

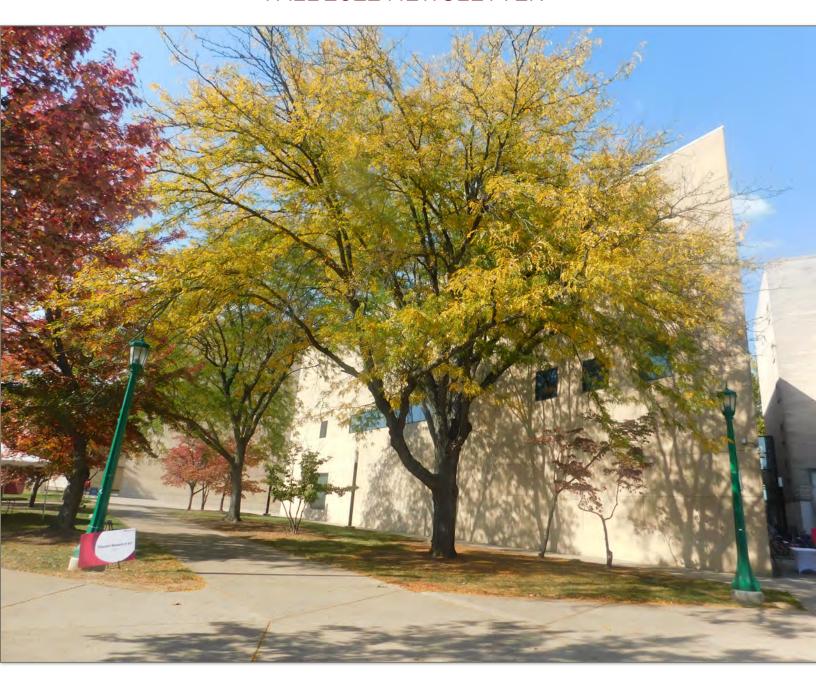






## AMERICAN STUDIES AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY BLOOMINGTON

## FALL 2022 NEWSLETTER







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## Letter from the Chair

Friday, December 16, 2022



## After many years of entreaties from my colleagues, I

finally joined the American Studies Department in Fall

2021, dividing my appointment with my long-time home in the History Department. Little did I know that this would mean I would soon be serving as Chair of the department. Although I received my Ph.D. in "American Civilization", that was over 30 years ago. The field has changed enormously since then, and much for the better, as it now takes in the full range of the so-called "American Experience" in all of its rich, transnational, multi-racial, multi-ethnic, and diverse spirit. To quote Raymond Williams, the cultural formations once regarded as "residual" or "emergent" in the field have now become hegemonic. Our signature lower-division undergraduate course, with 500-600 students a year, is "What is America?", and I am pleased to say that none of us teach it quite the same way, for there is no single answer to that question. "American Studies" as a field emerged during the Cold War, founded in the conceit that there was a single answer to that question, a kind of ersatz universal "American-ness" that could be discovered and displayed, often as a showcase of the

## **Letter from the Chair**



Friday, December 16, 2022

"free world." What makes the field exciting today is the rejection of that dogma. I am thrilled to be part of that transformation, and to lead a department so deeply and collectively committed to a new approach. There is no doubt that in the current climate, hostile as it is to humanistic inquiry, critical thinking, and an educational mission that looks beyond immediate career goals, our department faces some serious challenges, as do the "liberal arts" as a whole. Above all, we need to translate the enthusiastic response we find in our packed lower division undergraduate classrooms into a willingness of students to explore our curriculum more fully. In short, we invite IU undergraduates to join the department's vibrant faculty and graduate student culture in investigating that ever elusive question: What is America? You might find the answer in a Joni Mitchell song, in Peruvian punk rock, in a can of spam, inside a prison, in a photograph of an enslaved person or on a box of pancake mix, in a dance contest, in a queer community, in a former (or current) internment camp, on a Reservation, in a UFO experience, or perhaps somewhere none of us have thought to look yet. But as our majors, our graduate students, and our faculty know, it is the search that matters. Join us.

Alex Lichtenstein, Chair, American Studies



Friday, December 16, 2022

**During the week of October 17**, Department Chair Alex Lichtenstein visited the University of Sao Paulo to teach a graduate seminar on comparative US/South African history. Alex also published an online essay, "A Sharecropper's Family, on the site "Picturing Black History". See photo story on pages 6-7.





On September 22nd, Associate Professor Colin Johnson delivered an invited lecture to employees of the Conner Prairie Museum in Fishers, Indiana, entitled "The Pleasures and Perils of LGBTQ+ History." In November, he attended the annual meeting of the American Studies Association in New Orleans where he participated in two sessions: an "Author Meets Readers" panel organized around Carly Thomsen's recently published book, Visibility Interrupted: Rural Queer Life and the Politics of Unbecoming (University of Minnesota Press, 2021), and a session entitled "Sexual Modernity's Velvet Rope: Emergent Gay Cultures of

Capitalism and Political Moderation and its Sexual Others."

