

# Expressions

## Volume 24

**SJSU** | COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES  
AND THE ARTS

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# SJSU Pioneers Film Adaptation of John Steinbeck’s Short Story, “Breakfast”

By Alexis Cutchin

John Steinbeck’s first-person narrative, "Breakfast", tells the story of a stranger wandering down a deserted California road where he encounters a struggling migrant family amidst the Dust Bowl Migration of the 1930’s. Although the family has little to offer, they are grateful for what they do have and happily share with the stranger—demonstrating the profound effect of humanity and kindness.

Throughout its short narration, *Breakfast* powerfully illustrates the themes of contentment, struggle, gratitude, and humanity. For years, copyright restrictions have kept Steinbeck’s work from being reproduced or adapted in any way—until now.

With the help of SJSU’s Center for Steinbeck Studies, SJSU’s Spartan Films obtained exclusive rights to adapt the original short story into a film, allowing the Pulitzer Prize winner’s work to finally come to life. Under the direction of film professors Barnaby Dallas and Nick Martinez, the Department of Film and Theatre has produced the first ever film adaptation of Steinbeck’s three-page story.

*Breakfast* was eventually developed into *The Grapes of Wrath*, providing Steinbeck the material for humanizing the people coming to California in hopes of escaping hard times. In order to re-create this iconic scene, the cast and crew



traveled to Coyote Valley—not far from Steinbeck’s birthplace of Salinas, CA. “We chose the area because we felt it was the closest visual resemblance to the scene described in the book,” says Dallas. “We camped there for four days to shoot the

film." The team had a grueling schedule, with cast and crew waking up at 3:00 am, and shooting from 4:00 am onward.

Production Designer and full-time SJSU faculty member Andrea Bechert and a student team were responsible for the visuals, sets, and props for the film. The attention to period detail was meticulous. "They actually had students there cooking real bacon for the scene," explains Dallas. "We imported a specific bacon from New York that mirrored the aesthetic of what bacon in the 1930's would look like. Then, we set up a grill and actually cooked the bacon on it, all for one brief shot," he says.

The cast and crew enacted this tireless attention to detail in order to preserve the authenticity of the short story throughout the adaptation. The professors were determined to create an accurate period piece that respects Steinbeck and his message. "*Breakfast* is the quintessential Steinbeck story—it's such a moment in time looking through the fishbowl at four lives that cross paths for a moment," says Martinez. "It's about humanity, how some people have almost nothing, but still offer a stranger something to show kindness."

"Steinbeck liked to say that his job was 'to remind people of their humanity,'" says Nick Taylor, Director of SJSU's center for Steinbeck Studies. "It strikes me that none of his work reflects this intent better than *Breakfast*. It's a story about a simple act of kindness, a family sharing a meal with a stranger traveling alone. They're all migrant farmworkers, they're all struggling, but they have not forgotten the responsibility we share to care for one another."

Some believe the film has certain applicability to today's political turmoil and assume it is a commentary on immigration; however, Dallas and Martinez clarify that neither the film, nor the story, were meant to take a partisan stance. Martinez says, "Steinbeck never intended to make a political statement. It was more a commentary on human decency and his depiction of morals and ethics." Martinez describes how Steinbeck's work was meant to be subjective to the audience. He says, "To categorize Steinbeck's work as a strictly a political commentary would be a misrepresentation and disservice to him. Although this story has relevance to the immigration climate today, it's so much more than that. *Breakfast* is, in fact, the opposite of a militant depiction of immigration. He explains that Steinbeck has many themes and morals in his work, but they are all open to interpretation by the audience. Martinez says *Breakfast* is a multifaceted narrative, focused more on human decency and compassion. "If a narrative on immigration is what you get out of it, then great!" says Martinez. "However, it's not now, nor will it every be explicitly about that."



Foremost Steinbeck scholar and SJSU Professor Susan Shillinglaw sees similar themes. "The story's intention is to show how one shimmering moment can evoke pure enjoyment. It's about relishing in the present: complete participation in one heartfelt, shared experience. This is how we experience wholeness and a sense of belonging,

moments like these that illustrate we are a whole."

Ultimately, *Breakfast* portrays how simple humanity is a cure for turmoil—political, social, or anything in between. "The film really shows the spirit of generosity and kindness," says Barnaby Dallas. "Steinbeck was not a religious man. He believed that faith lies in community, humanity, and kindness towards one another. Essentially, faith exists in the spirituality of mankind. You know, helping your fellow man, giving them what you have, regardless."

