Muhlenberg College

DANA Forum 2012

Wednesday, April 25, 2012
Great Room, Seegers Union

Thursday, April 26, 2012
Great Room, Seegers Union
The Dana Scholars Program acknowledges students who display outstanding academic potential, integrity, and leadership ability through contributions both inside and outside of the classroom. Each summer, Muhlenberg College awards about thirty high school seniors with this honor, one of the most prestigious honors that the College offers. In offering this merit award, the College desires not only to support individual students but also to endorse excellence within the student body as a whole.

The Dana Program emphasizes creativity and independence of thought through independent study and research. The Program also connects the liberal arts with "real world" situations. Following the Dana First Year Seminar, Dana students complete three additional course units. Dana students participate in an internship, a work experience undertaken for the purpose of applying knowledge from the classroom and actively reflecting on that activity. Students also engage in a directed study with a faculty member of their choice, developing projects that emphasize creativity or original thought and culminating in a paper, performance, or presentation. All Dana students must complete the Dana Forum – a capstone experience in their Senior year.

Beginning with the Dana class of 2015, all Danas will participate in a Dana sophomore seminar.

Dr. Mohsin Hashim, Program Director
The Dana Forum is designed as a senior year capstone experience to deepen a greater sense of community among DANA scholars and to enrich the intellectual climate on campus. Each year the Forum helps Dana seniors develop and execute collaborative research projects that are tied to the Center for Ethic’s annual theme. In the Fall semester, under the supervision of the Director of the Dana Forum, students engage academic questions related to the annual theme chosen by the Center for Ethics. They also form working groups to research a topic of their choice and identify a faculty mentor for the project. The research component of the Dana Forum is completed during the spring semester of the Dana Scholar’s senior year. The specific nature of each team’s project depends on the students’ background, interests, and goals. Because of the goals of the DANA program, projects that also serve the community are strongly encouraged.

Dr. Hartley Lachter, Forum Director, 2011-2012
The Muhlenberg College Center for Ethics seeks to develop our capacities for ethical reflection, moral leadership, and responsible action by engaging community members in scholarly dialogue, intellectual analysis, and self-examination about contested ethical issues.

Through thematic lectures and events, the Center for Ethics serves the teaching and study of the liberal arts at Muhlenberg College by providing opportunities for intensive conversation and thinking about the ethical dimensions of contemporary philosophical, political, economic, social, cultural, and scientific issues. In service to its mission, the Center for Ethics hosts special events and programs provides faculty development opportunities, provides support for student programming, and sponsors a Living & Learning Community coordinated by a Faculty Scholar-in-Residence. The Center and thematic programs are directed by full time faculty members. Muhlenberg College gratefully acknowledges the Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation's support of the Center for Ethics.

The 2011-2012 program is entitled *The Politics and Ethics of Memory and Forgetting.*

**Dr. Lanethea Mathews, Director, Center for Ethics**
What are the ethics and politics of memory construction? What is the morality of memory? What are we obligated to remember? Are there some things we are obligated to forget? Do we have a responsibility, through memory and remembrance, to repair past mistakes? Should we ever attempt to erase memories? What is collective memory and what is its relationship to personal memory? How do memorials and museums contribute to our sense of a collective past? What is the relationship between memory, myth and truth? In what ways is memory construction a cause and effect of access to power? How is memory used in shaping the public and granting access to communities? Are there more or less ethical ways to access and attempt to shape memory?

Dr. Holly Cate, 2011-2012 Program Co-Director

Dr. Paul McEwan, 2011-2012 Program Co-Director
### Schedule of Events

**Wednesday, April 25**

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<th>Time</th>
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| 6:30 p.m. | Welcome to the Forum  
Hors D’Oeuvres Served                                 |
| 6:50 p.m. | Welcome and Opening Remarks  
Dr. Hartley Lachter, 2011-2012 Forum Director  
Dr. Paul McEwan, Co-Director, Center for Ethics  
2011-2012 Program |
| 7:00 p.m. | *Facebook, Memorialization, & Memory*  
Joshua Bohn, Daniel Greenfield, Stephanie Plumeri, Jamie Sklar |
| 7:35 p.m. | *Memories of Childbirth*  
Jennifer Bleznak, Samantha Mangel, Brittany Sherman |
| 8:10 p.m. | *Modern Nostalgia and Pop Culture*  
Louisa deButts, Leah Holleran, Elena Voonasis |
| 8:45 p.m. | *Bollywood and the Body: Cultural Memory through Bollywood Dance*  
Melissa Bressler, Amanda Gavin, Allison Hollows, Renee Hopkins |
| 9:20 p.m. | Closing remarks  
Dr. Hartley Lachter |
# Schedule of Events