AMST Assistant Professor Aleshia Barajas gave a talk on Thursday, October 27 entitled "An Extraordinary Ride to the Other Side: Border Fantasies and Fuckeries in the Context of Sanctioned Crossings." See photo story on page 8.



Friday, December 16, 2022



AMST Assistant Professor Olga Rodriguez-Ulloa presented her book launch of *Punk! Las Américas Edition* Thursday, October 6 at the First Thursdays Festival. See photo story on page 9. She also presented at Stanford University on black and indigenous relationalities in queer hip hop Friday, December 2.





Friday, December 16, 2022



## **AMST Professor** Micol Seigel was named a

series editor of Abolition: Emancipation from the Carceral

#### ANNOUNCING A NEW BOOK SERIES

## Abolition: **Emancipation from the Carceral**

This new series shares contemporary visions of abolitionism as a twenty-first century continuation of the unfinished work of emancipation from slavery. Resisting carcerality—especially state apparatuses that maintain racialized inequality—this series offers a platform for the groundswell of new, interdisciplinary work extending the intellectual and political vision of abolitionism. Books will address urgent issues such as local policing, family policing, e-carceration and electronic monitoring, surand sousveillance, crimmigration and border enforcement, antiblackness, settler colonialism, and involuntary medical confinement.

Abolition: Emancipation from the Carceral reflects the activist orientation of abolition and highlights abolitionist creative practices that explore radical worlds beyond policing and prisons. Authors may be grounded in fields such as American studies, geography, history, and critical ethnic studies. We welcome proposals for books across disciplines, from monographs to other compelling nonfiction works written for a more general readership. We will also selectively consider groundbreaking edited collections and anthologies.

SERIES EDITOR

MICOL SEIGEL is a professor of American

studies and history at Indiana University

and author of Violence Work: State Power

research and teaching, Micol is involved

in the Critical Prison Studies caucus of

the American Studies Association and

Transnational History of the Americas.

the Tepoztlán Institute for the

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and the Limits of Police. In addition to

#### SERIES EDITOR



professor of Mexican American and Latina/o studies at the University of Texas at Austin and author of Fugitive Thought: Prison Movements, Race, and the Meaning of Justice. He previously taught at the University of Oregon and served on the City of Eugene's Civilian Review Board, overseeing investigations into allegations of misconduct and uses of force by the Eugene Police

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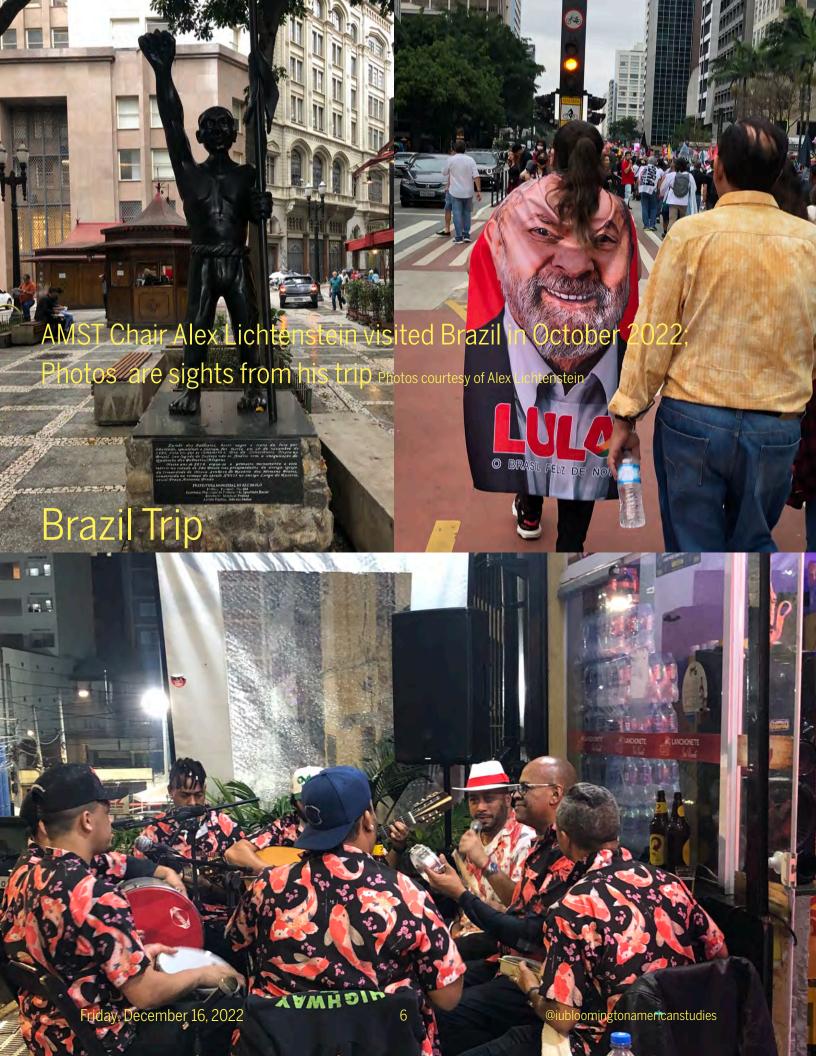
#### MIKE BACCAM Acquisitions Editor

