Strategic Plan – 2010 Forward
Department of Comparative Literary & Cultural Studies (CLCS)

About the Department

The seed for CLCS was planted in 1973, when a Comparative Literature undergraduate major was introduced. M.A. and Ph.D. programs in the same discipline were under way in 1977 with a core faculty of three full professors and approximately twelve affiliated faculty. After more than twenty-five years of steady growth and success, we became the Department of Comparative Literary & Cultural Studies in 2003 when we added a new Ph.D. emphasis in Cultural Studies. The name change also reflected the remarkable success of our undergraduate major in Cinema & Cultural Studies, which was officially launched in 1998 and quickly became the fastest growing major in the College of Arts and Sciences. At present, we have eight core members of the department and thirty affiliated members from Africana Studies, Art, Asian and Asian American Studies, cDACT, English, European Languages, Hispanic Languages, History, Philosophy, Theatre Arts, and Women's and Gender Studies.

At CLCS, we teach literature, cinema, and media historically, comparatively, and theoretically. We house three undergraduate majors – Cinema and Cultural Studies (CCS), Humanities Interdisciplinary (HUM), and Comparative Literature (CLT), and two minors (CCS and CLT). Our four graduate programs include the M.A. and Ph.D. in Comparative Literature, and the M.A. and Ph.D. in Cultural Studies. We are especially proud of the fit between our undergraduate and graduate programs, enabling Ph.D. students to complete their professional training by assisting in the delivery of undergraduate courses that closely parallel their graduate work in literary and cultural studies. Our research programs are thus fully integrated into our teaching mission.

CLCS faculty members are committed to theoretically sophisticated research into all cultural phenomena, especially literature, cinema, and visual media. Interdisciplinarity is essential to our mission. In addition to advancing knowledge, we are devoted to interrogating how knowledge is established and what functions it has served. To cite the work of just a few of our faculty, we teach and publish on the social and cultural construction of gender, the literature and cinema of migrating populations, the legacies of colonialism, the psychoanalytic interpretation of texts, the relationship between philosophical and literary discourses, and the American reception of works of art from Europe, Asia, and Africa. We house two academic journals: the well-established *Journal of Visual Culture*, edited by Raiford Guins, and the fledgling *pulsations*, edited by Patrice Nganang. Jacqueline Reich directs the New Directions in National Cinemas series for Indiana University Press, and Krin Gabbard is Editor-in-Chief of Oxford University Press's new and ambitious on-line bibliography for Cinema and Media Studies. Faculty members consistently pursue internal and external funding: E.K. Tan was the recent recipient of the Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation Junior Scholar Grant in Spring 2010, and Raiford Guins was a Lemelson Center Senior Research Fellow at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History during his junior research leave during Fall 2010.

We are extremely proud of Prof. Guins's work with what will be the William A. Higinbotham Game Studies Collection at Melville Library. The Higinbotham collection invests in and is dedicated to the scholarly study and material preservation of electronic screen-based game media, related texts, ephemera, and artifacts that document the history of video and computer games. The University Libraries in consultation with the collection's curators selectively identify, acquire, preserve, and provide access to primary, secondary, and special collections materials in their original formats. The collection supports the educational mission of Stony Brook University through its commitment to acquiring unique curricular resources that are accessible in perpetuity for the purposes of research, teaching, and learning across the University's diverse colleges and schools.

Challenges and Solutions

The current dire budget situation has prompted CLCS to think about new ways to optimize our diminishing financial resources while preserving our well-respected position high among the top twenty graduate Comparative Literature programs in U.S. public universities. At the same time, our suspended search in 2008-2009 has yet to be resumed, leaving us short of the teaching power needed to serve both our graduate and undergraduate students. In addition, four of our faculty members (Guins, Harvey, Petrey, and Reich) have teaching obligations to other departments This represents a reduction of 25% in what should be the full teaching power of our core faculty.

We have addressed these challenges in the following ways:

- We developed and established a new M.A. in Cultural Studies, and recruited our first class this year of four students in 2008, with plans to expand it substantially each year.
- We have increased our undergraduate course offerings and enrollment for the Summer and Winter sessions by 15%, thus raising additional revenue to supplement the depleted budget and the loss of adjunct funding as well as compensating for course shortages during the Fall and Spring semesters.
- We have optimized our undergraduate core course offerings by closely studying enrollment patterns and enforcing pre-requisites.
- We have pursued innovative and collaborative teaching projects, such as new course development with Women's and Gender Studies and our Classics in Literature program.
- We have formed an alliance with Alan Inkles and the Staller Center to offer an undergraduate film course around the highly successful Stony Brook Film Festival.

Vision for the Future

CLCS recognizes that in order for Humanities to flourish at SBU, interdisciplinary collaboration is essential. To this end, we continue to propose interdepartmental initiatives, such as additional cross-listed courses and greater communication with other graduate programs so as to avoid redundancy in course offerings. We also hope that

strategic conversations continue across the Humanities so that operational and scholarly excellence among the various departments can increase.

With an internationally renowned, highly productive research faculty, CLCS is at the forefront in shaping the study of literature, film, video, and electronic media in this century. As these fields evolve, we plan to extend our international recognition by redoubling our efforts to obtain major grants and fellowships. To this effect, and drawing on the imminent opening of the Higinbotham archive, we plan to apply for an NEH Digital Humanities Start-up Grant to further develop the archive, its facilities, and integrate its resources into both the graduate and undergraduate curriculum. In addition, we have established a fund with the Advancement Office and plan to pursue this avenue of revenue generation.

We are also in discussions to establish a faculty-led study abroad program in Cinema Studies at the University of San Marino. These plans are in the preliminary stage, but we intend eventually to offer a rigorous academic program that takes advantage of the University of San Marino's location and resources in order to allow students to investigate the great European cinema traditions *in situ*.

Once there are funds for new hires, we hope to bring in a junior faculty specializing in such fields as classics and gender, to expand our nascent course offerings in the field; queer visualities, to address issues of new media and sexuality; and transnational television and screen studies, to continue our investigations of technology, representation, and national productions.

Our Mission

Ever since its creation forty years ago, the program in Comparative Literature has been at the center of humanistic inquiry at Stony Brook. We have consistently offered faculty in other departments the opportunity to move beyond the disciplinary confines of their home departments and teach ambitious new courses of their own design. Everyone has benefited from these initiatives, especially our graduate students who have consistently found jobs in colleges and universities. We are extremely proud of our placement record.

We are also proud of the collegiality among departments that we have always encouraged, but now even more so as we develop new interdepartmental initiatives through our recently added programs in Cultural Studies. In the 21st century, in good times as well as in bad, we are confident that the University will continue to benefit from the unique opportunities we have offered and will continue to offer faculty and students at Stony Brook.