

"Human Trafficking in Ghana – Perspectives from the United Nations"

Group Members: Dr. Daniela Peterka-Benton, Dr. Yang Li, and Christabelle Robinson

To illustrate the larger issue of child trafficking in Ghana and attempts to end this inhumane exploitation, the event team invited Kingsley Nana Kwame Gyamera Abrokwa, Regional Child Labor Expert from Africa for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Mr. Abrokwa has a wealth of experience in the field of human trafficking and child protection through his work with the United Nations and also possesses research expertise with blockchain and Geographic Information Systems to monitor and prevent child labor in Ghana's cocoa sector.

A 2nd Installment of "The Circle of Arts"

Group Members: Dr. Johnny Lorenz, Alyssa Leslie Villasenor, and Dr. Kathryn Lockwood

The group created a 2nd installment of this exciting collaboration involving poetry, visual art and music: "The Circle of Arts." This installment of The Circle took place on the evening of March 26, 2024, at 7pm at Gold Montclair, a fantastic art gallery in Upper Montclair. It was wonderful to organize this event in a space off campus, within the larger Montclair community. Our event brought together the poetry of Val Vinokur (a poet, translator and professor at The New School); the paintings of Niki Kriese (her art was on display in the gallery); and the music of the Cali Collective, a string quartet with two horns (playing compositions from Bach and Caroline Shaw, for example; they also played Romanian Folk Dances and ended with a heartbreaking reinterpretation of a Leonard Cohen song). In fact, the musicians chose pieces that, in some way, spoke to the paintings on display. Similarly, our poet, Val Vinokur, read poetry that touched on themes he found in the artwork.

2nd Annual Legislative Breakfast, Addressing Human Trafficking in New Jersey: Policy, Research and Practice

Group Members: Ali Boak, Elizabeth Rich, Isabelle Ramos, Dr. Brigid Callahan Harrison, Dr. Christopher Salvatore, and Dr. Emily Douglas

The Global Center on Human Trafficking held the 2nd Annual Legislative Breakfast Addressing Human Trafficking in New Jersey: Law, Policy, and Practice on the Montclair campus. The breakfast brought together Montclair faculty, staff, and students with state policy makers, legislators, community organizations, and advocates to examine the issue of housing insecurity for survivors of human trafficking in New Jersey. Attorney General Matthew Platkin was a keynote speaker. Impacts included 1) Educated and raised awareness among more than 200 attendees; 2) Identified gaps and challenges in housing and the impact on the recovery and

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reintegration on human trafficking survivors; 3) Effectuated change in policy at the state level; 4) Strengthened relationship between Montclair and key policy makers and legislators in the State of New Jersey.

Medieval and Early Modern Studies Seminar (MEMS)

Group Members: Dr. Alison Beringer, Dr. Elizabeth Emery, Dr. Raul Galoppe, Dr. Minji Lee, Dr. Kathleen Loysen, Dr. Jeffrey Miller, Dr. Megan Moran, Dr. Meghan Robison, and Dr. Adam Rzepa

The Medieval and Early Modern Studies (MEMS) Seminar had an especially productive year. They hosted a mix of internal and external speakers from various humanities and social science disciplines, and also convened our first MEMS Research Roundtable. MEMS is a longstanding interdisciplinary speaker series housed in CHSS, with co-convenors from eight different Departments: Classics and General Humanities, English, History, Philosophy, Religion and Medical Humanities, Spanish and Latino Studies, and World Languages and Cultures. This year, we hosted speakers working in Political Science, Italian and French, English, and History, representing universities in New Jersey and abroad.

Consumption, Waste and Recycling from Antiquity to Present Times

Group Members: Dr. Enza Antenos, Dr. Deborah Chatr Aryamontri, Dr. Dawn Hayes, Dr. Greg Pope, Dr. Timothy Renner, Dr. Peter Siegel, and Dr. Neeraj Vedwan

The group hosted a two-day hybrid conference on the subject of consumption, waste management, recycling and reuse of goods. The scope of this conference addressed selected issues within this broad umbrella topic by looking at present and past cultures of different geographic areas in the world—the U.S., the Caribbean, the ancient Mediterranean—in order to explore underlying common ground on which scholars and practitioners with different backgrounds, and with different specific issues confronting them, can come to work together.

