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Congratulations to the 2008 Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl champions: (from left) Philippa Lieber, Matt McAlister, Alyssa Mander, Rahul Loungani and Dani Scoggins. The team was coached by Charles Starkey, assistant professor of philosophy and fellow of the Robert J. Rutland Institute for Ethics.
A Message from the Dean

Dear Readers of AAH,

When I came to work as an assistant professor of theatre at Clemson University in 1976, Elvis was really alive; Gerald Ford was president of the United States; and Robert Edwards was president of Clemson University. The chair of the Department of English, Ron Moran, wanted to grow the theatre program, and I became the new designer/technical director. At the time, current IT included mimeograph machines (the purple press), IBM “Selectric” typewriters and carbon paper.

I am now professor emeritus of theatre serving as interim dean of the College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities (AAH). Earlier this year, I chaired a panel of AAH faculty for Cyberinfrastructure Days, a Clemson-sponsored conference to extend the collaboration and impact of research, teaching and service with seamless IT services. The three AAH faculty who presented their research and teaching captured the imagination of a highly tech-savvy audience with their work, which included animated modeling and rendering, the digital recovery and restoration of 100-year-old audio materials and student presentations using a parallel digital universe.

The audience and I both learned just how much the faculty of AAH are on the frontiers of learning, using cutting-edge technologies and freely crossing disciplines to ask the timeless and timely questions. Their students are right along with them, often researching in small multidisciplinary teams on Creative Inquiry projects. This issue of AAH focuses on the multitude of ways that students, staff and faculty are employing technology to serve their restless curiosity.

You’ll also read about plans for a new Lee Hall Complex and the Center for Visual Arts — LEED-Certified structures that will define the future of Clemson University as a technologically integrated, interdisciplinary institution where blindingly creative and enormously sophisticated solutions for our future are developed. Read on and see!

Sincerely,

Clifton S.M. Egan, Interim Dean
College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities
Wikipedia defines a blog as a Web site, usually maintained by an individual, with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events or other material such as graphics or video. (“Blog,” 2008, n. p.).

While often erroneously described as online diaries in which individuals write their innermost personal thoughts for all to read, blogs have established a more professional presence in journalism, the corporate world and the academy, including at Clemson University. I talked with several AAH faculty members who are active bloggers and found a common denominator: Blogging enables them to reach out to their intended audiences much more easily and effectively than conventional means and also with an immediacy and intimacy that is missing from traditional channels of publication and exhibition.

ELISA SPARKS

Associate professor of English Elisa Sparks’ new blog WoolfWorld (2wolfworld.blogspot.com) combines her interest in the virtual world Second Life with her academic area of expertise in Virginia Woolf. According to Sparks, WoolfWorld enables her to blog about ideas for creating a space in Second Life for scholars and common readers of Virginia Woolf to meet, to talk about Woolf and to experience some aspects of her life. When asked what she gets from her blog that she does not get from traditional academic publications, Sparks referenced the immediacy of the Web, not to mention that it enables many more people to read, use and respond to her work. She did, however, point out that as a result of her presence on the Web, she has received offers to do more scholarly work and that many of her research interests go back and forth from Web to publication.
Christina Nguyen Hung is an assistant professor of art whose artwork is highly innovative, unconventional, multimediated and cross-disciplinary. She recently started a blog (christinahung.net/blog/) that she says benefits her work by providing added contextual information and elements that are not displayed easily within the traditional context of an art gallery. The blog will allow her to share the technical and theoretical aspects of her work and process that may not make it into final artworks. Moreover, because she works in the area of biomedia and interactivity, it is not always suitable for traditional exhibition venues. “I hope that my work and blog — along with the work of other artists using nontraditional media and biomedia — might help create the conditions which allow new exhibition and publishing opportunities to arise,” Hung says.

David Novak

Assistant professor of communication studies David Novak started his None Unchanged blog in late 2007, in part because he says, “I didn’t see a good blog out there that does communication how I do it — in a kind of hybrid humanities-social scientific way.” Unlike Sparks and Hung, Novak’s blog (humancommblog.blogspot.com/) is not intended to be a forum to present his own scholarship per se, but rather to enable him to bring disciplinary knowledge to everyday things such as movies, news stories, pop culture phenomena and the like. When asked why he chooses to do this in a blog in addition to more traditional academic publications, he replies that the blog enables him “to talk about some fun stuff” and also to “write in a little bit different format” than what he is used to. More importantly, he points out that the kind of things he can blog about would take two years to do in a journal, and an academic journal probably wouldn’t publish many of the things he blogs about.
In a 2006 article published in *Continuum: Journal of Media & Culture Studies*, humanities scholar Melissa Gregg, who describes blogging as “conversational scholarship that has followed in the tradition of independent and small-press publishing, reading groups, salons and even café culture” (p. 153), argues, “Blogs have made scholarly work accessible and accountable to a readership outside the academy” (p. 148). Blogging is a way for those of us inside the academy to be public intellectuals of a sort.

When asked specifically whether their blogs function to position them as public intellectuals, everyone with whom I spoke offered a generally positive response. Hung replied that she hopes to engage in dialogue with other artists, scientists and scholars, both amateur and professional, through her blog. Further, she believes she has more to gain than to lose by freely sharing her work and process and that if this makes her a public intellectual, “then so be it.”

Similarly, Sparks replied with a yes and no. While she hopes it inspires and educates and delights people ... it isn’t particularly opinionated in the manner that many political blogs and more typical public intellectuals are. She concluded, however, by acknowledging that in some ways she aims “to change the traditional definition of intellectual, which often disdains the visual imagination as a decorative extra.”

While Novak tends to think of public intellectuals as people such as Princeton professor Cornel West and University of Pennsylvania professor Kathleen Hall Jamieson — scholars one would see commenting on CSPAN or being interviewed on PBS — he agrees that “maybe somebody will think about things a little bit differently as a result of a post” on his blog.

Another common thread across all of these interviews was the role blogs play in bringing people together — in creating a space for people to engage in a dialogue that might not otherwise have taken place. Even more than blogs, social networking sites function to bring people together, something that is a major purpose of the Clemson Art Network (clemsonart.ning.com/).

In addition to her own blog, Hung manages this unofficial online network for the faculty, students and alumni of the University’s Department of Art. The site, according to Hung, is actually a social network anchored by a collectively authored blog. In addition to the more collective main page, each member of the network has his or her own page and blog. Hung created the network to take advantage of the best and most popular aspect of the Web: social networking. She sees it as an easy and convenient way for students, faculty and alumni to have a Web presence and display images of their artwork without having to build their own Web sites.

The site serves as a complement to the more formal departmental Web site, the latter of which conveys important information in a well-designed and stable way. According to Hung, the Clemson Art Network provides a fluid, interactive and
open publishing structure so that the members of the network are responsible for the content, something she sees as important for building and maintaining strong and dynamic relationships with alumni of the department. Indeed, the concept of strong and dynamic relationships is really a big part of what all of these faculty blogs are about. Whether it is relationships with Clemson faculty, students and alumni, academics at other institutions, professionals or people with an interest in the subject matter – blogs do provide a public forum for intellectual dialogue and go a long way toward making the University’s College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities known across the blogosphere.

