

# IFUSS Newsletter

## International Forum for U.S. Studies

Dear Colleagues and Friends around The World:

Although we just released a newsletter this past summer of 2011, we had so much to report to you that we are sending a mini-version this fall as well.

I hope this finds each of our past Fellows, Associates, Board Members, and Friends around the world flourishing as scholars. There are so many challenging world events right now from the deadly famine in Somalia to the devastating earthquake in Japan, but balancing these is some more hopeful news: the potentials for wider political participation in some of the nations in the Middle East and some strengthening of the world economic system for those parts that have been struggling so far (the U.S., Spain, Portugal, Ireland, and so on), while other economies like Brazil and China continue to thrive.

Amidst this complex social and political landscape, I had the privilege of addressing the Fifth World Congress of the International American Studies Association in Rio this past July of 2011. In that presidential address, my final one as I stepped down after two terms and four years as President of that organization, I spoke about identifying our true intellectual passions and pursuing them in a global community of scholars. For the past 16 years, IFUSS has been working to build that same type of true community of peers around the world and we continue to be grateful to all of you who support our work through your own intellectual passions.

In this newsletter you will find the latest on our current research Fellows, our enlarged program for graduate affiliates, and our forthcoming international conference on the impact of ideas, practices, and policies originating in the U.S. and engaging India. We look forward to working with so many of our colleagues and friends in India to make this conference and its publications and visual exhibits a powerful contribution to transnational scholarship on the U.S. I

especially thank my colleague and co-organizer for that conference Dr. Rajeshwari Pandharipande here at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, for the great pleasure of working with her on this new project.

We remind you of our expanded “Sabbatical Fellows” program and encourage you to check out our new website for more information on how to apply for a research residency if you are on sabbatical. Note too our call for manuscripts for the new IFUSS book series. Several manuscripts are in the pipeline already, and we would be delighted to hear about your work.

We are always enthusiastic about hearing from you and want to hear your ideas as we move forward for new initiatives over the next few years.

Please keep in touch, and let your colleagues know about our work-- are there others you'd like added to our mailing list? After 16 years, the global IFUSS network of scholars continues to provide strong connections across the globe and an ever growing network of professionals who share our vision of a community of peers united in the scholarly analysis of the impact of the United States—its people, practices, ideas and cultural products, as they circulate and are embraced, rejected, retooled, and reformed around the world. Virginia Dominguez and I remain grateful for your support and input, and excited about the continually expanding possibilities for the future as we move ahead.

With best wishes,

*Jane*

Jane Desmond

*Co-founder and Executive Director  
International Forum for U.S. Studies: A Center for  
the Transnational Study of the United States  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA*

### ***IFUSS Directors:***

Jane Desmond

*Executive Director*

Virginia Domínguez

*Consulting Director*

### ***Newsletter Editor:***

Melinda Bernardo

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## IFUSS FELLOWS, ACADEMIC YEAR 2011 - 2012

### IFUSS is pleased to welcome the following Faculty Fellows for Academic Year 2011-2012



**Isar Godreau** obtained her PhD in cultural anthropology from the University of California Santa Cruz (1999). Currently, she is the Director of the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research at the University of Puerto Rico at Cayey where she directs various research initiatives (institution-wide level initiatives and her own research projects) Her research and publications explore issues of "race," racism and identity in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. She has published on hair, racial terminology,

the folklorization of blackness, census racial categories in Puerto Rico and racism in the public education setting.

Academic interests include : race and racism, nationalism in the Caribbean, applied anthropology, anti-racist pedagogy, race and the census.



**Li Jin** is Professor of English and vice president of Beijing Foreign Studies University. She studied English at Shandong University (B.A., 1982), Beijing Foreign Studies University (M.A., 1986), and Texas Christian University (Ph.D., 1993). She joined the faculty of Beijing Foreign Studies University in 1986, and was a Fulbright visiting scholar at Yale University from Sept. 2000 to Aug. 2001.