*Breakfast's* filming and narrative aims to focus on small actions, rather than a single statement. Martinez says, "Breakfast effectively portrays how the most profound moments are created and immortalized by the smallest details. It's not what you say or think or believe that defines character, but rather, what you do: the small day-to-day kindnesses, like breaking bread with a stranger."

Still in the post-production phase, Martinez and Dallas have high hopes for *Breakfast*. The duo plans to enter the movie in a few film contests, but also see the teaching potential of the project. "I hope to adapt many more of Steinbeck's short stories into movies. My goal for them would be to string them all together and implement them in school curriculums that teach Steinbeck. That way, kids can learn to see Steinbeck through many different lenses and hopefully understand his work that much better," says Martinez. Set to be released in 2020, the film honors Steinbeck's original story: delivering an accurate representation of his literary work in a brief four minutes and thirty seconds. The crew's tireless work, the story's powerful message, and the studio's dedication to authenticity make *Breakfast* a must-see movie, sure to evoke something different in each viewer.



For more information on *Breakfast*, Spartan Studios, or the cast and crew, visit: [http://www.sjsu.edu/filmandtheatre/work/spartan\\_film\\_studios/index.html](http://www.sjsu.edu/filmandtheatre/work/spartan_film_studios/index.html)

For more information on The Center for Steinbeck Studies and more of Steinbeck's literary work visit: <http://www.sjsu.edu/steinbeck/>

# The School of Journalism and Mass Communications Joins H&A

*By Anthony Ngo*



We are proud to announce that the School of Journalism and Mass Communications (JMC) has joined the College of Humanities & the Arts (H&A). Founded on the principles of professionalism, inclusion, responsible practices, and personal development, the school provides degrees in advertising, journalism, and public relations. For graduate students, an M.A. in Mass Communications is also offered. The school focuses on preparing its students for media work after graduation.

Before joining H&A, JMC was a part of the College of Health and Human Sciences. The university requested this change to better align the curriculum and the activities of the school. The faculty of JMC showed overwhelming support in making the move. While there won't be any major changes to the school, being a part of H&A will allow for more collaborative projects between different programs. The JMC Director Phylis Johnson says, "There are always minor adjustments, but nothing major that will unduly impact our programs, events, or funding. If anything, I foresee opportunities to collaborate on various projects, resources, or curriculum."

Dr. Johnson believes that JMC will fit well within the college. The goals that H&A and JMC share include tackling community issues, educating audiences, and

promoting freedom of expression. Dr. Johnson says, "Journalism & Mass Communications is a program of which the humanities and arts are core, but our



school functions best when viewed as interdisciplinary, allowing for greater university involvement and community impact."

The school pushes the boundaries in advertising, convergence journalism, public relations, and mass communications. It also works closely with industry partners like Hewlett-Packard, Adobe, Apple, and Google to

help students find internships and careers outside of the classroom. Graduates have won six Pulitzer Prizes and many alumni excel in careers as online content producers, publishers, editors, news directors, and communication executives. H&A Dean Shannon Miller says, "Their commitment to artistic excellence, intellectual rigor, and effective communication makes a wonderful addition to the College of Humanities and the Arts." We are excited to see what JMC has in store for the future!

## **Notable Projects**

### Refugee Crisis in Greece

Study-abroad programs are important for JMC students to learn about the world. An example of this is the work that Professor Diane Guerrazzi accomplished with her students during a program in Greece. Journalism fieldwork has given students a first-hand opportunity to learn about the refugees and the larger impact this crisis has on the country. Students interacted with migrants from the Middle East and learned about why people are fleeing their home countries. Students not only spoke to refugees, but also to political leaders, clergy members, aid workers, and educators, to build a context for this story.

### Spartan Daily

Since 1934, the *Spartan Daily* has been keeping the campus and community informed with their publication. The newspaper covers campus events, sports, and opinion pieces. Prints of the *Spartan Daily* can be found in various locations on campus; stories are also published on their website. Through the efforts of both faculty and students, the *Spartan Daily* has won multiple awards through the Associated Collegiate Press and the California College Media Association.