**Haynes** joined the Clemson faculty in 2006. She has a B.A. in German as well as an M.A. and Ph.D. in humanities (rhetoric/composition and critical theory), all from the University of Texas-Arlington. Her 2003 article “Writing Offshore: The Disappearing Coastline of Composition Theory” JAC, 23(4), 667-724 was the winner of the James Kinneavy Award from the Association of Advanced Composition.

**Hung** began teaching at Clemson in 2007. She has a B.F.A. from the Atlanta College of Art and an M.F.A. from Carnegie Mellon University. She presented her art project “American Vectors” at the International Symposium on Electronic Arts (ISEA) in Singapore in July 2008. The project, which combines biomedia, Internet and printmaking technology to represent several of the enduring airbases run by the American military in Iraq, may be viewed at www.american-vectors.com.

**Novak** joined the Clemson faculty in 2006. He has a B.S. in public relations from Illinois State University, an M.S. in communication from Illinois State and a Ph.D. from Ohio University in organizational communication. Novak was the lead co-author on the article “Flipping the scripts of poverty and panhandling: Organizing democracy by creating connections,” which appears in the November 2008 issue of the *Journal of Applied Communication Research*.

**Sparks** has been teaching at Clemson since 1978. She has a B.A. in English from Bryn Mawr, as well as an M.A. and Ph.D. in English from Indiana University. She is the author of “Bloomsbury in Bloom: Virginia Woolf and the History of British Gardens,” forthcoming in *Art, Education, and Internationalism: Selected Papers from the Seventeenth Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf*.

**References**

New Life for Lee Hall
by Leslie Thornton

Clemson University students are literally designing the future. The School of Design + Building graduates go on to shape the built environment through architecture, art, city and regional planning, landscape architecture, historic preservation, real estate development, environmental design and planning, and construction science and management. With a constantly evolving and growing marketplace of environmental, health, geographical and spatial concerns, graduates in these fields are in high demand—and Clemson is eager to continue to deliver.

As Clemson’s design + building disciplines have grown and multiplied over the years, however, their physical home—the 50-year-old Lee Hall—has fallen far behind in providing adequate space for its inhabitants. Today, Lee Hall holds merely half the amount of space needed for the continued success of Clemson’s design + building programs.

Following a proposed two-phase approach, the renovations and additions will take Lee Hall from its current 110,000 square feet (72,000 net assignable square feet) to more than 200,000 square feet (with more than 140,000 net assignable square feet). Clemson’s Board of Trustees gave initial approval to this building project in July.

Taking Stock in the Stars

Clemson’s design + building disciplines are leading their fields. The Design Futures Council and Design Intelligence rank Clemson’s graduate School of Architecture among the top 10 programs in the nation, and the Planetizen Guide to Graduate Urban Planning Programs places Clemson seventh in the nation among non-Ph.D-granting programs and 10th in the South among all graduate programs.

Expanding and renovating Lee Hall will allow Clemson to continue to be recognized in national rankings such as these. Moreover, by creating additional classroom and studio space, the departments will have the necessary facilities to offer smaller class and studio sizes, thereby serving students better and helping the University on its quest to become a top-20 public university.

Most importantly, expanding Lee Hall will allow Clemson to accommodate current students and staff, increase enrollment in response to market demands and add new programs of study. This represents the first significant addition of space for the College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities since the Brooks Center opened in 1994.
“Clemson’s new Center for Visual Arts (CVA) will be a working studio where art and visual culture are explored in ways that will transform the lives of our students,” says Chip Egan, interim dean of the College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities.

Situated between the Brooks Center for the Performing Arts and Lee Hall, the CVA will offer all students at Clemson a venue for collaboration and world-class gallery space. It will also provide new, innovative studio space for Clemson’s award-winning art faculty and students. The building will serve as a creative bridge between visual arts and all the other disciplines at Clemson. And in reality, the center will actually be a bridge — a 65,000-square-foot pedestrian bridge that will stretch from the Brooks Center to Lee Hall.

Learning to harness one’s creativity is a skill that is central to every major and degree program at Clemson, from engineering to nursing to history to architecture. “It is in the public domain,” states Egan. “It belongs to all of us.”

Clemson already has a great track record of collaborating across different disciplines. Professor Art Young’s Writing Across the Curriculum program has been praised by both TIME magazine and The Princeton Review and was cited again this year when Clemson reached No. 22 in the U.S. News & World Report ranking of best national public universities.

Another primary purpose of the CVA is to provide gallery space where students and visitors can experience world-class art. “Think about what the Brooks Center has done for Clemson,” says Egan. “This past year alone, Clemson students had the opportunity to walk across campus to see Tosca or hear the National Symphony Orchestra. For many, those are life-changing experiences.

“When I tell friends of Clemson about the Center for Visual Arts, I like to remember what emeritus professor John Acorn said. ‘Some people see art as the frosting on the cake, but in fact, art is the yeast in the bread.’”

For more information about CVA programs or to join the Friends of the Center for Visual Arts to support the center’s programs, please contact Denise Woodward-Detrich at (864) 656-3899 or woodwaw@clemson.edu.

Conceptual rendering by the Boudreaux Group, SmithGroup and Seamon, Whiteside & Associates Inc.
The CAC.C took advantage of the unique venue by creating an exhibition that could be viewed both at eye level (through magnifying glasses) and from above (through binoculars).

Undergraduates Reap Research Rewards

Literary Festival Celebrates the Written Word

by Amy Bickett

This past March, an impressive group of nationally recognized authors — including Dave Eggers, Ron Rash and Laurence Lieberman — gathered in Clemson to share their work at the University’s first literary festival. The three-day event drew audiences from the surrounding area as well as other states. In one sense, the core of the festival was non-technological — authors continuing the age-old tradition of telling their stories. However, in a more comprehensive sense, the festival could not have been the success it was, nor could it have been carried off so quickly, without the help of various technologies. From emails to listservs to Facebook to e-publishing, the Creative Inquiry team — as well as the participating authors — leveraged technology every step of the way. Events were slated at multiple locations on campus and in town and included readings, workshops, panel discussions, kids’ events and more.

The festival was made even more special with its celebration of the 40th anniversary of Clemson’s literary magazine, The South Carolina Review. To learn more about the Review and see photos from the literary festival, visit www.clemson.edu/caah/cedp/writers_nook.htm.

Amy Bickett ’08 was a member of the undergraduate Creative Inquiry team that mounted Clemson’s inaugural Literary Festival.

Students and Faculty Collaborate on “MINImuseum”

by Robert Miller

The “MINImuseum of Richard McMahan” was an exhibition of more than 1,100 works of miniature art designed and built in spring 2008 by students, faculty and staff of the Clemson Architecture Center in Charleston (CAC.C). The exhibition was mounted in the rotunda of the Addlestone Library at the College of Charleston. It was curated by the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art and was a Piccolo Spoleto Exhibition.

The purpose of the CAC.C is to bridge academia and practice, placing students in an environment that teaches them to think and work in critical practice. The “MINImuseum” was an ideal opportunity to fulfill this mission, offering an actual project with an interesting program, a dramatic setting and a real client.

