

Tuesday, August 26, 2008

College of Arts and Sciences examines Cities

By **Rebecca Wyatt Thomas**, OU Web Writer

The College of Arts and Sciences continues Celebrating the Liberal Arts with 2008-09 theme Cities. The Celebrating the Liberal Arts themes are designed to demonstrate how a liberal arts education results from the interactive work of scholars from many disciplines.

This year's theme allows the various disciplines in the College of Arts and Sciences to explore the many facets of cities, which are complex and varied entities. Such an exploration can cover topics that include city histories and their respective roles in the global economy, how cities help give expression to art and culture, and whether cities can successfully respond to the many social and political challenges they face.

Details for events throughout the year are still being finalized, but a number of events are planned.

- The **Master of Public Administration** program will host a panel discussion titled "Running a City in the 21st Century." The panel will feature MPA program alumni who are currently or have served as municipal managers.
- The **English Department** will bring award-winning crime novelist S.J. Rozan to campus. Knutson has held positions on boards such as Mystery Writers of America, Sisters in Crime and Private Eye Writers of America. Her books are a creative expression of the theme, each focusing on a city. At OU, Knutson will participate in a public reading and an open discussion.
- The Art and Art History department is sponsoring a series of lectures that will be offered every other week during the winter term. The lectures will feature OU art faculty discussing cities in terms of art, such as architecture, photographs or artistic inspiration.
- The **Department of Modern Languages and Literatures** will sponsor a walking tour of downtown Detroit. The tour will focus on architecture, historic monuments and a lunch in Greektown.
- DMLL will sponsor a walking tour of Mexicantown in Detroit. The Mexican neighborhood is being transformed by infusions of funds from federal and local grants. The area is home to nearly 100,000 Hispanics and stores, restaurants and other businesses that serve the population.
- DMLL also will sponsor a presentation by Associate Professor of Spanish Ron Rapin, on Monterrey, Mexico and San Antonio, Texas. Rapin will present information on the historical and architectural elements of the cities, including the Alamo, Mexican Market Place, the Spanish Missions and the San Antonio River Walk.
- An exhibit at the Oakland University Art Gallery titled "Contemporary Flanerie: Reconfiguring Cities," will take place March 7 through April 12. The exhibit will display how an individual experiences a city as opposed to how a city appears or is represented. The exhibit will be curated by Vagner Whitehead, assistant professor of art.
- **Music, Theatre and Dance** will host David Eliet, a playwright, theatre director and educator, to present "Providence, Rhode Island versus Kirovohrad, Ukraine: A Small American City and Small Ukrainian City." The lecture will compare and contrast the typical American city with one in the Ukraine. The lecture will make use of projections of still photos and video.
- The **Honors College** will host Sam Staley for a lecture on Thursday, Nov. 6 from noon-1 p.m. Staley will discuss urban economics and green cities.

As part of the Cities theme, the faculty has selected a community book, written by James Howard Kunstler, "The Geography of Nowhere." The book explores the historical development and declines of cities and proposes solutions for developing new cities in the new century.

"The future will require us to build better places," Kunstler said. "Or the future will belong to other people in other societies."

Kunstler uses witty depictions of the nation's evolution from early settlements to an auto-driven society and what it is truly costing America to have such a lifestyle.

The Department of Writing and Rhetoric will host Kunstler for a lecture on "The Geography of Nowhere." Kunstler's visit to campus is still being planned. Watch The News at OU and the campus calendar for detailed information when it is available.

Cities is sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences with support from the divisions of **Student Affairs** and **Academic Affairs**.

SUMMARY

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