## ADDY Awards

Creating quality content is one of the main cornerstones of JMC's programs. This dedication to the craft of advertising was recently rewarded during the 2019 Silicon Valley American Advertising Awards (ADDY). The Silicon Valley ADDY award show highlights the creative works of advertising students in the area. SJSU's Advertising program won 11 Silvers, 16 Golds, 4 ADDYs, 3 Best of Shows, and 2 Judges Awards. This is a huge win for the program, and of course, they're looking to improve next year.

## JMC School Hearst Award Ceremony

For the first time, SJSU Journalism School faculty presents the prestigious 2019 William Randolph Hearst Foundation Award for outstanding professional media service to Alexander Shebanow and Dan Rather for their work on *FailState*, an expansive documentary exposé on the predatory for-profit colleges and worsening inequality in American higher education.

Honorees Director Alexander Shebanow and Executive Producer Dan Rather premiered *Failstate* to packed houses at the Austin Film Festival and in New York, garnering major press attention, film festival awards, and rave reviews in *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The Wall Street Journal*.

A JMC School faculty reception for the honorees is planned for SJSU's Dwight Bentel Hall on November 14th, from 4:30 PM to 5:30 PM in room 117. Campus community and Bay Area media leaders are invited to attend. Afterward, the award will be presented by two SJSU Journalism School professors, Hearst Award Coordinator Bob Rucker, a former national news correspondent for CNN in San Francisco, and Dona Nichols, a veteran Bay Area television news producer and assignment editor for NBC Bay Area, and mass communications instructor at San José State University.

### **Learn More**

Please visit <https://sjsujmc.com/> to learn more about the School

To learn about the Spartan Daily, please visit:  
<https://sjsunews.com/publication/spartan-daily>.

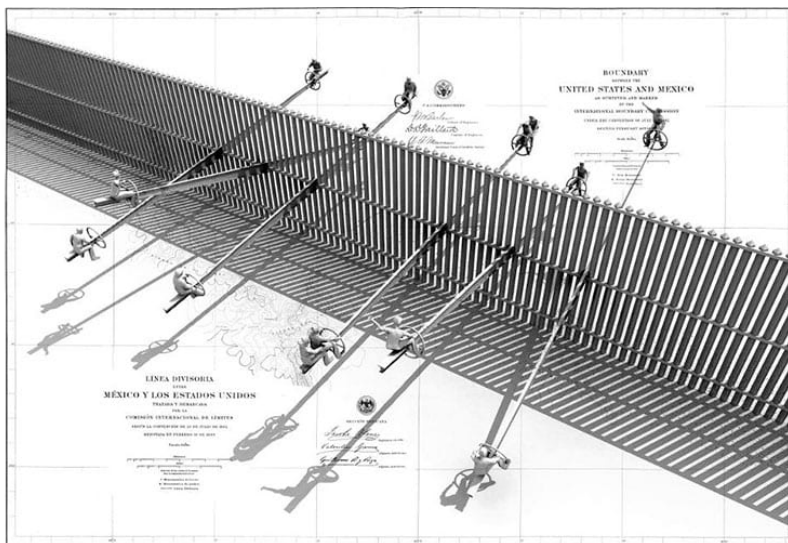
For more about the ADDY Awards, visit: <http://www.aafsv.com/>.

To watch the trailer for *FailState*, visit:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S64WANCgMek>

# Borderlands: Blurring Boundaries, Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges

By Lydia Row and Vy Anh Tran

In the summer of 2018, a wall was erected by the U.S. government between San Diego, California and Tijuana, Mexico after a prolonged period of heated controversy. Within a year, videos of children playing together on three pink teeter totters crossing the wall went viral. Bay Area Professors Virginia San Fratello of San José State University and Ronald Rael of UC Berkeley crafted this makeshift playground, coining it the “Teeter-Totter Wall.” Focusing on the need to encourage equality between communities and people, the pair made a conscious choice to combat the heavily charged politics of the border with a simple emotion: the joy of a child’s playground.



Although the “Teeter-Totter Wall” is no longer on display, the conversations surrounding it still remain. Joining the national discussion on the meaning of borders, the College of Humanities and the Arts introduces *Borderlands: Immigration and Migration in the 21st Century*, a series of themed events for 2019–2020.

*Borderlands* seeks to address questions that naturally arise from increased globalization, international conflicts, and friction between communities in transition: How are we connected? How are we engaged? How do we learn from each other? How do we build a better world together?

