



SPRING²⁰₂₅



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR, DR. LAUREN GUTTERMAN

Dear AMS Community,

What a whirlwind semester it's been in American Studies! Despite the many challenges of our current moment, our community of scholars and students has achieved so much this spring. Thirty-four students earned their bachelor's degree in American Studies or Urban Studies. Four graduate students received their PhD's and three completed their master's reports. Our graduate students have won multiple awards and presented on their research within and beyond UT. Our faculty have published essays and articles, organized conferences, and secured prestigious fellowships.

Watching our four senior thesis writers discuss their research projects at the year-end AMS Senior Thesis Symposium was one of the highlights of my academic year. The students' wide-ranging projects on Cold War health discourses, meteorology's effect on our relationship with nature, the politics of LBJ Library exhibits, and contemporary Indigenous fashion reflect the strengths and potential of an interdisciplinary approach. Their theses combine analyses of art and culture, social history, museums and archives, and science and technology. Their presentations demonstrated the analytical skills, creative thinking, and broad historical perspective that an American Studies major provides.

I wish you all a fun and relaxing summer and look forward to seeing you again in the fall!

Best wishes,
Lauren



**STUDENT
NEWS**

**SENIOR
THESES**

**Laura Li,
"Live Most and Serve Best': Comparisons in Early
Cold War and Early Trump Administration Health
Discourse"**

**Natalie Moses,
"Contested History: Maintaining Neutrality at the
LBJ Presidential Library"**

**Samuel Pitts,
"Aviation Meteorology: How Its Evolution Affects
Our Perception of Nature"**

**Montana Wooten,
"Fighting Indigenous Erasure Through Fashion"**

Alec Ainsworth,
"Chattel and Conquest: Jackson and Austin's
Embodiment of the Monroe Doctrine in the
American Empire"
Supervisor: Randy Lewis

Rivers Liu,
"Heaven is Destroying Me: On Archives,
Mourning, and Chinese Subjecthood in El
Paso at the Turn of the 20th Century"
Supervisor: Cary Cordova

Crys Zhao,
"HMoob American Studies at the University of
Wisconsin-Madison: Reimagining Institutional
Legitimacy and Belonging in the Neoliberal
University"
Supervisor: Lina Chhun



**MASTER'S
REPORTS**

Passed prospectus meeting and entered candidacy:

Lily Nagengast
Justine Frerichs
Odalis Garcia Gorra
Giulia Oprea

Passed their oral exam:

Rene Arteaga
Marco Guarino
Colleen Small

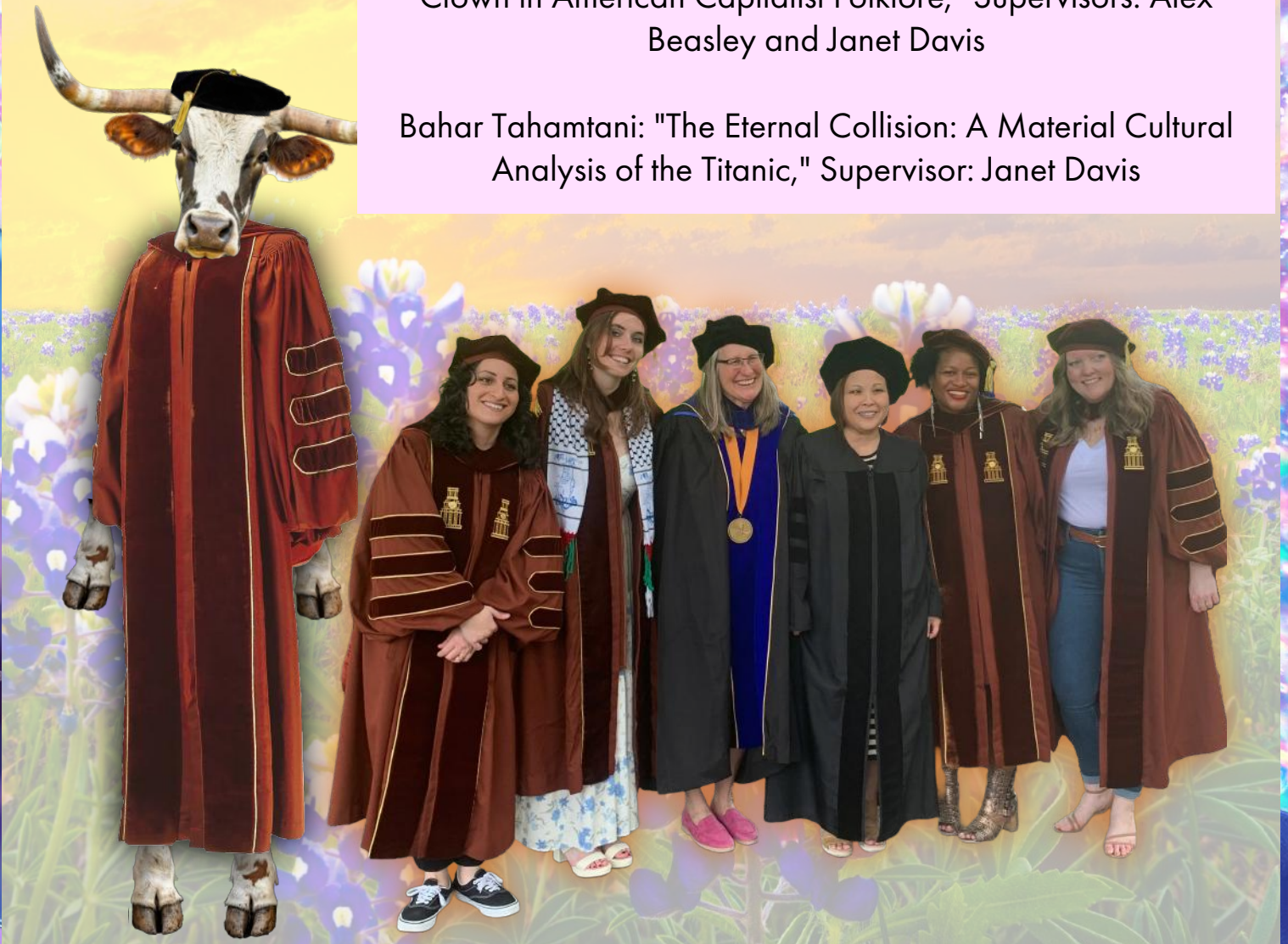
Dissertation Defense & PhD Graduates:

Ja'nell Ajani: "Legacy Building and Jean-Michel Basquiat: Transforming the Public Archive," Supervisor: Janet Davis

Taylor Johnson: "Unburied: Ancestral Remains and their Disruptions of Texas History," Supervisors: Janet Davis and Lina Chhun

Whitney May: "Pennywise and Pound Foolish: The Circus Clown in American Capitalist Folklore," Supervisors: Alex Beasley and Janet Davis

Bahar Tahamtani: "The Eternal Collision: A Material Cultural Analysis of the Titanic," Supervisor: Janet Davis





PhD candidate Lillian Nagengast has been awarded an AMS Dissertation Fellowship to work on her dissertation, "Where We Are: Networks of Change, Belonging, and Interdependence in Rural America."



'WE SPEAK, BUT THE UNIVERSITY DOES NOT LISTEN'

LGBTQ+ STUDENT ACTIVISM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN:

IN THIS PRESENTATION DR. LAUREN GUTTERMAN AND PHD CANDIDATE HARTLYN HAYNES DISCUSS THEIR NEW DIGITAL PRIMARY SOURCE EXHIBIT ON QUEER PASTS ABOUT LGBTQ+ HISTORY AT UT AUSTIN IN THE 1940S. THEY WILL HIGHLIGHT ARCHIVAL AND ONLINE RESOURCES DOCUMENTING HISTORY TO USE IN YOUR OWN TEACHING RESEARCH.

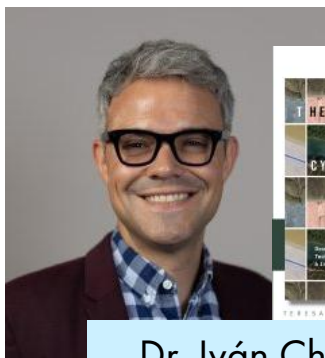
EVENT DETAILS:
WEDNESDAY
FEB 5, 2025
TIME: 12:00 - 1:00 PM
LOCATION: RLP 1.302D

PhD candidate Colleen Small's essay "Free Speech for Sale: How the Franchise god Chills Free Speech on Public University Campuses," won first place in the Free Speech Essay Contest sponsored by the Bech-Loughlin First Amendment Center at UT Law School.

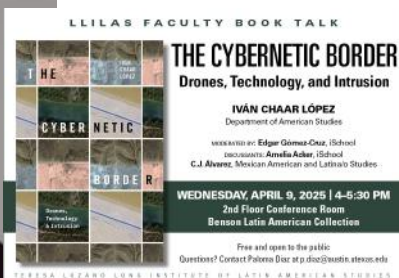


Dr. Gutterman and doctoral candidate Hartlyn Haynes presented their research about UT Austin's LGBTQ+ history which will be published online on *Queer Pasts*.





Dr. Iván Chaar López gave a book talk at the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies (LLILAS).



Dr. Lina Chhun was the Keynote Speaker for the 2025 TAAADS Symposium!