The students and professors collaborated in a group that was a cross between a small practice and an academic studio. While there is no way the students could have pulled off this project without extensive professorial input and oversight, it is equally true that the professors were entirely dependent upon students for initiative, production and delivery. This project was not a professor’s scheme executed by students; it was entirely the product of collaboration on many levels. Every member of the design team owned a piece of this project, some larger and others smaller. The work as a whole was, to revert to an oft-cited but seldom-fulfilled cliché, greater than the sum of its parts.

Robert Miller is director of the CAC.C.
Preserving Humanity’s Distant Past

In 2006 landscape architecture students from Clemson began a transcontinental collaboration with architecture students from Ain Shams University in Cairo, Egypt. Together, the two schools have teamed up to provide design solutions to challenges in Luxor, Giza and Cairo — locations of some of the world’s most treasured antiquities.

Their work began with the Avenue of the Sphinxes along the Nile River, an area that has experienced centuries of unplanned urban growth. More recently, the students have collaborated on a proposal for the area at the foot of the Giza plateau, home to the Great Pyramids of Giza. Much like the challenge in Luxor, the students’ current project is to find solutions to a rapidly changing urban fabric, this time in the very shadow of the world’s most famous pyramids.

According to Clemson landscape architecture professors Hala Nassar and Rob Hewitt, the pyramids of Giza are on top of one plateau, and the future site of the New Grand Egyptian Museum is on another nearby plateau. Between them and to the east, a sprawling and unplanned fabric has developed over the past 50 years.

Nassar, who used her academic contacts in Egypt to establish the collaboration, said the students and their faculty leaders are seeking practical solutions to the unplanned sprawl, but solutions that will remain sensitive to the cultural and economic needs of the residents.

“This is an amazing opportunity for the students of these two universities, a chance to have an impact on an ancient site,” Nassar says. “They’re working and studying in a place where they leave their footprints on thousands of years of civilization.”

“Coverings” Provides Real-World Challenge

The assignment: design and build an indoor putting green — not out of grass or anything that looks like grass — but out of ceramic tile and natural stone. Make it beautiful; make it functional; make it movable; make the deadline.

This past spring, in a logistical feat of art and engineering, 17 Clemson art and ceramic engineering students achieved all of the above. They collaborated to create and construct the 12’ x 24’ structure, then they dismantled their creation (very carefully) and transported it all to Orlando, Fla., (even more carefully) just in time for the opening of “Coverings,” an annual expo and convention for the ceramic tile and natural stone industry.

“I teach ceramic art, and normally, if my students miss a deadline, it’s bad, but they are the only ones who suffer,” explains Sue Grier of Clemson’s Department of Art. “This experience of a real client and an immovable deadline put pressures on them and taught them lessons that will be useful the rest of their careers. It was pretty scary at times, whether we would get it done on schedule and whether we could get it down there without wrecking it, but we did.”

Grier team-taught the class with Eric Skaar, professor of ceramic engineering, and Molly Kennedy, assistant professor of materials science and engineering. The tile and stone were contributed by “Coverings” exhibitors.

A Clemson landscape architecture studio provides the perfect setting to collaborate on creating a new master plan for the area surrounding the Great Pyramids of Giza.

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Grier team-taught the class with Eric Skaar, professor of ceramic engineering, and Molly Kennedy, assistant professor of materials science and engineering. The tile and stone were contributed by “Coverings” exhibitors.
Think hospital room, and images of uncomfortable beds, bad lighting, stale air and dreary views leap to mind. But Ellen Vincent, Clemson doctoral candidate in the environmental design and planning program, is helping to change that. Her area of concentration is the built environment as it relates to health. In collaboration with her dissertation chair, Dina Battisto, Vincent is studying the effects of nature-based images on health.

“It is known that exposure to surrogate nature views, represented on screen or wall, has the potential to cause a psychological and physiological shift toward wellness,” writes Vincent. “What is not largely known is which images are more therapeutic than others.” Using multiple research methods – a sorting task, focus groups, interviews and a clinical experiment – Vincent is learning which types of nature images are the most restorative.

“In environmental design and planning, there are not a lot of precedents in what we’re doing – conducting an experiment with an interdisciplinary team from architecture, landscape architecture, art, nursing, psychology and computer science. It’s truly cutting edge,” says Battisto. “Ellen’s very passionate. She’s driven to the point where she’s not going to be dissuaded by the obstacles that come with research, and there are many, I think Ellen’s one of the most optimistic students I’ve ever seen. She embraces the challenges that come with research.”

In July, Vincent presented the first phase of her research at the Third International Conference on Interdisciplinary Social Sciences at the Monash University Centre, Prato in Tuscany, Italy. Phase Two is under way this fall in a simulated hospital patient room in Clemson’s School of Nursing. Phase Three will occur in a real hospital setting and begin sometime next year. Vincent is hopeful that her doctoral research will offer recommendations on how to include nature scenes in health care settings that may help reduce stress for sick patients.

Ellen Vincent
Ph.D. Candidate
Environmental Design and Planning
Justin Hodgson
Ph.D. Candidate
Rhetorics, Communication and Information Design

Justin Hodgson, a doctoral candidate in rhetorics, communication and information design (RCID), will compose his dissertation twice – once in the traditional, printed manner and again using “Sophie 2,” a sophisticated new format that will allow him to create a multimedia presentation of his work.

This summer, Justin was one of only two graduate students from across the country invited to the University of Southern California to learn about Sophie 2. “The invitation list was extremely limited, so we were thrilled when Justin was asked to attend,” says Victor Vitanza, director of Clemson’s RCID program and chair of Hodgson’s committee. “This says great things about our students and our program.”

Hodgson is developing his dissertation, “Logos of Possibilities: Rhetorical Inventions/Inventional Rhetorics,” both in print literacy for the Clemson Graduate School and in electronic literacy using Sophie to demonstrate the differences between more traditional paper and PDF files and a truly multimedia dissertation that uses pictures, animation, sound and words to communicate.

In many ways, Hodgson’s dissertation in Sophie will in itself be among the findings of his research. The medium is the message redux.

“Learning to use the multimedia platform of Sophie as another option to my scholarship allows for a ‘historical’ examination of the potentialities and limitations of a text-based print dissertation with those of a multimedia/multimodal creation,” says Hodgson.

“Upon seeing Sophie in action at the workshop, I realized I could conceptualize my project in significantly greater depth. I was not only capable of working more relationally — moving beyond just illustrating text with media and instead putting various media into conversation with one another without meta-commentary — but I was able to open a complexity that bridged the realms of text, film, comic and hypermedia, yet it could not be reduced to any of these singularly. At its core, the Sophie program works via linking and layering, which not only frees us from the linear constraints of the literate apparatus, but opens possibilities we may not have previously considered, possibilities we may not have previously thought: It opens thought to other possibilities, which is what makes working/thinking with Sophie such an exciting avenue for scholarship.”

Nick Mazzuca
M.A. Candidate
English

The playwright sits, still and quiet, on the back row of Clemson’s Bellamy Theatre as a handful of actors on tall barstools read aloud the words he has written. At the end of the reading, a moderator steps forward and begins to ask questions — probing the audience about the play. The questions are wide-ranging, but the rules of answering are narrow. Respondents may only react. They may say how a plot twist makes them feel or what they think the ending means and so on, but they may not suggest solutions — new endings, different dialogue, etc. Those decisions are left in the hands of the play’s creator — the playwright.