Li Jin's teaching and research interests are American fiction and American women writers. She has taught undergraduate courses such as Introduction to Literature, Twentieth-Century American Literature, and English Composition, and graduate courses such as Nineteenth-Century American Fiction, American Women Writers, Myths in American Culture, Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers, and Bibliography and Research Methods. Li Jin has published extensively in the areas of American women writers and American fiction: *A Critical Survey of American Literature* (1999), *Writing Women and Women Writing in Nineteenth-Century America* (2004), *Twentieth-Century American Women's Fiction* (2010) and over twenty articles in these areas. She is also the deputy editor-in-chief of *The New Age Chinese-English Dictionary* (2000) and *A Chinese-English Dictionary*. (3rd ed., 2010).



**Ulf Hannerz** is Professor Emeritus of Social Anthropology, Stockholm University, Sweden, and has taught at several American, European, Asian and Australian universities. He is a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, an honorary fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, a former Chair of the European Association of Social Anthropologists, a former director of the Swedish Collegium

for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences (SCASSS), and a former editor of the journal *Ethnos*. His research has been especially in urban anthropology, media anthropology and transnational cultural processes, with field studies in West Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States. His study of the work of news media foreign corre-

spondents included multi-site research in four continents. Among his books are *Soulside* (1969), *Exploring the City* (1980), *Cultural Complexity* (1992), *Transnational Connections* (1996), *Foreign News* (2004) and *Anthropology's World* (2010); several of them have also appeared in French, Spanish, Italian and Polish. He was Anthropology editor for the *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (2001) and gave the Lewis Henry Morgan lectures at the University of Rochester in 2000. In 2005 the University of Oslo awarded him an honorary doctorate.

Current academic interests: macro-anthropology, global future scenarios, history of world.



**Giorgio Mariani** is Professor of American Literature at the University of Rome "Sapienza," where he directs the Graduate Program in English-language literatures. He holds a PhD from Rutgers University, where he also taught for several years before moving back to Italy in 1991. Currently serving as the President of the International American Studies Association, and a long-time co-editor of the Italian journal of American Studies *Ácoma*, he has written, edited, and co-edited numerous

books, including *Spectacular Narratives: Representations of Class and War in Stephen Crane and the American 1890s* (1992); *Allegorie impossibili: storia e strategie della critica melvilliana* (1993); *Post-tribal Epics: The Native American Novel between Tradition and Modernity* (1996); *Le parole e le armi: saggi su guerra e violenza nella cultura e letteratura degli Stati Uniti d'America* (1999); *La penna e il tamburo: gli indiani d'America e la letteratura degli Stati Uniti* (2003); *America at Large. Americanistica transnazionale e nuova comparatistica* (2004); *Emerson at 200. Proceedings of the International Bicentennial Conference*. His essays and reviews have appeared in various journals, including *American Literary History*, *Studies in American Fiction*, *Fictions*, *RIAS*, *RSA Journal*, *Stephen Crane Studies*. His current book-project is entitled *A Farewell to Arms? Waging War on War in the American Literary Imagination*



**Helena Wulff** is Professor of Social Anthropology, Stockholm University, Sweden. Her research has been especially in expressive cultural forms in a transnational perspective, with field studies in Stockholm, London, New York, Frankfurt-am-Main, and Ireland (mostly Dublin). Studies of the transnational world of dance and social memory through dance have generated questions in relation to place, mobility and emotions, as well as to visual culture. Among her English-language

publications are the monographs *Ballet across Borders: Career and Culture in the World of Dancers* (1998, reprinted 2001, Berg) and *Dancing at the Crossroads: Memory and Mobility in Ireland* (2007, Berghahn), as well as the volumes *The Emotions: A Cultural Reader* (commissioned editor, 2007, Berg) and *Youth Cultures: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (editor with Vered Amit-Talai, Routledge, 1995), *New Technologies at Work: People, Screens and Social Virtuality* (editor with Christina Garsten, 2003, Berg), and *Ethnographic Practice in the Present* (editor with Marit Melhuus and Jon P. Mitchell, 2010, Berghahn). Articles have appeared in journals such as *Body & Society*, *Identities*, *Ethnography*, *Ethnologie française*, book chapters in many volumes, and entries in a number of encyclopedias. She is Editor (with Jonathan Skinner) of the book series "Dance and Performance Studies" for Berghahn. In 2006, she gave the Phyllis Kaberry Commemorative Lecture, University of Oxford. She was Editor-in-Chief (with Dorle Dracklé) of *Social Anthropology/Anthro-*

pologie Sociale, the journal of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA), and Vice President of EASA. She has been a visiting professor at University of Ulster, Northern Ireland/UK and University of Vienna, Austria.