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## FOR MORE DETAILS.



#### Department.



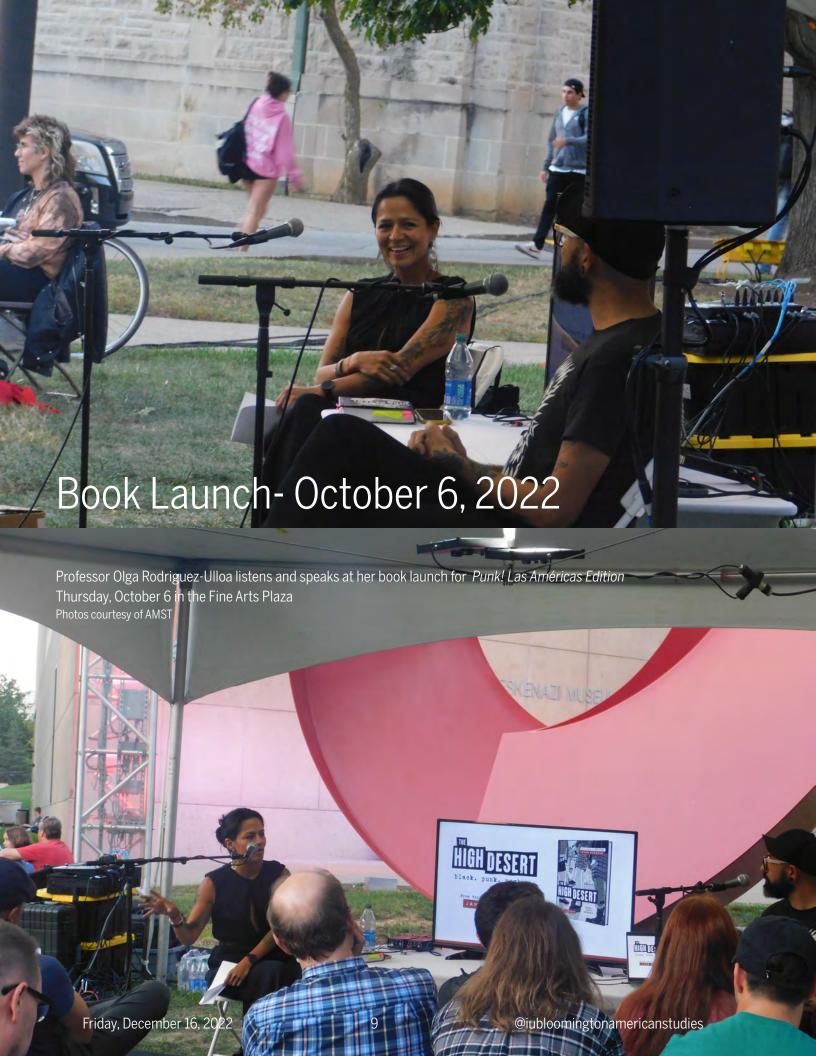














Friday, December 16, 2022

# "Unmasked: The Anti-Lynching Exhibits of 1935 and Community Remembrance in Indiana"

This multi-media
American Studies
exhibit, co-curated by
departmental
members Alex
Lichtenstein and
Phoebe Wolfskill,
along with former



American Studies colleague Rasul Mowatt, will be open on campus March 25-April 28, 2023, at IU's Process Gallery, Maxwell Hall. The exhibit brings together protest art and political ephemera from the 1930s and 1940s while highlighting current efforts to memorialize the victims of racist atrocities, especially in Indiana. Available for guided tours led by skilled facilitators, exhibit visits will be followed immediately by an opportunity to discuss the role an honest reckoning with America's racist past can play in promoting social justice, racial healing, and reparation. With support from the Clowes and Lilly Foundations, "Unmasked" will subsequently open at locations in Indianapolis, South Bend, and New Albany. Further details about the exhibit can be found here To inquire about a tour for your class, group, or organization, please contact: Alex Lichtenstein, lichtens@indiana.edu or Phoebe Wolfskill, pwolfski@indiana.edu





Friday, December 16, 2022



Institute for Advanced Study Visiting Fellow Dr. Dina Alves and host, American Studies professor Micol Seigel, enjoy a dinnertime colloquium with colleagues this semester.

