

American Studies

Porchlight



Stephanie Dodaro, 2024

Buffalo Migration Mural Collaborative - linktr.ee/buffalomurals



Letter from the Director



The University of Wyoming American Studies program continues to do well, as you will see from the pages in this newsletter. In addition to our second-year MA students, we have a diverse group of six wonderful new MA candidates from Uzbekistan, Nigeria, the UK, and the United States. They are keeping the Cooper House vibrant,

as are our strong ties to the Wyoming Institute for Humanities Research, the Humanities Council, and different student organizations on campus that have been meeting in the building.

This semester, we brought speakers including Dr. Jennifer Nez Denetdale, Chair of American Studies at the University of New Mexico, we celebrated Halloween with more than 50 undergraduate students, we brought back the Historic Preservation class, now taught by our alumna Kaycee Prevedel and by State Historic Preservation Office employee Gwendolyn Kristy, and sent seven of our MA students to the American Studies Association (ASA) meeting in Baltimore where we also held a reception for the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the ASA. It's been a busy semester!

We are also proud to announce that the American Studies family will gain a new member early in 2025 when Dr. Trisha Martínez is expected to have her baby!

I would like to thank our students Cara Barclay and Max Umurzakov for working on this newsletter, and I wish everyone happy holidays.

Ulli Adelt

Spotlight On Our First Year Students



Joseph is an American Studies first-year graduate student who has obtained a BA in International Relations and an MA in Political Science. His research explores the U.S. justice system, particularly carceral studies and the relationship between incarceration, race, and social policy in the United States. Joseph now works as a research assistant where he has gained further development experience through collaboration on projects, academic growth and professional experience. Joseph also enjoys reading, hiking, biking, meeting new people, and traveling to experience different cultures and viewpoints.



Cara Barclay is a Master's student in American Studies from the UK, alongside her Graduate Assistantship. After graduating from the University of Manchester in History and American Studies, and her semester abroad at NC State, Cara wanted to study this discipline from a more contemporary approach, specializing in Indigenous studies and natural resources. To learn more about these, she is beginning her volunteering with the Sierra Club. Engaging in student life through sports is important to her, as she involves herself in extracurricular activities such as weightlifting, boxing, and bouldering.



Benny Pallares (El Benny) joined the American Studies program to promote the importance of Latinx Education, Critical Race Theory, and Ethnic Studies here in the United States and around the world. His hobbies include running, swimming, dancing, boxing, poetry, reading, cooking, and volunteering at local community centers.



Harper Pachel is a first-year student in the American Studies MA Program. Her general research interests right now are gender and women's studies and fiber art. Harper chose American Studies at UW because it seemed like a very welcoming program, and since American Studies is so interdisciplinary, there would be a lot of freedom to explore new topics and be creative. This semester, she's working as a research assistant at the American Heritage Center. She has been learning how to research for and create exhibits and has had the opportunity to work on some interesting transcription projects as well. Some of her hobbies are drawing, quilting, and board games.



Lynnea Rivera from Colorado Springs is a first-year student in the American Studies graduate program pursuing her interests in Fire Ecology and Indigenous Studies. She received her Associate of Science at Pikes Peak Community College, then transferred to UW to finish her Bachelor. She got a dual degree in Environment and Natural Resources and Environmental Systems Science. Her interests for her future include fire management with a nontraditional approach by including tribal perspectives to further ecological health. She is currently a graduate teaching assistant for Approach to Environmental Problem-Solving. Lynnea loves the outdoors and plays on the UW Club softball team.



Max Umurzakov is Master's student in American Studies who is also a Graduate Research Assistant at the Cooper House. Max is not new to Laramie as he completed an exchange semester through the Global UGRAD Program at the University of Wyoming for Fall 2023. Earning his Bachelor in English and Literature from Fergana State University, Max embarks on exploring American history and culture as a graduate student. His research interests are conspiracy theories surrounding the moon landings or Apollo missions. He believes that the American Studies program is an amazing opportunity for his professional and educational development in becoming a better thinker, writer, and researcher.