We are witnessing a play in process, a script emerging.

And our brave author is Nick Mazzuca, a graduate student in English and one of seven U.S. student playwrights invited to develop their plays during WordBRIDGE, a play-writing laboratory held at Clemson in June. Playwrights, chosen from undergraduate and graduate programs from around the country, worked with professional artists, including directors, actors, designers and dramaturgs. They had access to resource artists — psychologists, storytellers, choreographers, improvisation specialists and others. Daniel Stein, an internationally recognized mime artist, and Anne Garcia-Romero, a nationally recognized playwright, were among the artists-in-residence during this year’s event.

“We spend two weeks each year working diligently with the playwrights in a closed, protective environment,” says Mark Charney, Clemson’s director of theatre and co-artistic director of WordBRIDGE. “Playwrights can experiment with scripts in a safe and supportive environment. They are invited to participate on the basis of a script that exhibits great promise. We hope that they feel free to ‘play’ with their works as much as they want with the understanding that their original scripts still exist.”

For 12 years, WordBRIDGE has developed plays by more than 70 writers. Richard Rice started the program at Eckerd College, and the play-writing laboratory moved to Clemson University in 2007.

With the assistance he received from WordBRIDGE, Mazzuca is moving on to the next step. “I’m keeping in contact with various members of the WordBRIDGE family and working on two pieces: a revised Blue Door and a companion play that I’m in the process of conceptualizing. WordBRIDGE’s greatest strength (among many) is its promotion of the artist’s process AFTER the workshop, and I continue to experience the profound results of those two weeks. WordBRIDGE was possibly the best artistic experience I’ve ever had.”
While most AAH faculty use some or many elements of the Blackboard e-learning environment in their courses — file sharing, discussion boards, etc. — there are newly emerging technologies beyond Blackboard that can enable faculty to achieve their pedagogical goals for a particular course. Two of those are blogs and podcasts, and according to faculty who use them, they have the distinct advantage of being technologies with which students are familiar and feel comfortable — features that greatly aid the learning process.

“A blog is a more contemporary way for students to think about their experiences.”
Architecture associate professor Jori Erdman has chosen to use blogs in two of her classes in place of the more traditional journals that are often used in these project-based courses. “I thought that blogging would be an interesting way to document the process of the projects, document each student’s progress through the course and share their opinions in real time with each other and potentially a larger audience,” says Erdman. Both blogging and journaling address her pedagogical goals for these courses through the aspect of self-reflection, but she feels, “A blog is a more contemporary way for students to think about their experiences. It is a format that most of them are comfortable with and thus they open up more and actually do the work during the semester rather than waiting until the end to fill up a journal.”

Another contemporary technology being effectively used in AAH courses is podcasting. According to associate professor of German Johannes Schmidt, “A podcast is audio programming that is broadcast via the Internet.” Philosophy and religion associate professor Kelly Smith elaborates that while in some ways podcasts are similar to listening to an old radio program, by virtue of being on the Internet they are very easy to download, which makes them conveniently easy to listen to.

According to Smith, “This ease of use makes them extremely popular, especially with younger audiences.” Given that, it is no surprise that faculty are finding them useful in their classes. For the past three years or so, Schmidt, who teaches German, has used podcasts in many of his classes. He finds, “Listening to podcasts can be productive in lower-level language classes.” Students in his upper-level classes create their own podcasts. Also, students communicate with the Clemson German community on iTunes U via German Cast. In all these cases, the technology enables him to provide students with authentic German material and to motivate them to learn the language and engage with/in a foreign culture. The technology, according to Schmidt, supports the content. Specifically, he feels, “Too often technology is used to distract from the fact that there is little content delivered. Here is a technology, especially with respect to audio, that abstains from the dazzling images and animated chaos of commercial Web pages.” In addition, because students are comfortable with the technology, it empowers them to explore other cultures on their own. More importantly, the technology serves as a common meeting ground among students and teacher.

“The need is not to generate new information so much as to find new ways to present it to people who are interested . . .”
Like Schmidt, Smith has used podcasts in traditional classes, and now he is incorporating them into a four-semester Creative Inquiry project with biological sciences professor Jerry Waldvogel titled “Exploring Podcasts as an Educational Tool: The Evolution-Creationism Controversy.” The plan is for students to take courses on evolution and creationism during their first semester; spend the second semester conducting background research on the topic; write and revise two or three podcast scripts in their third semester; and professionally record these podcasts during the fourth semester. The ultimate goal is to distribute the podcasts on the Internet for free public access, something in which the National Center for Science Education has already expressed interest.

Why podcasts? Smith outlined their advantage this way: Ease and convenience of access, effectiveness at reaching young people and a 10- to 15-minute length means they are simple and to the point. “The need is not to generate new information so much as to find new ways to present it to people who are interested,” he explains. Smith points out that scientists and other intellectuals no longer control access to information in the way they used to. “The Internet has democratized information, and there is now a lot of competition for the public’s attention. The danger is that public opinion may come to be increasingly shaped by bad information clothed in a pleasing presentation.” For him, the ultimate solution is to find better ways of presenting good information so people don’t have to force themselves to consume it, something he hopes to accomplish with this Creative Inquiry project.

Not only has the Internet democratized information, but it has made it easier for faculty to deliver course content in a way that is engaging to a generation of students that has grown up with computers and the Internet. According to the PEW Internet, an American Life Project, 84 percent of college- and graduate school-aged young people between the ages of 18 and 28 are active online as both consumers and producers of content. No wonder these and other faculty have moved beyond Blackboard and introduced more Internet-based technology into their classes.

Erdman began teaching at Clemson in 2000. She holds a B.S. in architecture from the University of Virginia and an M.A. in architecture from Columbia University. She is the design editor for the Journal of Architectural Education, 61(1-4).

Schmidt joined the Clemson faculty in 2000. He left the University of Konstanz (Germany) after three years with an intermediate exam in German literature, theoretical linguistics and economics and received an M.A. in Germanic languages and literatures from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Hamburg (Germany) in 1999 and recently published an annotated translation (with Jeff Love) of F.W.J. Schelling’s Philosophical Investigations of the Essence of Human Freedom and Related Matters (1809) (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006). An article on podcasting is forthcoming in Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German.

Smith has been teaching at Clemson since 1998. He holds a B.A. in philosophy from Georgia State University, an M.S. in evolutionary biology from Duke University and a Ph.D. in philosophy from Duke University. He is the author of the forthcoming “Foiling the Black Knight” in Synthese, J. Fetzer and G. Branch (Eds.).
High-Tech Tiger Band

BY GLENN HARE

Memorial Stadium is full. The band is in position. The downbeat is signaled. And the first notes of an exciting, entertaining halftime show ring all over Death Valley. It’s a scene that takes place throughout the fall football season, a scene of pageantry, patriotism and Tiger Spirit.

Behind the scenes is a dedicated staff of band professionals and several innovative software packages that help create the band’s legendary pregame and halftime shows. “These programs assist in arranging music, designing drills, and they even allow band members to chart their movements across the field,” says Mark Spede, associate professor of music and Clemson’s director of bands.