Thanks to donor-funded global engagement funds and artistic excellence grants from our college, SJSU is engaging these inquiries by applying the perspective of the humanities to the issues that surround the meaning of borders. Seventeen events will investigate and interrogate this theme through drama, music, design exhibitions, lectures, and literary events, adding nuance and depth to conversations at both the local and national level.

To learn more about Virginia San Fratello's and Ronald Rael's work, please visit:

<https://www.post-gazette.com/news/nation/2019/07/31/border-Mexico-US-seesaws-play-children-together-professors-installed-pink-across/stories/201907310280>

<https://www.kqed.org/forum/2010101872573/pink-seesaws-promote-play-and-goodwill-along-us-mexico-border-wall>

## **Borderlands Events Showcase**

### ***Beyond Borders Exhibition: The Cost of Crossing Borders***

*August 16-18 at the Hammer Theatre*

*August 21-September 13 at the SJSU Art Building 214*

Upon entering the well-lit exhibition room in SJSU's Art Building, your eyes are drawn to a small TV in the corner. On the screen, a shoe steps on a butterfly, breaking its wings. Words appear next to this image; they say, "Don't step on someone else's dream," followed by "Support the Dream Act." As the video loops, more images appear: a child and parent being separated, a naturalization form ripped apart, a person jailed.

This video was part of the Beyond Borders Exhibition, an exploration of the refugee crisis around the globe.

The Beyond Borders Exhibition, featuring artwork created by SJSU graphic design students with the theme "Borders: Migrants and Refugees," opened in the Hammer Theatre in August 2019 as part of the International Design Education Exposition and Conference (IDEEC). The students' artwork were showcased alongside the works of professional designers during the conference. After the conference, the students' pieces were moved to the exhibition room in the Art Building for public viewing.

According to Professor Yoon Chung Han, curator for the exhibition, the students were asked to think of borders not only as boundaries between countries, but as the divide between cultures, languages, beliefs, and people. Around the room, posters with images and messages about the struggle and trauma of refugees adorn the walls. Paper structures depicting their hardships fill the table in the center of the room. On the TV screen, words continuously fade in and out: *Don't reject, help project migrants and refugees. Color outside the lines, live without the*

*borders. Refugees are our neighbors, classmates, coworkers, friends & family, together we are one.*



To see the Beyond Borders video and the students' artwork, go to:  
[www.ideec.design/special-exhibition-beyond-borders](http://www.ideec.design/special-exhibition-beyond-borders)

### ***Falling Words: Teaching SJSU Students the Art of Rakugo***

*October 24 at 5:00 PM at the Student Union Ballroom B*

Inside one of the ballrooms of SJSU Student Union, the audience burst out laughing as the man sitting on stage demonstrate how to make a folded fan looks like chopsticks. He holds the fan as he would chopsticks and makes the motion and noise of a man eating noodles. This description does not do his art justice, however.

The man on stage is Shinoharu Tatekawa. He is giving a lecture on *rakugo*, the Japanese art of telling stories while sitting in a formal position and using only a fan and a small cloth. This rakugoka, professional rakugo performer, was invited by the Department of World Languages and Literature to "give students an experience

beyond textbooks," according to Professor Midori Ishida, the event organizer. This lecture on rakugo, like other the Borderlands event, answers the question, "What is it to cross borders?"

Shinoharu is one of the few practitioners who performs in Japanese and English. His lecture transfers the listener not only across languages but also time. With 300 years of history, those who perform rakugo must follow strict protocol while performing both stories from ancient time, passed down through generations of rakugoka, and newer stories. These English performances of Japanese stories allow the audience to appreciate a different culture through laughter and empathy. Though Shinoharu can only give the audience in the SJSU ballroom a truncated version of a rakugo performance in his lecture, the audience's laughter shows that they understand the spirit of the art.

Professor Midori Ishida hopes that "Mr. Tatekawa's talk will make the audience realize that we live in a world where there are millions of different cultural backgrounds, but we still have some qualities to share, and that's why we can laugh together and cry over the same story."



## **Upcoming Events in 2019**

### ***A Bilingual Conversation with Balam Rodrigo***

*November 14 in the Hammer Theatre at 3:00 PM*

A poet who literally and figuratively crosses borders, Balam Rodrigo comes to SJSU from Mexico to lead a poetry workshop and a public conversation at the Hammer Theatre. This event is free. For information on the workshop, contact the Chicana/Latina Student Success Center. For information on the conversation, visit the Hammer Theatre website.