Historic Preservation field trip

On one of Laramie's last warm afternoons before the icy breeze hits, the Graduate Historic Preservation class traded the classroom for Pilot Hill Recreation Area. We embarked on a hike to a Medicine Wheel; one of many built over the course of thousands of years by Indigenous people. Its origin and purpose is unknown. Yet, we discussed how we can infer its origins, such as how weathered the rocks are compared to the surrounding ones, and the grass growing inbetween them. Along the way, we practiced an archaeological excavation, reading a compass and identifying rocks that could potentially aid us in finding the Medicine Wheel. We were given time to reflect on the ways Indigenous people interact with the land and the importance of respecting that, even if we don't know the answers ourselves.



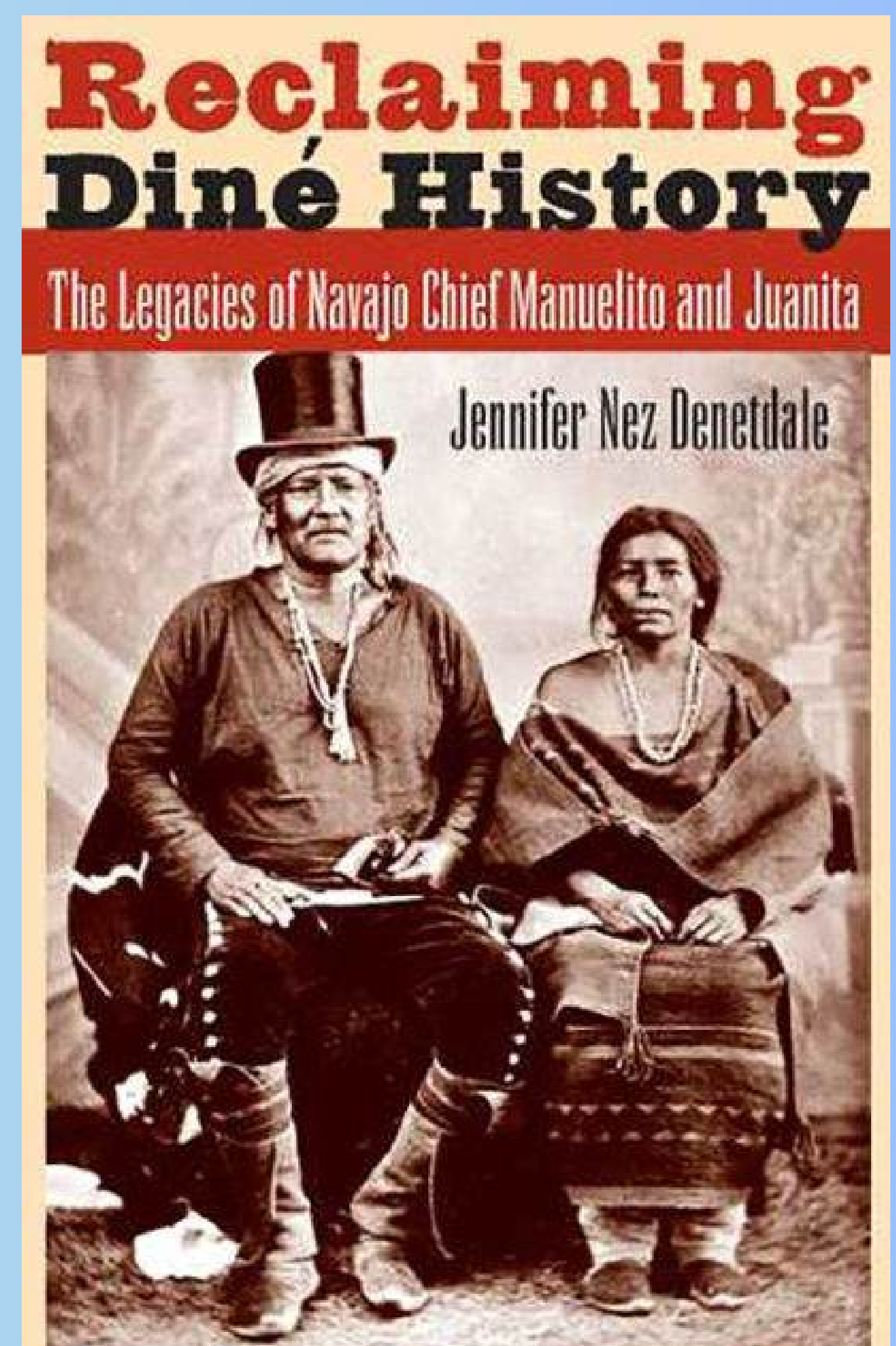
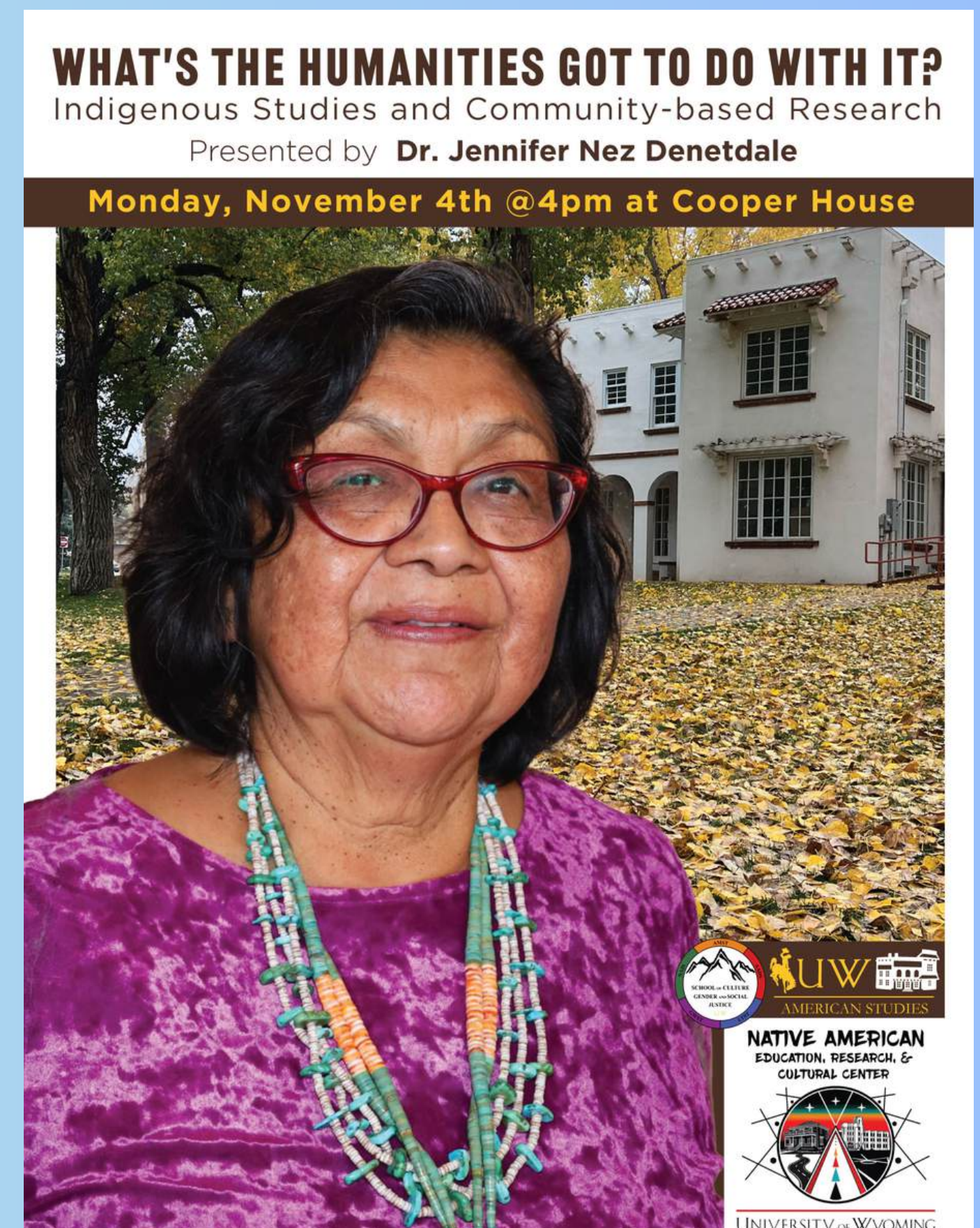
By actively engaging in archaeology, culture, and history, the hike encouraged us to think beyond our own worldview and appreciate the interconnectedness of cultural and landscape preservation, alongside practical careers within American Studies.