Months before the band’s first rehearsal, Spede and the band staff spend hours composing and arranging music using Finale, a music notation program. With Finale they can instantly write, see and listen to the music they’ve written. The software allows them to send MP3 sound clips via email to band members, who can then listen to the charts on their personal computers. The sound files are also played on the band practice field during drill training.

Using Pyware, a software package that helps write marching drills, the band staff can see and hear a drill long before the musicians take their places on the practice field. Pyware has many special features. The program animates the choreography and synchronizes the movements to the music composed in Finale. Another feature of Pyware is its ability to animate the movement of individual musicians. Using a highlighting function, Tiger Band members can view their movements across the football field from set to set on their own computer.

“One of the old days, this was all done by hand,” explains Spede. “It’s amazing what we can do today with some of these programs.”

Most recently, the band’s high-tech tools have expanded beyond the music realm and moved into video. With completion of Memorial Stadium’s video scoreboard, Tiger Band has found a new medium to entertain thousands of Clemson fans. The “RENT” and “Guitar Hero” halftime shows are examples that featured amusing and enlightening video clips that further engaged the audience. “In order to use this new medium, the band staff has had to learn film-editing software such as iMovie and ProTools, an audio engineering package,” Spede says.

A crisp, fall football game is one of the last places one would expect to find the impact of high-tech computer software, but for the Clemson University Marching Band, the football field is no better place to showcase the results of the high-tech Tiger Band.

Spede has been keeping time at Clemson since 2002. His academic degrees include a Bachelor of Music from the University of Michigan, a Master of Music from Ball State University and a Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Texas at Austin. Tiger Band was recognized by the College Band Directors National Association three times in the past two years for their innovative halftime performances.

In addition to being director of Tiger Band, Spede is conductor of Symphonic Band at Clemson.
Erecting Energy Efficiency

BY NINA NORRIS

With a joint appointment between the School of Architecture and the School of Materials Science and Engineering, Vincent Blouin is working to reduce energy consumption in buildings AND to improve energy efficiency.

Energy consumption and energy efficiency are worldwide concerns today. The energy crisis affects each of us at home, at work, and at the grocery store and everywhere in between. Since the U.S. Green Building Council estimates that 39 percent of total energy consumed in the United States is attributed to buildings, we could conserve a significant amount of energy if our buildings were designed to be more efficient.

Take hospitals for example. Hospitals consume vast amounts of energy just heating, cooling and lighting the buildings. When you add this to the energy consumption of the various types of medical equipment and information technologies, you find that this 24/7 operation is one of the most energy-intensive building types. So what can we do to improve the rate of consumption and efficiency? Blouin seeks the answer. Through his teaching and research in both colleges, he brings architects, engineers and material scientists together in search of more energy-efficient design solutions for buildings.

To help study optimal energy solutions in his research, high-powered computers are required. Blouin will use Clemson’s Palmetto Cluster — a next-generation high-performance computing cluster that provides vast and flexible computing capabilities.

Blouin explains, “Our computational capabilities limited us in the past. Today, computer programs allow us to numerically model how different physical characteristics impact energy usage. The Palmetto Cluster can provide the computational resources needed to model the thermal behavior of an entire building.”

Simulating the thermal behavior of different materials in buildings allows one to scientifically choose specific building materials and systems that may reduce energy consumption and efficiency. These simulations can also be used to investigate the performance of new materials for buildings.

Blouin’s research involves modeling the behavior of advanced materials for building applications with a particular focus on phase-change materials (PCM). Using PCM in buildings can help reduce the penetration of extreme exterior temperatures to interior spaces through heat absorption and then later distribute the heat to interior spaces when needed, day or night for example. With success in this area, future building designs could utilize PCM to control the temperature of the building and keep it constant without experiencing extremes. “Although phase-change materials have been around in architecture for several decades, they are not commonly used. One reason is the lack of knowledge of their life-cycle benefits. We want to try and change that.”

Blouin graduated from Ecole Centrale, Nantes, France, in 1993 with an engineering diploma equivalent to a bachelor’s degree. He earned a master’s in mechanical engineering in 1999 and a Ph.D. in naval architecture and marine engineering in 2001 from the University of Michigan. He was a visiting assistant professor (2005-2006) in mechanical engineering before accepting the joint appointment in the School of Architecture and the School of Materials Science and Engineering in 2007. He specializes in finite element numerical modeling of structural and thermal systems.
Contrary to the misperception that blogs are navel-gazing, introspective, self-indulgent online diaries, “That’s not what blogs are about,” corrects communication studies assistant professor Mihaela Vorvoreanu. “Blogs are about looking outward, about being resourceful, about engaging with other people,” something she does on her PR Connections blog (www.prconnections.net), which she describes as “a blog about public relations scholarly research, practice and education. Its goal is to create connections among these areas and among the people who work in them.” For her, her blog is “a way of making an impact on the world.”

Vorvoreanu considers herself “part of a group of public relations scholars and practitioners who are very much interested in experimenting with and pioneering social media. In this group of people, you have to have a blog. It’s part of your personal credibility. A blog is more important than a phone number or a Web site.”

Vorvoreanu feels her blogging and participation in social networks sometimes have more impact than her more traditional academic work — at least as far as reaching PR practitioners who are unlikely to read academic journals. She reminds us, “Research publications are not free, and they’re not publicly available. They are locked down behind walls, and very many of them are very expensive.” If she were to write a traditional academic article about ethics or social responsibility in public relations, she says, “Nobody would read it except for a few students and a few other scholars who are going to cite it.”

Practitioners need things presented in a briefer, more accessible way, something Vorvoreanu says blog posts accomplish. “So in a blog post, I can write something about ethics in 500 words at most.”

Vorvoreanu also spoke specifically of Twitter, which she describes as “a collective microblogging platform.” On Twitter she explains, “Very often people will engage in conversations about ethics. That’s how you have the opportunity to trickle in information, to trickle in principles and ethics. Of course, you have to adapt to your audience. You can’t use an academic tone. You can’t get up on your soapbox and tell everybody how they’re doing things wrong. But you have an opportunity by engaging in constant interaction with them. By being their friend, you have an opportunity to influence them; you have an opportunity to ask some questions that will get them to think about things they didn’t think about before, to think about things differently.”

Vorvoreanu offers very specific advice for academics skeptical about social media: “If you’re at all interested in communication, in culture, in economy, you cannot afford to ignore it. It matters. Don’t be afraid of it. This is our chance to break out of the ivory tower and make a difference in the world.”

Vorvoreanu began teaching at Clemson in January 2007. She has a B.A. in communication and public relations from Bucharest University (Romania) as well as an M.A. and Ph.D. in communication from Purdue University. She is the author of the book Web site public relations: How corporations build and maintain relationships online (Cambria Press).
Cold War Science and Environmental Thinking

BY JEANNIE DAVIS

When we think of the word “environmental,” we may think of climate change, rising fuel costs, maybe even “green” light bulbs. We probably don’t think of warfare, the military or weapons, but history professor Jacob Hamblin does. With support from a $165,000 National Science Foundation (NSF) Scholars Award, Hamblin is researching the roots of environmental thinking in preparation for his new book, *Arming Mother Nature: Science, Technology and Environmental Security after World War II*.