**Thursday, April 26**

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<td>7:10 p.m.</td>
<td><em>Curricular Change and the Regulation of Academic Memory</em>&lt;br&gt;Joseph Fielding, Jon Morgan, Sara Romanello, Kevin Tomasura</td>
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<td>7:45 p.m.</td>
<td><em>Allentown’s 250th Anniversary Time Capsule: A Vehicle for Collective Memory Construction</em>&lt;br&gt;Rebecca Glassman, Heather Malacaria, Daina Nanchanatt, Anvi Patel</td>
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<td>8:20 p.m.</td>
<td><em>Seeing American Justice? A Closer Look at Eyewitness Testimony in the Legal System</em>&lt;br&gt;Tina Chou, Meredith Colwell, Lisa Peterson, Brendan Phelan</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Concluding remarks&lt;br&gt;Dr. Mohsin Hashim, Director, Dana Scholars Program</td>
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Event Schedule

April 25
7:00 P.M.

**DESCRIPTION**

**Facebook, Memorialization, & Memory**

This project explores the legal, cultural, and psychological implications of the permanence of digital information on memory and memorialization. We examine how Facebook profiles form a key component of the individual persona, and how both structural aspects of the site and cultural norms influence remembrance of that persona after his or her passing. Our study is unique in that it examines relationships between death anxiety in the “real” world and acceptability of various forms of mourning practices in the online community. Relatively few studies have been performed on such grieving behaviors strictly in the digital environment; previous research that does exist focuses mainly on different methods of memorialization and privacy issues without considering the factor of death anxiety. Our goals in conducting this research are not only to determine the socially acceptable “norms” of grieving practices on Facebook, but also to understand how individual perceptions of these norms vary with respect to the variables of intensity of Facebook use and anxiety about death.
Memories of Childbirth

Our research addresses the findings of a survey completed by nearly four-hundred mothers of varying ages, geographical locations throughout the United States, and birthing experiences. We assessed the biological and socio-cultural factors that impacted how mother's recalled childbirth and rated the overall quality of the experience, and how memories of the pain change over time. Additionally, we analyzed how various conditions impacted perception of pain and the overall childbirth experience. Some of these factors included supportive friends or family present, the use of medications, the quality of hospital staff, and whether or not the woman had given birth previously. Finally, we explored possible cultural reasons as to why we received such an overwhelming response from women who desired to share their birthing experiences for this project.
Event Schedule

April 25
8:10 P.M.

**Presenters**
Louisa deButts
Leah Holleran
Elena Voonasis

**Mentor**
Dr. Paul McEwan

**DESCRIPTION**

**Modern Nostalgia and Pop Culture**

This study addresses the ways nostalgia has changed throughout time, has manifested itself in pop culture, and is affected by new technology such as YouTube. We begin by defining and discussing the history and progression of nostalgia. We specifically examine nostalgia’s relationship with 20th century pop culture, cultural territory, and generational identity. Through a thorough study of YouTube videos and the comments associated with them, we posit that the YouTube generation exhibits a different relationship with the past outside the realm of traditional types of nostalgia.
Bollywood and the Body: Cultural Memory through Bollywood Dance

Bollywood films offer a unique space to explore Indian identity at the intersection of past Indian tradition and the desire to appeal to the contemporary world. With the centrality of the female dancing body within these films as a site to explore changing Indian nationality, religion, and sexuality, defined gender roles and class distinctions are becoming more transient. The fusion of established Indian dance forms with contemporary westernized dance styles permits a space for a new sense of Indian dance, where retained aspects offer a place to explore progression within Indian values. In exploring the history of dance within Bollywood films and the female body in relation to divinity, our study found that contemporary Bollywood still preserves much of traditional Indian character. Yet, the varying landscape, display, and censorship of the female dancing body as a vessel for cultural memory permits an opportunity to explore changing social approaches to what can be classified as Indian in the face of increasing globalization.
Curricular Change and the Regulation of Academic Memory