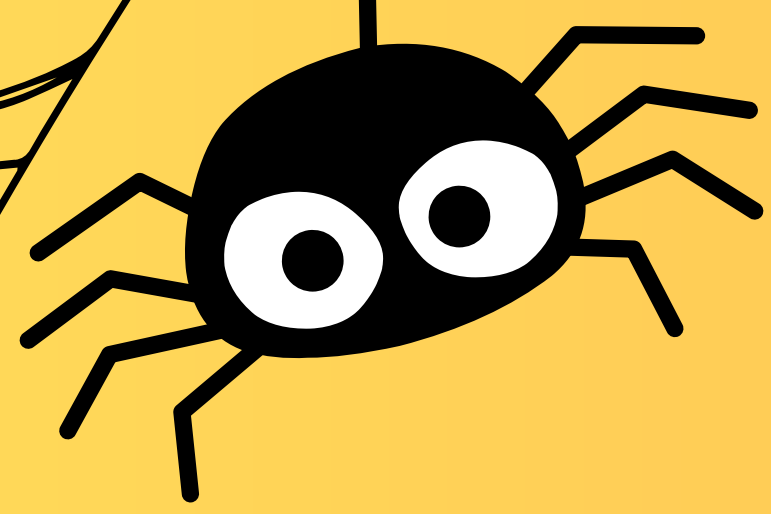
Respecting and observing the natural environment can teach us so much about other cultures. American Studies encompasses these values, highlighting the complimentary nature of its theoretical approach, with preservation and archaeology's practical one.



Dr. Jennifer Nez Denetdale

We were lucky to have Dr. Jennifer Nez Denetdale join us at the Cooper House for a talk. Denetdale is the first ever Diné/Navajo to earn a PhD in history. Her book, published in 2007, *Reclaiming Diné History: The Legacies of Navajo Chief Manuelito and Juanita* set the standard for Diné histories and methodologies. As a Professor of American Studies at the University of New Mexico, she spoke about how American Studies is Indigenous Studies, you must understand the history of the land you are on. Also, how Diné research is informed by interdisciplinary methods, the importance of interrogating colonial archives, and the Land Back movement.





HALLOWEEN

Party



The Cooper House came alive with a thrilling Halloween Party that embraced the spooky spirit of this fall season. The Halloween evening was vibrant with eerie costumes, decorations and Halloween treats. The highlight of the event was a costume contest, where effort and creativity on costumes were on full display. The winners of the contest received prizes from the American Studies program. A cozy movie night featuring a spooky film added an extra layer of the Halloween vibe to the night.

American Studies Association Conference

On November 13th, we arrived at our hotel in Baltimore in anticipation of the ASA conference. By the time we checked in, everything was closed for the night, so it was 7/11 for dinner.

On Thursday morning, the students attended panels like, “Seed Banks, Coral Arks, and Forest Futures: Speculative Ecologies and Hawai’i Restoration.” The panelists discussed the importance of Land Back movements, decolonization of the knowledge production system, and questioned discourse on resilience in relation to coral.



One of our panels was the one that followed, titled “Haunted Ecologies: Worldly Violences, Environmental Horror, Anticolonial Futures.” Dr. Lisa Fink approached ecology through the lens of invasive species discourse. Invasive species rely on horror tropes, evoking feelings of fear and disgust. This language can be harmful, as the idea of invasion within horror threatens white domesticity. Eradication is presented as the only solution. Educators thereby need to be mindful of tropes they use. This panel was most interesting to us as it recognized how American Studies can inform ecology in the way language is used and its ties to settler-colonialism.

Over the next few days, the American Studies cohort attended panels from a broad range of subjects. The Welcome Reception showcased exciting new scholarship in American Studies. That reception and the Rocky Mountain Chapter Reception were an opportunity to network with other people in the field and hear about their research. There was also time for exploring the city and even a day trip to DC. Some of us visited the American Indian Museum followed by shopping in Georgetown.



Meet our graduate Misha



*Congratulations Misha Richman
on a successful MA defense!
The title of her thesis was
"The Only Way Out is Through: A Trans
Tankie Response to Homonationalism."*

Current faculty



Dr. Ulrich Adelt is the author of two books, *Blues Music in the Sixties: A Story in Black and White* (Rutgers University Press 2010) and *Krautrock: German Music in the Seventies* (University of Michigan Press 2016). He has contributed chapters for several anthologies and published articles in numerous journals including the *American Quarterly* and the *Journal of Popular Music Studies*. He is currently working on a book project about rhythm guitar. Adelt has published twenty-three book reviews since 2007 in journals like *Popular Music*, *American Studies*, and the *Journal of African American History*. He is on the editorial board of the journals *Rock Music Studies* and *Popular Music and Society*.