### ***[Dreamer] Project: An Undocuplay***

*November 15, 16, 21-23 at 7:30 PM and November 24 at 1:00 at the Hammer Theatre*

This play is a verbatim theatre piece created from interviews with SJSU undocumented students. [Dreamer] Project shows students not just as “undocumented” but as human beings navigating an extraordinary time in our history. This is the story of our students. Tickets can be booked on the Hammer Theatre website.

### ***Bang-Bang You’re Dead: A STEP Production***

*December 4-6 at 11:00 AM and December 7 at 2:00 PM and 7:30 PM in the Hammer Theatre*

*Bang Bang You’re Dead*, a play by the Department of Film and Theatre’s School Touring Ensemble Program (STEP), challenges the safety of schools as a recourse for dealing with a broken, violent, and unfair world--fixable only by today’s generation. All showings of this play are free.

The College of Humanities and the Arts is proud to present these Borderlands events, which showcases the diversity and talent of SJSU students. We hope to continue fostering our students for a brighter future with the help of our faculty and alumni.

# Fulbright Recipient Cathleen Miller Profiles Refugees in the UK

*By Devina Martinez*

One day, Marie returned from the market to an empty home. She didn't think much about her family being gone at first, but when the police showed up demanding she tell them her husband's whereabouts, Marie began to worry. They brought her to the station where the police chief, a man with unchecked power, forced her to be his "girlfriend" in exchange for keeping her family alive. She needed to save herself, so Marie took money that she had found in the police chief's room and escaped to the UK. Marie hasn't seen her family in four years, and she has no idea if they are alive. Marie's story is



devastating, but with "50% of female refugees worldwide being women who traveled alone or with small children," her story isn't unique. So many women around the world are forced to leave their countries—fleeing for their lives—only to be denied asylum and sent back. Stories like Marie's must be brought to light, and that is exactly what Fulbright recipient and SJSU English Professor, Cathleen Miller, set out to do.

In 2018, Cathleen received the prestigious J. William Fulbright Foreign Fellowship. The fellowship is an educational exchange program created to increase mutual understanding between the US and other countries. Participants are selected to study, teach, and conduct research in another country by their ability to demonstrate academic merit and leadership potential. Cathleen says, "I couldn't believe it. I mean, I never thought that I would get it." But with a career full of accomplishments, it's no surprise to us that she was chosen for the fellowship. As part of her award, Cathleen traveled to England and served as the first Distinguished Chair of the Humanities at the University of Manchester from September 2018 through March 2019. Once in Manchester, she began her major project: to interview, profile, and share the stories of five refugees.

According to Cathleen, "Research has shown that we will remember stories when we have forgotten everything else. We forget the names, we forget the dates, we

forget the places, but we remember the story.” She wanted people to hear and remember these refugees’ stories, which is why she sought to publish them and make them accessible around the world. After weeks of searching for a news outlet, Cathleen was amazed that Al Jazeera, an independent news organization funded by the Qatari government, wanted all five. “I just wanted to get these stories out there because they’re timely,” she says “I thought that they would just want one of the stories, but I was astonished when they wanted all of them.” The profiles were released individually from June 16-20, each marking a day in the United Kingdom’s Refugee Week. Cathleen knew that she wanted to do this project because many of her previous works revolve around the topic of women’s migration, such as *Champion of Choice*, a biography about UN leader Nafis Sadik, and *Desert Flower*, an autobiography co-written by and about, Somali nomad Waris Dirie.

The five stories are about the lives of Marie, Sohelia, Laila, Odachi, and Jenny. Jenny was the only male, and the only refugee to use his real name in the profiles. “He’s an incredibly charismatic person,” she says. “I wasn’t going to write about him at first because he was a guy, but he was one of the first people who was willing to talk to me.” Jenny was forced to flee his home in the Democratic Republic of the Congo because his activist work made him a government target. Unfortunately, after living in the UK for 12 years, he still has not been granted asylum. He fears that one day he will be sent back if the UK decides that it is safe for him to return home. Jenny is homeless but continues to run his activist network from the UK, organizing it from the library by day and a McDonald’s by night. In addition to telling his story through the profile, Cathleen pitched the idea of making a documentary about Jenny’s work to students studying film in Manchester, which Al Jazeera agreed to publish once complete.