Our research examines the 1989 curricular change at Muhlenberg College as a moment in which the college renegotiated its own identity by restructuring and relabeling the core of courses that constitute a ‘Muhlenberg education.’ This shift manifests itself in the altered pedagogical rhetoric of documents like the course catalog and mission statement, and, in a more nebulous way, through the memories and perceptions of all those who participated in and were affected by the change. Our project addresses both of these sites, using primary and secondary documents to track changes in the way the college publicly represented itself, and a series of filmed interviews with faculty and administration to both investigate changes in the way individuals conceptualized the college and capture the act of memory on film. Such a project ultimately entails a discussion of memory, as we are dealing with curricular change as a site at which the college alters its own identity—that is to say changes how it wants to remember itself—but also with individual memories of a specific moment in the history of Muhlenberg College. By providing a rich explication of Muhlenberg’s past and its associated memories, we aim to offer insight into current curricular change, its relationship to Muhlenberg’s identity, and the academic/rhetorical trajectory of the college.
Event Schedule

April 26
7:45 P.M.

Presenters
Rebecca Glassman
Heather Malacaria
Daina Nanchanatt
Anvi Patel

Mentor
Dr. Lanethea Mathews

DESCRIPTION

**Allentown’s 250th Anniversary Time Capsule: A Vehicle for Collective Memory Construction**

Our study explores the politics of the construction of collective memory formed in a community. We question who has the authority to form this collective memory, how it represents the diversity of a community, and how future generations will come to understand a place through this collective memory. In addition to a theoretical investigation of collective memory, we use a case study of Allentown’s 250th Anniversary Time Capsule to study how collective memory making is put into practice in a community. We developed a survey to determine what items, places, and events Allentown’s residents would like to see encapsulated for future generations. Our results address the challenges that emerge from trying to create a representative memory for a socioeconomically diverse community.
**Event Schedule**

April 26  
8:20 P.M.

**Description**

**Seeing American Justice? A Closer Look at Eyewitness Testimony in the Legal System**

In the past two decades, 75% of exonerated inmates were wrongfully convicted based upon eyewitness testimonies. The validity of using eyewitness accounts in the courtroom has been a point of contention between the established infrastructure of the legal system and the developments in the fields of science and psychology. Our analysis of eyewitness evidence raises a number of ethical questions regarding its use in the American court system.
Dana Scholars Program

Mission Statement
The Dana Program offers outstanding, intellectually versatile students an opportunity to belong to a community of scholars that fosters conversations across disciplines, rigorous academic inquiry, and promotes engaged citizenship and leadership. Each Dana scholar can major in any academic department or program. All Dana seniors engage in collaborative research projects on issues of public concern and interest.

**Director:** Dr. Mohsin Hashim
**Forum Director, 2011-2012:** Dr. Hartley Lachter

**Faculty Advisory Committee:**
Dr. James Bloom, Dr. Janine Chi, Dr. Linda McGuire, Dr. Mohsin Hashim

**Student Advisory Committee:**

**Class of 2012**
Joseph Fielding
Jennifer Bleznak

**Class of 2013**
Garrett Gallinot
Casey Moser

**Class of 2014**
Cimarron Sharon
Michael Schramm

**Class of 2014**
Jennifer Weeks
James Custer
DANA Scholars

Class of 2012

Jennifer Bleznak
Joshua Bohn
Melissa Bressler
Meredith Colwell
Louisa deButts
Joseph Fielding
Amanda Gavin
Rebecca Glassman
Daniel Greenfield
Leah Holleran
Allison Hollows
Renee Hopkins
Heather Malacaria
Samantha Mangel
Jonathan Morgan
Daina Nanchanatt
Lisa Peterson
Brendan Phelan
Stephanie Plumeri
Sara Romanello
Brittany Sherman
Kevin Tomasura
Elena Voonasis