“My ultimate aim in this project is to highlight something that rarely is talked about,” says Hamblin, “namely the military origins of environmental thinking. That means broadening our understanding of ‘environmental’ beyond philosophy, political activism or countercultural ideas. Strangely enough, many of the scientific ideas we rely upon today, when we think about ecosystems and earth systems, have their origins in military research on how to fight World War III — research on our vulnerability to radiological warfare, biological warfare and weather modification. At the international level, I’m exploring the connections between this early research and the programs of United Nations specialized agencies to prevent disease, end world hunger and protect the environment. It is a big topic, and undoubtedly I’ll spend a lot of time wrestling with controversial issues as I write the book.”

In Hamblin’s NSF grant proposal, he summed up the project by saying, “The central question of this study is this: How did the science of environmental warfare beginning in the 1940s influence international policies of environmental security by the late 1970s? It is an unexplored question, yet it is fundamental to our understanding of how Cold War science has shaped the contemporary world.”

Hamblin explains, “The grant supports research in the archives of several bodies here and in Europe: NATO (Brussels), the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (Rome), the World Health Organization (Geneva), the British National Archives (London) and the U.S. National Archives (Washington, D.C.). I also will visit the archives of the International Atomic Energy Agency (Vienna) and the archives of the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Paris).”

Recruited to Clemson to teach in the Science and Technology in Society program, Hamblin specializes in the international dimensions of science, technology and the environment. In his NSF proposal, he pointed out that Clemson is “one of the few universities in the country that requires all graduates to satisfy a ‘Science and Technology in Society’ requirement as part of general education.” As he researches his book, he intends to include undergraduate collaborators through Clemson’s Creative Inquiry initiative.

Hamblin has taught at Clemson since 2006. He received his degrees, including a Ph.D. in history, from the University of California, Santa Barbara. He is a former postdoctoral fellow at the Centre Alexandre Koyré in Paris. He has published more than a dozen articles and chapters and is the author of three books, including *Poison in the Well: Radiactive Waste in the Oceans at the Dawn of the Nuclear Age* (2008), *Oceanographers and the Cold War: Disciples of Marine Science* (2005) and a reference encyclopedia entitled *Science in the Early Twentieth Century* (2005).
Assistant professor of philosophy Allen Thompson has his hands full. In addition to his work with Clemson’s Department of Philosophy and Religion, he teaches in the interdisciplinary Ph.D. in environmental design and planning and collaborates with the Rutland Institute for Ethics and the Restoration Institute. Most recently, Thompson was very busy organizing the national conference “Human Flourishing and Restoration in the Age of Global Warming,” held at Clemson in early September. The conference attendees — philosophers, writers, biologists and ecologists from across the United States and Canada — worked through dinner and late into the evening to address some of the most difficult and controversial issues of our time: climate change, the future of human flourishing, geotechnology, the status of animals and more.

“It was a packed schedule,” laughed Thompson, “but we wanted to take advantage of the time we were together to address as much as we possibly could.” Clemson students also participated, presenting their work from three Creative Inquiry projects: “The Experimental Forest,” “Carbon Footprint and Offsets” and “Human Culture and Commercial Development.”

“Without radical change,” said Thompson, “within 100 years 30 to 70 percent of the species on this planet will be extinct. That’s an atrocity. We are already in a global food crisis.

Throughout our history, human beings have influenced the environment through our technology, so there’s a great hope for a technological fix to the environmental crisis,” Thompson continues. “But I resist that kind of thinking. Humans are tremendously adaptive and resourceful. Look at World War II when Americans mobilized to win the war. What’s needed now is that same kind of attitude. If we have government and public support, together we can solve this crisis.

Thompson dismisses the question of whether global warming is “real” or not. “It’s a faux debate,” he says. “But even if the debate is over in the eyes of the experts, the notion that global warming isn’t real is still in the public discourse, is still lodged in the minds of the public.”

So … what should we do? “We don’t need special new technology to get ahead of this,” Thompson says. “What we need is a willingness to change. We need to recognize that there are unknown tipping points out there. We need to rethink our role as planetary managers against the backdrop of the natural world.”

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For the Greener Good

BY JEANNIE DAVIS

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Weaving a Future for Sweetgrass Baskets

BY JEANNIE DAVIS

Sweetgrass baskets are intricate, lovely works of art, hand-sewn for centuries in South Carolina’s Lowcountry and Sea Island communities by descendants of West African slaves. Originally used for winnowing, the baskets are sought-after by tourists, and their production and sale have helped sustain traditional ways of life for members of the state’s Gullah community.

The historic places associated with sweetgrass basket-making are threatened, however, by booming housing and road development, according to Cari L. Goetcheus, assistant professor of landscape architecture. The historic homes, community buildings and roadside stands—as well as the sweetgrass ecology—are all at risk. “African Americans who left Mt. Pleasant to find good jobs were successful and have come back home to build in these historic, African American communities,” says Goetcheus. “Along with all the new gated development, this trend is forcing property and land assessments to rise, making it harder for the indigenous community members to pay taxes and stay on the land they’ve had for generations.”

The first step in protecting historic landscapes and buildings is identifying them, and that is exactly what Goetcheus is doing. Along with Patrick Hurley of Ursinus College, Goetcheus is using $34,000 in grant funds from the National Park Service to assist members of 10 Mt. Pleasant African American communities in identifying, locating and mapping important natural and cultural resources associated with their traditional craft. Undergraduate and graduate students at both institutions have assisted in piecing together the sweetgrass puzzle.

Working closely with the Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Festival Association, the research team is collaborating with community leaders and elders to complete their study. They are conducting oral history interviews and property and garden surveys, along with studying historic documents. They’re also leaning heavily on GIS mapping and GPS technology to build their maps.

“This kind of research would not be possible without both old and new technology,” says Goetcheus. “We’ve created a GIS database with current aerial photographs and other data, input GPS points for known historic resources such as churches and homes, and georeferenced old aerials and old maps to be able to compare what was historically identified and what remains today,” Goetcheus explains.

Goetcheus has taught at Clemson since 2005. She has a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture from Utah State University and a Master of Historic Preservation from the University of Georgia. She defines her area of interest as “the intersection of planning, landscape architecture and historic preservation.” Her article “Landscape Preservation Education in the United States: Status in 2007” appeared in the inaugural edition of Preservation Education and Research, and she is currently co-editing Exploring the Boundaries of Historic Landscape Preservation, the 2007 annual meeting proceedings of the Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation.

of bilingualism between English and Japanese. They focus on the Japanese children’s educational environment in the United States, their language proficiency in English and Japanese, and the children’s identity issues.

HISTORY

Tom Kuehn has published Heirs, Kin and Creditors in Renaissance Florence with Cambridge University Press, 2008. The book results from research conducted in 2003-04 with a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

ENGLISH

Michael LeMahieu’s article “The Theater of Hustle and the Hustle of Theater: Play, Player and Played in Topdog/Underdog” has been accepted for publication in the collection Crowned with Laurel: Critical Essays on African American Pulitzer Prize Winning Literature, edited by Yolanda Williams Page (Palgrave Macmillan). His article “Creative Inquiry: Facts, Values and Undergraduate Research in the Humanities” is forthcoming in Reading, Writing and Research: Undergraduate Students as Scholars in Literature and Language Studies, which is edited by Laura Behling (Council on Undergraduate Research). He has been named an alternate for a 2008-2009 Harry Ransom Humanities Center Research Fellowship from the University of Texas-Austin.