Cathleen’s work is significant because it focuses on refugees who have fled for reasons that are often overlooked, such as domestic abuse and violence against women. “It’s important because it can change public opinion, it can change public policy, and it can change laws. People’s lives are at stake,” she says. “As writers, we can change the world. I’ve seen things change as a result of work that I’ve written. Laws changed that have protected women in 22 of the 28 African countries where female genital mutilation had been practiced. I’m sure that is saving lives and protecting girls.”

Her work goes hand in hand with the college's current “Borderlands” project series. Many of the stories we see in these profiles are similar to the stories at the forefront of news today. Stories like Marie’s, Sohelia’s, Laila’s, Odachi’s, and Jenny’s tell of hardships that many people in the US are experiencing too. Cathleen says, “I’ve interviewed many people, and they had been through the same things, just on another continent.”

Each story is featured on the Al Jazeera website and can be found here: [www.aljazeera.com](http://www.aljazeera.com). Cathleen hopes that these stories act as a platform to raise awareness of the very real obstacles that female refugees around the world constantly face. More of Cathleen's work can be found on her website: [www.cathleenmiller.info](http://www.cathleenmiller.info).

*Also in 2018-19, Professor Victoria Rue received the Fulbright Scholarship where she shaped an oral history and ethnography of the people, particularly for the women of Bethlehem, titled Maryam: A Woman of Bethlehem. Visit her website for more info: <http://victoriarue.com>.*

## Portrait: Kirsten Brandt

By Lydia Row



Join the College of Humanities and the Arts in welcoming Kirsten Brandt, Assistant Professor of Musical Theatre, to the Department of Film and Theatre. Kirsten is an interdisciplinary artist whose practice embraces inquiries into gender, technology, and politics. Kirsten also has a long history as an educator, including classes taught in musical theatre, directing, playwriting, acting, experimental theatre, women in theatre, Walt Disney, and Shakespeare—just to name a few.

Kirsten earned her undergraduate degree in Theatre from UC San Diego, which included her completion of the Education Abroad Program in Birmingham, England. Afterwards, Kirsten earned her M.F.A. in Interdisciplinary Arts from Goddard College in Port Townsend, focusing on topics such as gender in performance, performative technologies, and environmental justice. For seven years, Kirsten served as Executive Artistic Director of the Sledgehammer Theatre—San Diego’s leading alternative theatre—where she produced 25 performances, 11 of which were world premieres.

Kirsten later served as Associate Artistic Director of the San Jose Repertory Theatre where she directed *Rabbit Hole*, *Groundswell*, *The Big Meal*, *Legacy of Light*, *Splitting Infinity*, *Doctor Faustus*, *Next Fall*, and many other performances. While at the Repertory, Kirsten also co-wrote *The Snow Queen*, which is a rock musical with ongoing national and international productions. In memory of her time there, she says, “I first worked with students at SJSU when I was the Associate Artistic Director at the San Jose Repertory. The students at SJSU are eager, adventurous, and possess great intellectual curiosity. I am thrilled to continue learning from them.”

In addition, Kirsten says that she looks forward to the “unique and inviting opportunity that SJSU provides to continue my research and artistic practice with an interdisciplinary approach to theatre and musical theatre.” As an award-winning theatrical director, playwright, and producer with over 20 years of experience, her passions lie in creating an intersection between live performance and digital media

and in igniting the imagination of audiences through visceral storytelling and visual poetry that encourage dialogue and ethical engagement. To find out more about Kirsten's work, please visit her website at: [www.kirstenbrandt.com](http://www.kirstenbrandt.com).

Welcome to SJSU, Kirsten!

## Portrait: Corie Brown

*By Anthony Ngo*

The College of Humanities and the Arts welcomes Professor of Choral Music and Education Corie Brown to the Department of Music and Dance. She holds a B.A. in Music Education from Alma College, and an M.A. of Music in Choral Conducting from the University of Oregon. In 2019, she received her D.M.A. in Choral Conducting and Literature at the University of Colorado, Boulder.



Dr. Brown has an extensive musical history in many diverse places, aiming to ensure quality music education for all. Looking to empower disadvantaged students through music, she has taught music in Michigan, Bogotá, in the Chicago public school system, and in Colombia with the Fundación Nacional Batuta. Most recently, Corie co-conducted the University of Colorado Boulder Women's Chorus. She has also performed as a mezzo-soprano with the Oregon Bach Festival and toured throughout the US, Europe, Argentina, and Colombia. In 2017, she performed in an intergenerational women's chorus at Carnegie Hall.