Current academic interests: expressive cultural forms (dance, art, images, text). Writing and literature as cultural process and form focussing on contemporary Irish writers and their work.



**Jingqiong Zhou** is Professor and director of the Center of American Studies at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies (GDUFS). Zhou earned MAs from both GDUFS (1988) and Warwick (1992) in Britain. Starting her teaching career at GDUFS in 1988, Zhou obtained associate professorship in 1999, when she spent the whole year working as senior research fellow at the Center of American Studies, Hong Kong University (HKU). As the fruit of a longtime teaching and the research fellowship, *Contemporary American*

*Culture and Society*, a college textbook set for English majors in China, was published in 2003 and is in its 12th printing. Her first book-length criticism, also published in English, is *Raymond Carver in the History of Black Humor* (2006). Also in 2006, Zhou published *A Reader in American Fiction of Black Humor*, an anthology that covers selections and analysis (in Chinese) of black humor in 15 American novels and stories. Professor Zhou has also published several papers, exploring specific fictional works of authors such as Carver, Kafka, Twain, and Morrison.

During her time with IFUSS she will work on her current book project, *Dark Humor in American Fiction of Bildungsroman*.

### *IFUSS Graduate Affiliates:*

#### **IFUSS is also pleased to announce its 2011-2012 Graduate Affiliates**

##### **Ergin Bulut (Institute of Communications Research)**

Ergin's research investigates the production process and culture of the video game industry. He looks at both the local and transnational dimensions of video game production, as well as the kinds of skills and credentials necessary in this new knowledge economy.

##### **Fay Hodza (Human and Community Development)**

Fay's primary research goals are directed toward understanding the construction and management of social crises involving youth and children using ethnographic and grounded theory methods. His dissertation research examines how potential forms of marginalization relating to gender, sexuality, and power unfold within the context of two crisis intervention programs that target homeless youth in rural Illinois.

##### **David Greenstein (History)**

David's research explores the meanings and events of the post-World War I "Red Scare" as part of a transnational cultural encounter between Americans and Russians. He is interested in thinking about the ways in which histories are not bound within national borders, but rather, are constituted by transnational cultural contact, which allow for the multidirectional flow of people, ideas, and anxieties.

##### **Zach Sell (History)**

Zach's research addresses the interrelations between U.S. slavery, empire, and global capital. He is interested in the ways that the plantation economy of the *Old South* functioned as a global model, which industrial capitalism sought to emulate, developed managerial techniques from, and was based upon.

##### **Darren M. Stevenson (Institute of Communications Research)**

Darren's research centers on the policies, practices, and impacts of biometric identification, in the United States and transnationally. He is interested in the ways in which individuals both accept and reject biometric identification practices and the ways in which these choices overlap with technical, legal, social, and cultural traditions.

*This year's Fall Speaker Series will include the following speakers:*

**Helena Wulff**, *The Irish Writer as Global Public Intellectual: Fiction and Cultural Journalism between Ireland and New York*

Friday, October 21<sup>st</sup>  
3pm - 109 Davenport

**Ulf Hannerz**, *Soft Power: The Politics of Culture in Globalizing Times*

Friday, November 4<sup>th</sup>  
3pm - 109 Davenport

**Isar Godreau**, *Hispanic Whiteness in the US Empire: Taming slavery and the invisibility of free people of color in Puerto Rico*

Friday December 2<sup>nd</sup>  
3pm - 109 Davenport

### *IFUSS Conference Announcement:*

THE INTERNATIONAL FORUM FOR U.S. STUDIES at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, is pleased to announce its upcoming conference:

#### **The Presence of "America" in India: Where and How Does "America" Appear and What Are The Effects? April 5th-8th 2012**

Conference Co-Organizers: Professor Jane Desmond and Professor Rajeshwari Pandharipande, UIUC

##### DESCRIPTION

During the last decade, the circulation of ideas, commodities, cultural practices, and cultural products perceived as coming from the U.S. and gaining traction in India has accelerated. We understand this process as a dialectical one, full of multiple transformations/translations/ and effects, and with a substantial history, where India is not merely a "receiving" region, but rather a complex set of national and subnational cultural and political groups actively involved in articulating relationships to "America."