Photo courtesy of Micol Seigel

### **Graduate**



Friday, December 16, 2022

## Sasha Weiss

Sasha entered the American Studies program in Fall, 2022. He comes from Los Angeles originally, but he moved between Dallas, LA and Santa Fe often enough that all three feel like hometowns. Sasha has spent the last few years in Chicago, where he received a BA in Fundamentals: Issues and Texts and an MA in Interdisciplinary Humanities from the



University of Chicago, studying attitudes towards death and colonialism-as-apocalypse, respectively. Before realizing his heart lay in the humanities, Sasha worked in biomedical research, and he especially loves projects that allow him to integrate critiques of medicine into his research. Sasha is particularly interested in the intersections of medical racialization, embodiment and anticolonialism in Native science fiction and futurism, as well as Indigenous literature more broadly. He's also interested in cultural approaches to genetic disease. Outside of academia, Sasha is a poet, painter, extra spicy food enthusiast and plant person slowly turning his apartment into an indoor forest. Sasha has some chronic health issues, so you might not see him at too many indoor in-person events during the pandemic, but he's really excited to be here and hopes the pandemic gets under control soon so he can be a more active member of the department.

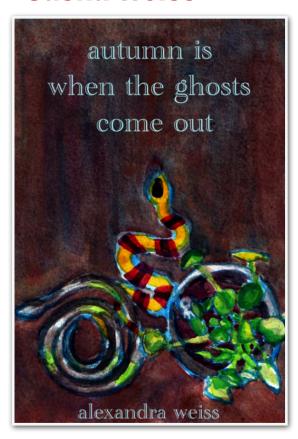


#### **Graduate**

Friday, December 16, 2022

## **Graduate Student News**

## Sasha Weiss



On October 25, 2022 Sasha also released autumn is when the ghosts come out, a poetry chapbook about how it feels to be haunted. They explore their experiences with depression, OCD, and coming to terms with a hereditary cancer syndrome.

Lisa Doi

AMST Grad student Lisa Doi presented a paper at the American Studies
Association conference in November on a panel entitled "War, Incarceration,
Imperialism, and Memory after 1965."

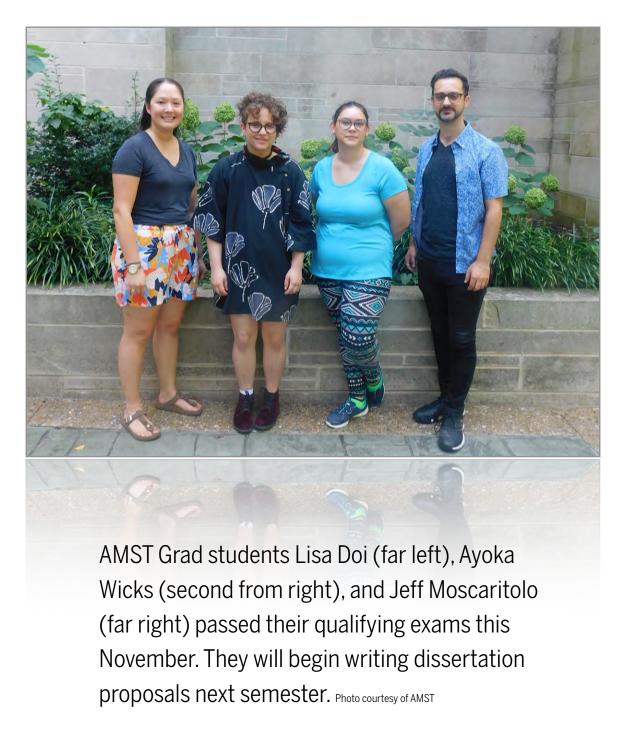


# COLLEGE OF ARTS + SCIENCES AMERICAN STUDIES

#### **Graduate**

Friday, December 16, 2022

## **Congrats, AMST grad students!**





## **Graduate**

## **Congratulations, Giselle!**

Friday, December 16, 2022



AMST celebrated the graduation of Giselle Cunanan, PhD, who successfully defended her dissertation in December 2021. She is pictured (right) with research chair and AMST professor Micol Seigel (left) from December 2021 commencement. Giselle is currently a Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow of Critical Race & Ethnic Studies at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington.

Photo courtesy of Micol Seigel