She believes that SJSU's environment is a great fit for her. "I felt drawn to the similar passions, research, and aspirations of the incredible faculty in the School of Music and Dance," she says, "and it is inspiring to be a part of what has been a strong tradition of choral music and music education at SJSU."

She sees the drive and potential of her students. "My new students are striving, bright individuals who bring such depth and passion to the classroom," she says. "They strike me as eager and open to new ideas. On top of that, they're dedicated to their education, this community, and the world." One of her goals is to challenge her students and push them towards being the most effective, mindful educators and musicians possible. She says, "It is really a teacher's dream to work with students ready to soak up new ideas, experiment, and take risks—and I can't wait to see what we are able to achieve this year."

Dr. Brown uses her experience in music to connect people and is always striving toward improving her craft. She says, "I'm looking forward to the music we'll make together, to collaborating artistically within the university and with the outside community, to having the chance to further my research with marginalized communities and choral music and to explore how we can further incorporate ideals

of social justice into the music education curriculum.” She is also proud to announce that she will be a part of our upcoming Washington, DC SJSU Choir Tour this spring.

Join us in welcoming Corie to the College of Humanities and the Arts!

## Portrait: Étienne Brown

*By Alexis Cutchin*

Please join the College of Humanities and the Arts in welcoming Dr. Etienne Brown to the Philosophy Department. Etienne received his M.A. in Sociology from the University of Ottawa and completed his Ph.D. at Sorbonne University in Paris, where he also taught philosophy. Subsequently, he was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Oxford and the Université de Montreal.

Etienne's general research interests are within the philosophy of technology, political philosophy, and ethics, with a current focus on political epistemology and the ethics of online interaction. "My research focuses on the way social media is transforming democracy, and I look forward to contributing to interdisciplinary initiatives on this subject within the College of Humanities and the Arts such as the Deep Humanities Series," Etienne explains. These research interests coincide well with the two GE courses Etienne is teaching this fall: Science, Technology, and Human Values, and Computer Ethics and Society.



Originally from Quebec, Etienne believes that San José State offers the perfect combination of familiarity and the unknown: "I have decided to come here because working at SJSU strikes the right balance between feeling close to home and beginning a new adventure!" Etienne feels familiar with SJSU's pedagogical approach but is new to the Bay Area; however, he is up for the challenge. "I grew up in Quebec, you can definitely hear that when I speak, and I feel the most at ease in the North American educational context, where student participation in the classroom is strongly valued. At the same time, building a new life in NorCal is exciting. It will take me years—or possibly decades—to discover the region and the state. For me, this is very reassuring because it means that I will never be bored," Etienne says.

So far, Etienne is already enjoying the scenery San José has to offer. Recalling his first visit to SJSU, he says, "It was raining heavily during my campus interview this past February, so my first impression was that the campus is sunnier and greener than I remembered! The landscaping is quite stunning."

Etienne is happy with his decision to join SJSU. "On the human level, I believe that SJSU lives up to its reputation as one of the most diverse universities in the

country. Not only do students come from various backgrounds, but the employees who occupy leadership positions belong to different cultural communities. This is something of which SJSU can be proud."

Etienne is optimistic about his future and what he can accomplish here. "I work in the philosophy of technology and I am convinced that SJSU can rapidly become a leader in the reflection on the ethics of emerging information technologies. If I can contribute to the creation of an intellectual space where scholars, students, citizens, and people working in the tech industry have the opportunity to address pressing ethical and political issues together, I will be very fulfilled as a researcher."

# Portrait: Michiko Uryu

By Vy Anh Tran

Please join the College of Humanities and the Arts in welcoming Dr. Michiko Uryu to the Department of World Languages and Literatures. Born and raised in Japan, Dr. Uryu earned her master's degree in TESOL from the University of Pennsylvania and her Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics from UC Berkeley. She specializes in intercultural communication, discourse analysis, and second language acquisition. Her Ph.D. dissertation, *Another Thanksgiving Dinner: Language, Identity, and History in the Age of Globalization*, explores the shift in intercultural communication as people become more globalized and cultures intersect more than ever before. She also co-authored an article, "Intercultural Contact, Hybridity, and Third Space," for *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication*. Dr. Uryu will continue her research in language and intercultural communication here at San José State University.