We use the term “America” advisedly as it does not presume to reference all of the Americas but rather to capture the sense of the U.S. as both a geo-political entity and a cultural imaginary, that is, not only as a political actor, mediating between Pakistan and India, but also as a cultural influence in many of the contemporary changes in Indian daily life and institutional structures. These include shifting practices of food consumption, modes of fashion, notions of secular democratic politics, the restructuring of Indian higher education institutions, the emphasis on “American” accents in English speech, employment in U.S. corporation customer service “call centers,” the impact of the presence of the U.S. business corporations (such as IBM), new developments in Indian agriculture and engineering, the migration of hip hop style dancing into Bollywood musicals, the much contested “brain drain” to the United States, and so on.

### CALL FOR PAPERS

We welcome paper proposals from a wide range of disciplines and topics that seek to understand the complexities of these processes and relations. These include but are not limited to: media studies, security issues, food, agriculture and ecology, diaspora studies, performance and the performing arts, fashion, business and economics, literatures and language, religion, engineering, architecture and landscape, travel and tourism, and social relations. Proposals should explicitly address the conference theme. Panels will be organized to give each speaker approximately 20 minutes each. Other formats beyond the usual paper presentation mode, such as posters and performances, will also be considered.

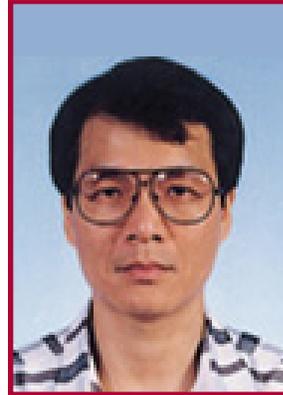
Please submit via email a proposal detailing your research and how it addresses the conference theme in the form of a brief abstract of no more than 300 words. Please include your name, title, affiliation, and contact information (mailing address and email), as well as a brief C.V. of no more than two pages **BY OCTOBER 15TH to:**

Ms. Anita Kaiser, Conference Coordinator  
International Forum for US Studies  
arkaiser@illinois.edu  
www.ips.illinois.edu/ifuss

### *Interview with Sangjung Jeong*

**Jane Desmond for IFUSS:** *In our recent conversations, you mentioned the growing sense of anti-American feeling in South Korea, especially among many individuals who might describe themselves as “progressive” in their politics, and who are feeling more positive towards North Korea these days. Yet, during the military incident a couple of months ago, when North Korea fired on the South and the U.S. engaged in military exercises in the area, a more complex set of attitudes seemed to emerge in public discourse. Given the more than 50 year legacy of the military presence of the U.S. in South Korea, how does the current geo-political situation affect the production of intellectual work on the U.S., and/or the students your center attracts?*

**Sangjun Jeong:** Perhaps first you need to understand how Koreans traditionally viewed the U.S. and what made them turn against the U.S.. In Korean the “United States of America” is translated into *mi-guk* which means a “beautiful country”. I’m not sure of the etymology of the word, when it began to be used, or to what extent Koreans associated the country with beauty. But I believe the word must have contributed to



shaping the image of the U.S. in the mind of Koreans. In contrast, Japanese call the U.S. “the country of rice”.

The very positive image of the U.S. was drastically changed in 1980 when a democratization movement in Kwangju, a city in the southwestern region, against the military coup was brutally cracked down upon by the military. Several hundreds or thousands civilians were killed and numerous were wounded. You should understand this: the Korean Armed Forces were (and still are) under the command of the U.S. Armed Forces Commander in Korea. Many Koreans believed and still believe that the

USAF aided or supported the generals who decided to suppress the uprising. As you know, in its foreign policies, the U.S. government tended to side with the status quo rather than change since World War II. In the 1980s several U.S. cultural centers in Korea were occupied and burned by radical students and activists.