Dr. Trisha Martínez is an Assistant Professor of American Studies in the School of Culture, Gender and Social Justice. She is a proud alumna of the University of Wyoming, where she obtained her Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and her minors in Chicano/a Studies and African American and Diaspora Studies. Dr. Martínez achieved her M.A. and Ph.D. in American Studies at the University of New Mexico. Dr. Martínez's northern New Mexico family roots extend from Sapello and Valdez, up the Manito Trail to Wyoming, a migration experience she documents in her ongoing research, publications, and curated exhibits. Through teaching and community outreach, she remains passionate about encouraging youth and creating opportunities that serve the best interest of her communities.



Dr. Rachel Sailor (Ph.D. University of Iowa) has published extensively and lectured internationally on the history of photography in the American West. Her first book *Meaningful Landscapes: Landscape Photographers in the Nineteenth-Century American West* (UNM Press, 2014) won an award of excellence from the local historical society as well as a "Best Book on the West" award from History Colorado. In 2014 Sailor received a Georgia O'Keeffe Research Center Stipend in American Art for a five month residency in conjunction with her new book project *Pictorialism in the American West: 1900-1950*. In 2017, Sailor was awarded a Terra/Fulbright for research and teaching in Luxembourg. Previous to the University of Wyoming, Sailor taught at the University of Texas at Tyler. She teaches nineteenth and twentieth-century European art, American art, American Modernism and seminar courses on Art of the American West and American Photography. Sailor is spending this academic year as a Seibold Professor to further develop her teaching.

Dr. Stephen Dillon is Director of the School of Culture, Gender, and Social Justice. He is the author of *Fugitive Life: The Queer Politics of the Prison State* (Duke University Press, 2018). His research on race, queer and trans politics, feminism, and incarceration has appeared in the *American Quarterly*, *GLQ*, the *Journal of African-American History*, *Radical History Review*, *Feminist Formations*, *Theory and Event*, *Signs*, the *Feminist Review*, *Cultural Studies*, *Women and Performance*, *Qui Parle*, *Social Sciences*, and *Places*.



Jascha Herdt is a lecturer at the University of Wyoming, teaching in the School of Culture, Gender, and Social Justice, and American Studies. As a musician, several of his courses deliver content that use music as a lens into cultural issues. When not teaching, he enjoys playing guitar with local bands, and cooking good food.

Brigida (Brie) Blasi is a public historian and museum professional. She has BA in Humanities/Fine Arts from the University of Wyoming, an MA in History with an emphasis in Public History from New Mexico State University, and an MS in Library Science with a concentration in Archival Studies from the University of North Texas. She is currently a PhD student in the new Public Humanities program in UW's English Department. Brie has spent her career working in museums, historic sites, archives, and in historic preservation. Her specialties have been in curation, museum and nonprofit management, identity studies, the multicultural history of the US West, and local and family history. In her spare time, she loves tending to her chaos/pollinator garden and helping with rescue animals. She returned to the University of Wyoming in 2020 to take on the role of Public History Educator at the American Heritage Center.





Kaycee Prevedel is a public lands advocate, wildlife enthusiast, and softball addict. She currently teaches Historic Preservation for the American Studies program and is happy to be back after receiving her Master's degree from the UW American Studies program in 2020. Her background is in archaeology and higher education focused on Indigenous land rights. She currently works for an environmental nonprofit, Sierra Club WY, and her work focuses on protecting public lands and wildlife from resource exploitation. She has a hippie husband and a young son and is dedicated to working to protect intact ecosystems and ensure a livable planet and just society for all.

Gwendolyn Kristy is a professional preservationist who is currently the Chief of Planning and Historic Contexts for the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office. She co-teaches Historic Preservation as a lecturer for the American Studies program. She serves on the Albany County Historic Preservation Board, the Wyoming Association of Professional Archaeologists Executive Committee, and the Lincoln Community Center Board. Her interests are primarily related to community preservation. Gwendolyn received her M.A. from the University of Chicago.





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