ART

William W. Lew recently served as guest curator for a major art exhibition, The Return of the Yellow Peril: A Survey of the Work of Roger Shimomura, 1969-2007, for ExhibitsUSA, a program of the Mid-America Arts Alliance. This retrospective exhibition of one of our country’s most prominent contemporary Japanese American artists will tour and be shown in six museums/galleries across the United States during the next two years. The exhibition is an outgrowth of Minidoka Revisited, an exhibition that Lew organized for Clemson University’s Lee Gallery in 2005.

PERFORMING ARTS

Piano professor Linda Li-Bleuel has been named a 2008 Fulbright Scholar. She is one of more than 1,000 American scholars and professionals selected by the U.S. Department of State to take part in the prestigious exchange program. Li-Bleuel will teach and perform at the Chinese Cultural University in Taiwan this fall.

LANGUAGES

Jeff Love completed a book called Tolstoy: A Guide for the Perplexed, to be published by Continuum (London) this fall. He and Todd May (philosophy) completed the article “From Universal-ity to Equality: Badiou’s Critique of Rancière,” which is forthcoming in the philosophy journal Symposium. Love also has a review article on translation of the philosophical passages of War and Peace forthcoming in The Tolstoy Studies Journal. He is working on another book tentatively entitled The Sadism of Modernity.

ENGLISH

Michelle Martin’s chapter “Arna Bontemps, Langston Hughes and the Roots of African American Children’s Literature” was published in Jonda McNair (of Clemson’s education school) and Wanda Brooks’ co-edited anthology Embracing, Evaluating and Examining African American Children’s and Young Adult Literature (Scarecrow Press) in spring 2008. Martin is working on a book entitled Dream Keepers for Children of the Sun; the Children’s Literature of Arna Bontemps and Langston Hughes. She spent May of 2007 working on this project as a research fellow at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscripts Library at Yale.
Consider this scenario: You’ve decided to build a new building. You’ve hired a designer and selected the site, a site that just happens to be on the side of a mountain. Construction will necessitate moving that mountain—or part of it—to another location. How much will that cost? How long will it take?

Enter stage left: Gregg Corley, associate professor of construction science and management (CSM). According to Corley, the capital construction industry loses lots of money and time every year because of the lack of technology and lack of consistency among the players. “If you can save just 1 percent,” he says, “you can see large gains.”

“Technology changed everything,” Corley continues. “Twenty years ago it would take three days to answer a question about the construction work required for the project described above. Now we’re talking two to three hours, and it’s a lot more accurate.”

The new technology also helps bring a message of exactitude to the construction process.

“Technology helps us think through the smallest details,” Corley says. “We can say, okay, you tell me you need a door; tell me what kind of door you want.”

Planning and forecasting this way allows builders to “make our mistakes in a virtual world before you have people out on the site, waiting for doors. The technology allows us more time to think about the best way to build a building. You can “build the building” before you actually build the building,” Corley says.

He has become expert in software solutions for the problems and questions involved with construction: earthwork, labor productivity and material-cost estimating, and project scheduling and management. Using 3-D modeling programs and estimating and scheduling software, he has helped Clemson’s CSM students achieve national notoriety for their expertise in this area.

“We still teach our students to do it all by hand,” Corley says, “but then we teach them to do it using the software. They can see the comparison. That’s where the learning comes in.”

Corley’s groundbreaking work with students has made the CSM program highly sought-after by software developers. “Companies are begging us to use their software,” Corley adds. “While Clemson’s program is one of the smallest, it’s one of the best.”

He can back up that claim by pointing to the third-place national win by Clemson at the 2008 National AGC/ASC Heavy-Civil Construction Competition in Las Vegas this past March. More than 200 teams from universities around the country competed at the regional level. Clemson’s team qualified for the national competition by winning the Southeast regional in November 2007 in Jacksonville, Fla.

“It was the first time Clemson had competed in this division,” says Corley, “and the judges in Florida were blown away. They saw things that Clemson students are doing that nobody else in the region is doing.”

Gregg Corley has been teaching at Clemson since 2001. He has both B.S. and M.S. degrees in civil engineering from Clemson. He is an active member in the Timberline Users Group (TUG) and a featured writer for the TUG Pulse.
Testing the Task

BY JEANNIE DAVIS

English Professor Tharon Howard does not mince words. “Technology is great,” he says, “but it’s like putting lipstick on a pig if you can’t use it.” As director of Clemson University’s Usability Testing Facility (UTF), Howard knows whereof he speaks.

“Usability tests are a collection of empirical research methods,” explains Howard, “that help product designers and project managers better understand the tasks people want to perform and environments in which they perform them. The goal, of course, is to create innovative products and services that are efficient and easy to use.”

Howard’s base of operations is the Clemson UTF, which uses performance-tracking, measurement-collating and data-validating functions. The UTF has provided Howard with a platform for a string of successful collaborations with technology giants IBM, Microsoft, NCR and AT&;T, as well as textbook publishers Addison-Wesley and Allyn & Bacon/Longman—divisions of Pearson Education.

Most recently, Howard’s ventures have been funded by two 2008 grants: a $30,000 award from Allyn & Bacon/Longman to create a public-speaking textbook and a $20,000 award from Addison-Wesley for user-experience testing of educational materials on developmental mathematics.

His latest work extends into the very heart of usability testing—whether the test itself is effective. “Ease of use isn’t the end of the story,” says Howard. “You have to make sure your test subjects ‘get it,’ really understand what they’re trying to accomplish.” In a recent article, he writes, “Users reported high levels of satisfaction with products being tested and believed they had successfully completed tasks which they judged as easy to complete when, in fact, they unknowingly suffered failure rates as high as 100%.” Ouch!

According to Laura Coaty, director of market research and development for Allyn & Bacon/Longman, “The four usability tests Dr. Howard has done for us have changed the way we make and think about our educational products. His findings have given us more actionable feedback on how students use textbooks than ever before. It has resulted in significantly better and more useful educational materials for thousands of college students. By the end of next year, we anticipate that over 200,000 students will have benefited from Dr. Howard’s findings.” She added that Howard’s “What Every Textbook Author Should Know” is “mandatory reading” for Pearson’s authors, editors and production managers.

“I have the most fulfilling job in the world” says Howard. “I have an opportunity to be an advocate for users on the one hand, as well as the opportunity to help product developers think creatively and discover new potential markets for their products. It’s kinda like being the preacher who gets to marry the producer to the consumer.”

Howard has been keeping technology user-friendly at Clemson since 1992. His B.A. in English is from the University of Missouri, and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees are from Purdue University. He has published widely across a diverse range of media, including his most recent article, “Unexpected complexity in a traditional usability study,” for the Journal of Usability Studies.
Long Distance Lessons in Art

BY SANDRA PARKER

Teaching a class of 400 students is a pretty tall order for anyone. But it becomes a special challenge when those students are scattered all over the world — while the class is being taught.