In addition to its stance towards the military in 1980 the U.S. was blamed for the division of the Korean peninsula because it agreed with the USSR to divide Korea at the end of the WWII. Thus, since the 1980s the democratization movement of Korea has come to include anti-American ethos and attitude. The Korean progressives—you know how complicated this word is from country to country—came to perceive the U.S. as the reactionary and imperialist country. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the consequent dismantlement of the Cold War logic, I believe, helped the Korean perception of the U.S. shift to the opposite direction, perhaps excessively. Besides, the first generation leadership of North Korea had more legitimacy than the South Korean regime in their struggle against the Japanese occupation before the Korean independence in 1945 and subsequent policies. It was the period of disillusionment with the U.S. Anti-Americanism was at its peak for the past

ten years. In retrospect, I feel that the U.S. was seen as evil because it had been viewed as an angel before. After North Korea’s attack last November it seems that Koreans, particularly the younger generations, came to see the U.S. as it is, a country with its strengths and limitations, virtues and vices. It’s neither benevolent nor malignant, and thus we should deal with it practically. I believe that Americanists are no longer associated with a pro-American stance. Now Koreans, especially my students, are ready to take the U.S. as one of the many countries in the world, one of the most important allies to us politically and economically. I feel we’ll be able to do American Studies in a more mature way.

**IFUSS:** *While here as an IFUSS Faculty Fellow conducting your own research, one of your foci is on rising “Islamophobia” in the U.S., and I know you recently organized a conference on that topic at your center for American Studies at Seoul National University. What were some of the highlights of that conference? Did any of the key ideas emerging then seem to resonate on the ground here in the U.S.? Have other perspectives emerged in your research so far on this topic while here?*

**SJ:** Our conference last December was focused on the cultural representation of Islam and Muslims in the United States. We tried to deal with several issues. In what ways do post-9/11 discourse reinforce and/or reinvent the fourteen-hundred-year-old antagonism against Muslims? Can this relationship be shifted in a new direction? Have we already witnessed some signs of a new beginning? By examining a wide range of media through which images and rhetoric circulate papers presented revealed how the American public has responded to 9/11. They racialized Islam and thereby reverted to idioms that renew an age-old racist imagination—seeing Muslim majority countries as static, violent, and sexist. Will American society be able to overcome this incarnation of the familiar demon and move toward an expansion of democratic institutions and publics as it did in the 1960s? The majority of speakers were

not sure yet.

Although the conference was successful in defining and locating the problems in the symbolic realm, it really dealt with what could and should be done to make a real change, however small it might be. It seemed a bit idle to critically analyze the cultural representations, considering the gravity of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the severity of the former's sufferings. The general consensus of the participants seemed to be that no real change could be made for the next few decades between two parties if the U.S. would not drastically alter its policies, which is highly unlikely. The point of irreversibility has passed in the settlement of the West Bank, and thus Palestinians have no choice but to suffer. The whole picture was very grim.

As for my research on Islamophobia in the U.S. here, I have not had enough time yet to delve into that topic yet, thanks to various arrangements and academic events you have made for me.

**IFUSS:** *As a literary scholar who has published on U.S. postmodernist authors earlier in your career, you have a special expertise in postmodernism, literary production, and cultural politics. How have your work interests developed since that earlier phase, and if there are different trajectories that you want to pursue now, how did those new interests develop?*

**SJ:** When I was doing my graduate studies in the 1980s postmodernism was something in the air. I took courses from English, History, Philosophy, and American Studies departments without really thinking about postmodernism. But I found out later that most courses were somehow related around the theme of postmodernism. It helped me a lot when I wrote a dissertation because I could incorporate many of the term papers into it. I examined ethical consequences of the postmodernist conception of the world and history, by examining the ways in which the actual historical event, the Rosenberg case--the trial and execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg as Soviet spies--was represented in literature, journalism, and history. I feel that the postmodernist sensibility--its playfulness, plasticity, anxiety, irony, etc.--has become part of me. Since then my areas of interests have shifted into multiculturalism, postcolonialism, consumer culture, Asian American literature, American democracy and Arab American culture. All of these topics are closely related to postmodernism, and my interest in them, I somehow feel, is the extension of my interest in postmodernism. What I would like to do now, however, is examine New England Puritans, what they believed, how they treated and lived with Native Americans, Quakers, and those with non-orthodox views. I'm particularly interested in investigating John Winthrop, Anne Hutchinson, their debate, and how it illuminates and helps understand the contemporary America. This subject is one I had in mind from my graduate student years. In addition, I'm planning to examine the experience of Korean Americans, especially those who have reached the higher echelon of American society.