The Friendly Bench Initiative

Group Members: Dr. Elizabeth Emery, Dr. Eunice Park, Dr. Brenda Marshall, and Shelagh Patterson

The initial goal of the interdisciplinary group, which brought together colleagues in Nursing, Public Health, Writing Studies, and World Languages, was to create a Montclair version of the [Friendship Bench Project in Zimbabwe](#) created by psychiatric professor Dr. Dixon Chibanda and now in use all over the world. Our version provided training in Mental Health First Aid (for students, faculty, and community members), with a focus on training senior women from the Montclair community to come to campus to create a set of safe set of ears on campus for college

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students struggling and afraid or unwilling to seek help from mental health professionals. These “grandmotherly” (in the parlance of Dr. Chibanda) Mental Health “first aiders” serve as a bridge that connects the student with the needed supports provided by the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) and the Disability Resource Center (DRC).

Autism Interdisciplinary Group

Group Members: Dr. Erin Kang, Dr. Laura Lakusta, Dr. Jennifer Yang, Dr. Jennifer Bragger, Dr. Brian Abrams, Dr. Aaron Helgeson, Dr. Michael Hannon, Corinne Catalano, Eileen McKeating, Drew Wallace, Dr. Victoria Puig, Dr. and Dr. Alicia Broderick

The Autism Interdisciplinary Group (AIG) aims to join together researchers, clinicians, stakeholders, staff, and students at Montclair State University (MSU) and in the community. During this academic year, the AIG was approached by a film team regarding a possible screening of their film “ASD BAND: The Movie.” AIG leadership was excited to partner with the production team to bring this film to the MSU community, and we hosted virtual screenings of this film prior to our annual symposium. In addition to the “ASD BAND: The Movie” screening, the AIG also hosted its third annual multidisciplinary symposium in April 2024 during Autism Acceptance Month.

RIGS: Climate Justice: Mapping Community Vulnerabilities and Crafting Strategies

Group Members: Dr. Arnaud Kurze, Dr. Timothy Gorman, Dr. Neeraj Vedwan, and Dr. Jorge Truebe

The mission of RIGS (Research on Interdisciplinary Global Studies) is to support a vibrant and synergistic community of scholars who traverse disciplinary and geographical boundaries. The Climate Justice initiative, a collaboration between departments in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) and the College of Science and Mathematics (CSAM), including Anthropology, Justice Studies, Sociology, and Earth and Environmental Studies embarked on a comprehensive exploration into climate vulnerabilities and strategies for resilience. The Climate Justice initiative at Montclair achieved its objectives of fostering interdisciplinary dialogue, promoting community resilience, and empowering students as agents of change in climate justice advocacy. By integrating global perspectives with local engagement, the initiative contributed to a deeper understanding of climate challenges and highlighted pathways towards sustainable and inclusive solutions.

HOLA Oral History Initiative & Digital Archive Project

Group Members: Antonella Calarota-Ninman, Dr. Anne Edstrom, Dr. Raul Galoppe, Dr. Fernando Naiditch, and Dr. Stephen Ruszczyk

The approach to this initiative has involved five distinct steps: (1) preparation and training of students as oral history interviewers during the two academic semesters; (2) collecting of interviews; (3) reaching out to organizations and companies to create partnership with HOLA; (4) curating our website and a campus digital archive launched last year where we share these oral histories with the broader public; and (5) hosting an on-campus event with public school teachers to show them how to use oral history in their classroom. In the 2023-2024 academic year we carried out a handful of different projects. One project collected oral histories with immigrant detainees, in collaboration with First Friends NJ/NY. A second one focused on oral histories with Latino student families. A third one focused on the work that Latino organizations have done and are doing in nearby communities. These projects respond to our objectives of documenting, understanding, and engaging with northern New Jersey's Spanish-speaking and Spanish language heritage groups. In the process, we are connecting students with the Latino community on and off campus. We have engaged in topics of recent history and public interest in New Jersey, reflecting the growing representation of Latinos in our state.