But associate professor of art and architectural history Janet LeBlanc is just the person to take on that task. And she does so with a dexterity and proficiency that belie the difficulty of the deed.

For the past five years, she has taught AAH 210 “Introduction to Art and Architecture.” It’s a Web-based survey that introduces non-art majors to an overview of art and architecture from different time periods and cultures.

LeBlanc says the flexibility of the course makes it a huge selling point for students who are trying to meet requirements and fit them into an already tight schedule.

“Distance education allows the students to take a course and have room for it at any time they can fit it in,” LeBlanc explains. “You can be anywhere. Some have been on cruise ships, at the beach or on an internship in Toronto. I’ve had students from California, Chicago, India and even active military members in Afghanistan and Iraq.”

LeBlanc’s course is popular and has a waiting list. Part of the success of AAH 210 has been that she teaches students how to learn. Mastering art history is only a part of it. Success at distance education also requires adjusting to never meeting the professor and sharpening time-management skills.

“You can take huge amounts of information and break it down into bite-sized pieces,” LeBlanc says. “Most students do well. My bugaboo is students who want something for nothing. They need to be able to read and follow directions. It isn’t difficult, but at the end of the day, those who cannot or do not follow directions will probably be less successful than those who do.”

Teaching a distance education course has its own issues. “It isn’t just a matter of loading some tests online and then the class you taught live will run itself,” LeBlanc says. “It isn’t less work; it’s more compared to teaching live. But I love it, and I think there’s a niche for it — a growing niche I might add — in today’s academic world.”

Finding textbooks that work well in distance education is another hurdle, but LeBlanc solved that problem by writing her own. She says that takes a huge investment in time, but it is another hurdle, but LeBlanc solved that problem by writing her own. She says that takes a huge investment in time, but it has paid off for her students.

For the future, LeBlanc sees the number of art history courses continuing to grow. In a time of depleted resources, distance education can provide a less expensive means of quality information delivery. And for the students lucky enough to take one of LeBlanc’s courses, it’s an enjoyable way to earn humanities credit.

“I suppose I have mutated into a quasi-cyberspace nerd!” she jokes. “I am only an email away. Students can always get the help they need.”

Janet LeBlanc has taught at Clemson since 1974. She holds a B.A. and M.A. from Michigan State University and an A.B.D. from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland.
**Flickering Images**

**BY JEANNIE DAVIS**

Je suis. Tu es. Il est. Vocabulary, repetition, listening, speaking, writing and practice are the ways we teach students a second language. Joseph Mai, assistant professor of French and film studies at Clemson University, uses all those tools, plus another — movies.

"Film puts language in context, gives students a deep sense of the other person’s experience," says Mai. "Language is an important part of culture, but culture itself is bigger than language, as the cinema shows. Everybody speaks film, whether they live in America or in Africa. Film has a way of becoming universal and global. It is local, happily, but it opens up to everyone."

"Take a movie like *Persepolis,*" he continues, "this big-budgeted, popular, animated film was made by an Iranian director in France, in French and Farsi, dubbed by American actors who were directed by the filmmaker, and it takes place partially in Iran and Austria. What nation does this film belong to? Even as a cartoon, it tells us a lot about how people live, and tells it in a way we can’t get from the news. Good films allow students to talk about political issues, historical issues, serious issues, but without some of the filters they sometimes use. They can freely see the similarities to their own lives as well as the differences."

Mai uses movies to teach his students about culture and language and also about the art of filmmaking. He has published on a number of film authors, including the highly influential director Robert Bresson and the two-time Palme-d’Or-winning Dardenne Brothers (*Rosetta, L’Enfant*), who are the subjects of his book now in preparation for the University of Illinois Press.

Is he a cinéphile? — obsessed with the cinema? Mai laughs. "Film is an art form that talks about life. I teach students how to read a sequence. I show them how the director of a film is on the same level as an author, a painter, making meaningful creative decisions. But we also talk about how a director’s decision can get our affect going ... even making us behave differently in our real life. It teaches us to perceive."

Reaching back to the earliest days of film, Mai shares with his students the landmark, silent films from brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière and Georges Méliès. "I love the Lumière brothers (their very name means “light”), who were the first to develop the technologies of photography and public projection we know today," he says. "Their films bring the past — its bodies, spaces, even its experiences of time — right to us in the present." How do his students like these early, silent, flickering films now a century old? "They actually love them," he says. "I just showed Méliès to a group of students; some laughed all the way through while one said she’d have nightmares!"

Mai has taught at Clemson since 2004. He earned his B.A. from Northern Illinois, his M.A. from the University of Illinois and his Ph.D. in French from Yale University. He has also studied at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris. Recent publications include his article “*Corps-caméra*: The Evocation of Touch in the Dardenne’s *La promesse.*"

Jeanne Davis is professor of French at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. She specializes in French cinematic culture and has published articles and reviews on the cinema of the 1960s, Françoise Hardy and the French New Wave, and Stéphane Audran and the French New Wave. She is currently working on a book on the cinema of the French New Wave and the French art cinema through the 1990s.

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**PLANNING AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE**

Elaine M. Worzala’s article “An Exploration of the Risk and Return Spectrum for Institutional Investors in the Senior Living and Long Term Care Property Sector” has been published as a white paper by the funding body, the Real Estate Research Institute, and is available on their Web site. Worzala presented the findings at the institute’s annual meeting in Boston in April. Several additional articles will come from this work, including "Researchers Establish Risk Premiums for Senior Housing/Healthcare Investments," which will be published in the “Multifamily” section of *Urban Land.*

**LANGUAGES**

Barbara Zaczek has published the book (co-authored with Rosetta D’Angelo) *Resisting Bodies: Narratives of Italian Partisan Women,* Annali D’Italianistica, Studi e Testi, vol. 9, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2008. The book is a translation of texts that explore the experience of partisan women in Italy between 1943 and 1945, focusing on the representations of a female body. The texts include fictional accounts as well as autobiographical narratives of partisan women published between 1944 and 2000.
Snatch, 20" x 25", 2007, graphite and gouache by Heidi Jensen, Clemson associate professor of art.

Jensen says, “My work considers the subversive and insalubrious strains of human behavior that haunt the idea of a progressive, utopian society. My drawings are constructed to look like a single-frame animation still, offering an incomplete but compelling narrative.”

Jensen’s art will be on display in January in Clemson’s Lee Gallery. Located in Lee Hall, the gallery provides the University and surrounding community with access to regional, national and international artists through a variety of exhibitions and special events. The gallery also showcases fine art created by Clemson’s art students and faculty. From February 11 through March 13, 2009, Lee Gallery will host Clemson’s National Print and Drawing Exhibition, “Principles and Perspectives in Progress.” For more information, visit www.clemson.edu/leegallery.
“Someone once said, ‘Technology makes the world a new place.’ And so it is for Clemson students who experience the cutting-edge, high-tech teaching and research discussed in this issue of AAH. Whether using computer modeling, 3-D virtual reality, blogs, podcasts, distance learning or film, AAH faculty connect students to a much wider and more exciting world.”

Prof. Donald M. McKale, Ph.D., Department of History Recipient of Clemson’s Class of ’39 Award for Excellence Class of ’41 Memorial Professor of the Humanities