**IFUSS:** *Who would your ideal audience be for your work and that of your colleagues associated with American Studies at Seoul National University? Have you seen that notion of your targeted audience change in the last decade or so?*

**SJ:** There were times when I firmly believed literature, history and philosophy were the most important areas of study. Then the implied reader of my work was me and my colleagues in the humanities who were interested in the United States. These days I respect serious investigative journalists and anthropologists most. They seem to help better understand fellow human beings and the world we live in better. If an opportunity is provided, I would like to make a series of documentaries on the United States that are tailored to the needs of Koreans, so that they could understand it as it is. I'm currently writing an article for a magazine whose readership is of highly educated Koreans about the influence of American thoughts and culture. I'm planning to write a book on American society and culture for the general public in Korea. I would like to reach a wider and more diverse audience. Although I'm not really

trained in journalism and ethnographic studies, I believe I'll be able to utilize scholarship produced in those fields.

**IFUSS:** *You and I have had the opportunity of speaking together in Beijing and Tokyo and Seoul. Has there been any concerted effort to develop intellectual exchanges among scholars in these three sites in terms of your shared intellectual interests in the U.S.? At this moment, do you foresee such exchanges or collaborations being useful, or are the national and subregional research concerns too different?*

**SJ:** The American Studies Association of Korea (ASAK) has an exchange program with the Japanese Association of American Studies (JASS). We send a Korean delegation, usually two American Studies scholars, to the annual meeting of the JASS, which has also dispatched their delegation to our annual conference for the past two decades. I attended the annual conference of the American Studies Network (ASN) of China in 2009 and 2010. I admire and respect my Japanese colleagues for their meticulous and specific studies. I have got the impression that Chinese Americanists are more concerned in practical matters such as trade and US-China relations than culture or literature, though there is a small group of younger scholars interested in cultural studies. Korean Americanists, mostly with literary backgrounds, tend to be theoretical and philosophical. They prefer meta-narratives. I feel that Korean scholars need to pay more attention to practical relevance of their work whereas their Chinese counterparts need to understand the U.S. through cultural studies. We have much to learn from one another in these three East Asian countries. Personally I'm going to attend the ASN meeting whenever my schedule allows. We may be able to invite some Chinese graduate students to our annual graduate students workshop. If I work for the ASAK, I would try to promote collaborations between China, Japan and Korea in various ways. I was told that the U.S. embassy in Seoul suggested a joint conference between these three countries to the executive committee of the ASAK last year. Well, I'm not really sure their suggestions would be detrimental to or helpful for its realization.

Besides, while in China it seemed to me that Americans and Chinese should understand each other much, much better. I got the impression that their level of mutual understanding is quite low. It is an imperative in a changed bipolar system of the world that two superpowers know each other better for the sake of peace in the world as well as in East Asia.

**IFUSS:** *What issues would you like to see researched or debated more widely among members of the global community of scholars of the U.S.? How might we collectively craft an agenda for the next five years, which would provide a welcome arena for work that might otherwise be very difficult to do alone?*

**SJ:** As president of the IASA and director of IFUSS, I believe, you know better than any other person about the issues that concern the Americanists around the world and how to mobilize them and set up an agenda. I feel that IFUSS and IASA could play a more active role. As for issues, along the line of comparative and transnational studies with emphasis on the reception, I would suggest the United States as an empire (comparison with previous empires), the reception of U.S. popular culture, the experience of the US around the globe, etc.

## IFUSS NEW MEDIA

IFUSS is pleased to announce the launch of our newly re-designed website, <http://ips.illinois.edu/ifuss/index.html>.

Also, for the latest updates and opportunities, please follow us on Facebook,

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/International-Forum-for-US-Studies-IFUSS/167327029980366>.



The updated site provides easier navigation, enhanced information on our initiatives and Fellows, a recent list of opportunities, and additional resources for scholars of the U.S.

Please check it out!

### Contact Information

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