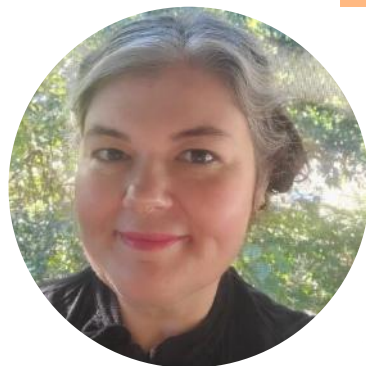


Dr. Steven Hoelscher presented "Pictures on a Wall: Public Humanities and the Making of an Exhibition" at the American Studies Workshop.



The American Studies Workshop series, facilitated by Dr. Iván Chaar López and Levina Parada, serves as an interdisciplinary community space that brings together faculty and graduate students to share their work. We had the pleasure of hosting wonderful faculty members across the University of Texas at Austin this semester! Thank you to all presented and attended.

Dr. Sage Ponder has a co-authored paper forthcoming in *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*. Written with her collaborative research partners from Jackson, MS, it details their project, the Jackson People's School.

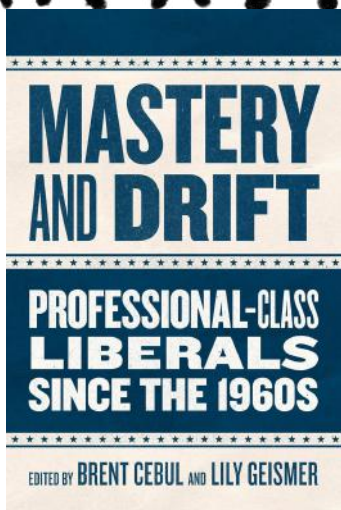


FACULTY NEWS

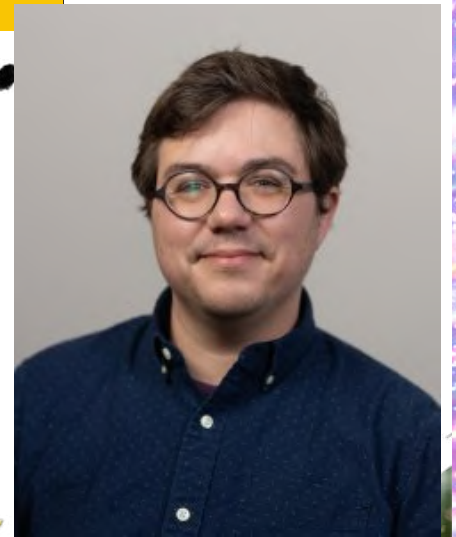




Dr. Janet Davis's research and teaching was featured in an article in COLA's *Extra Credit* Substack column!



Dr. Alex Beasley published "Queer Autonomy and the Afterlife of the Family Wage," in *Mastery and Drift: Professional-Class Liberals since the 1960s*.



Dr. Randy Lewis was awarded a Visiting Professorship in Cultural Studies at the University of Gdańsk!

**FACULTY
NEWS**

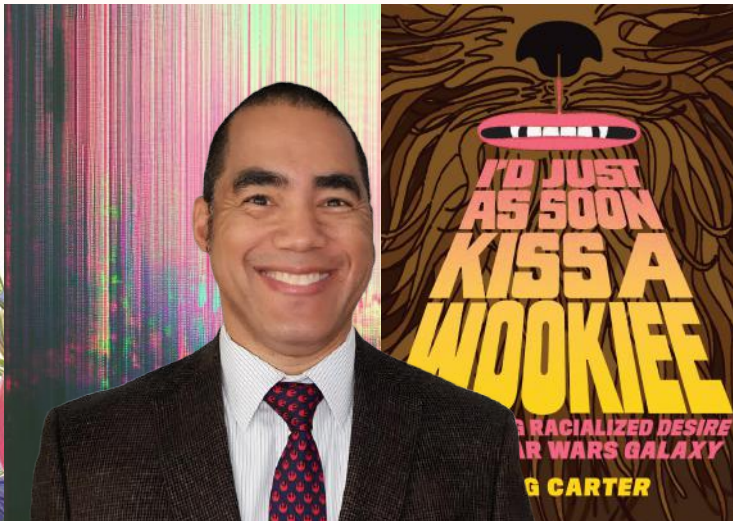
ALUMNI NEWS



Dr. Jeannette Vaught, joined the faculty of California State University-Los Angeles as **Assistant Professor** of Environmental Humanities!



Dr. Laura Crawley has been named 16th **PRESIDENT** of Bethany College!



Dr. Greg Carter published *I'd Just As Soon Kiss A Wookiee: Uncovering Racialized Desire in the Star Wars Galaxy*, coming JUNE 2025!



CONTACT INFORMATION

Find us on social media!



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SPRING 2025 The logo for American Studies, featuring the word 'american' in a colorful, multi-colored font and 'studies' in a blue, outlined font.



american studies



The University of Texas at Austin
College of Liberal Arts