both much published and prominent specialists in comparative literature and culture.

2. **Early Modern Spanish Language, Literature and Culture:**

This area includes Medieval Spanish (Dyer), the Cervantes project (Eduardo Urbina) and Golden Age literature (Arizpe, Kallendorf) and Colonial Spanish language and literature (Dyer, Imhoff, Luiselli)

3. We also have some as yet underdeveloped strength in **Border Studies and Gender Studies.**

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

- **Comparative Border Studies –**

Comparative Border Studies is an interdisciplinary program that examines shifting boundaries of race, class, gender, religion, and politics in a variety of international and cultural settings. It builds on the rich themes that have long animated the study of the Atlantic World and the Spanish Borderlands of North America—including multiculturalism, conquest, human agency, identity formation, and environmental diversity—but extends these approaches methodologically, theoretically, and geographically. Students have the opportunity to study with faculty whose collective expertise includes Asia, Africa, Europe, Atlantic communities, the Americas, and regions within the United States.

- **Diplomatic and Military History –**

Diplomatic and Military History in our department is focused on the United States, Europe, or Latin America. Current faculty and graduate students study foreign policy and international relations, military experience and thought, and war and society. They are complemented by colleagues in the department who specialize in Britain, Germany, the Soviet Union, and the history of technology.

Both of these areas greatly enhance the ability to understand the problems facing contemporary Texas and the United States.

DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMANCE STUDIES

The Department of Performance Studies has two interrelated areas of research excellence, with faculty addressing the following questions in their research and creative activities:

Expressive Culture and the Challenges of Transnationalism

- How do cultural forms travel within and across national borders? How do they change as a result?
- How is citizenship constituted by, and reflected in, expressive culture in response to transnational flows of capital, people, and media?
- How do cultural forms drive, critique, and reflect transnational economies and politics?
- How does technology, broadly construed, enable or constrain expressive forms as they move transnationally?
- How do putatively transnational cultural forms represent multiple dimensions of difference (class, differentially-abled, gender, nationality, race, sexuality)?

Engaging Mediated Modernities

- How are experiences of being “modern” and of Modernity as an aesthetic movement, variable across cultural and national contexts?
- How does the idea of the “modern,” shape engagements with the past (aesthetic forms, technology, ideas of the folk, etc.)?
- Which subject positions, discourses, and experiences are privileged by various notions of modernity and which are not?
- How do communities create and receive the products of mediated modernities? How do they use them?
- How do cultural forms create and disseminate ideas of the “modern,” the “new,” and “progress”?

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

- History of Philosophy
- History and Philosophy of Logic
- Ethics and Political Philosophy
- American Philosophy
- Philosophy of Religion

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

- Democratic and institutional decision making
- Race/ethnicity/gender, representation & governance
- Statistics for the social sciences
- International conflict and cooperation
- Historical, normative, and formal political theory.

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

- mental health and disorder, including alcohol and substance abuse
- aging and memory
- interpersonal functioning and social relatedness
- infant development
- recovery of neurological function and stress adaptation
- diversity in the workplace

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Tentative Inventory of Areas of Strength in Sociology (preliminary draft Sept 12, 2008)	
Topics and Subtopics	Relevant Research Areas Represented in Sociology
Democracy and Diversity	
Racial and Ethnic Tensions	racial and ethnic relations
Immigration	demography
Social Inequality:	
Socioeconomic Inequality	race/class/gender; stratification
Health Disparities	demography
Cultural Differences and Multiculturalism	culture; social psychology; racial and ethnic relations; gender
Globalization and Social Change	
The Rise of China & India	sociology of Asia and the Pacific Rim
Impact of Globalization	social movements
Central and South America	sociology of Central and South America
The Rise of European Union	sociology of Eastern Europe
International Migration	demography
Environment and Climate Change	
pollution	sociology of corporations, social impact assessment, environmental sociology
environmental movements	social movements
environment and health	medical sociology
environment and developing economies	sociology of Asia and the Pacific Rim, sociology of Central and South America
National Security and Political Stability	
Democracy and Security	military sociology; political sociology; war and democracy
Terrorism in Global Context	sociology of terrorism; deviance and criminology
Human and Civil Rights and the War on Terror	sociology of terrorism