Excited for her new position, she says, "I am thrilled to be at SJSU, which has a long history at the forefront of education in California." For Dr. Uryu, San José's multicultural environment is excellent for her as an educator. "When I stepped onto the campus, I was impressed by the diversity of the student body," she says. "As a researcher, who is interested in trans-nationalism and cultural hybridity along with intercultural communication, I am excited by the diversity and interdisciplinary opportunities offered by SJSU."

Dr. Uryu, as an applied linguistics scholar, hopes her teachings about languages can help students adapt to an increasingly multicultural world. With the opportunities the campus's diversity offers, she says, "I would like to use all my knowledge and experiences to help my students achieve their goals and become a cosmopolitan of today's globalized world."

Welcome, Dr. Uryu!

# Portrait: José Juan Villagrana

By Devina Martinez

Join the College of Humanities and the Arts in welcoming Dr. José Juan Villagrana to the Department of English, where he joins us as an Assistant Professor of Literature. Dr. Villagrana holds a B.A. in English with a minor in Spanish from Northwestern University and received his Ph.D. in English at UC Berkeley, with a dissertation titled *Doomsday Poetics: Early Modern England and Spain, 1561-1680*.

Professor Villagrana comes to SJSU from Bates College, where he taught numerous courses such as The Global Renaissance; Shakespeare and Racialization; Milton; and Apocalypse and the Reformation.



A major part of Professor Villagrana's decision to join our college was driven by our student body. "I came to SJSU specifically to work alongside creative, dedicated, and collegial students," he says, and he hasn't been disappointed. "I love working with SJSU students! Our discussions are exciting," he says. "I get to learn something new from students' broad interests and skills after each encounter with them. They're redefining what's possible in the field of English while promoting the discipline's core principles of literacy and critical thought."

Dr. Villagrana's research interests include 16th and 17th century English and Spanish literature, with a focus on apocalypticism. In addition to these studies, he will continue his research into issues of religion and racialization in the early modern era while teaching courses on Shakespeare and surveys of Early Modern Literature. He says, "My goal is to work with students' existing knowledge of Shakespeare and the major works of English literature that they encountered in high school or community college to understand how these works speak to England's cultural and political interests in a global context."

Dr. Villagrana is currently working on a book that uncovers the relationship between apocalyptic thought and the racialization of people during the Renaissance.

Welcome to SJSU, José!

## It's A Dean's Life Vol. 24

In the College of Humanities and the Arts, we leverage the arts and humanities to ask the most important ideas of our time. This fall, we are embedding this motto directly into our curriculum. Our faculty are coordinating 19 events over the course of the 2019–2020 year to engage with our two College programming themes: The "Deep Humanities & Arts," and "Borderlands: Migration and Immigration in the 21st Century." Faculty have enthusiastically responded to both themes—especially to Borderlands, and our fall semester has drawn students from design, theatre, music, world languages, journalism, English, and film into these events.

Our Borderlands events allow us to reconceptualize the idea of borders through a focus on "Blurring Boundaries, Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges." Our own H&A Marketing Team was crucial in helping us to understand the range of possibilities within this theme. Their wonderful logo for the events allowed us to envision the flexible nature of the Borderlands theme and how it could help us to conceptualize the positive directions that the arts and humanities can set for a topic that has been so divisive within our nation over the last three years. Their work has highlighted another major value in our College: our belief that the collaboration between the arts and humanities is the most productive way to engage and reimagine how major ideas affect our students and our state. The arts and humanities continue to illuminate each other through intellectual, aesthetic, and artistic explorations within and outside of the classroom here at San José State University.

Attendance has been very strong at our events, which have ranged from *rakugo* (Japanese comedic storytelling) to a reading by Pulitzer Prize-winning author, Sonia Nazario. Many of these events are described within this issue of *Expressions*. We have also discovered how central the Borderlands theme is to faculty research and creative activity, as well as faculty-and-student learning collaborations. With the addition of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication to our College this fall, we have significantly increased the number of our faculty actively engaged in this important issue of our time.

*Expressions* highlights the amazing work of Professor Diane Guerrazzi, whose students are reporting on the refugee crisis in Greece and Italy. Their television special report illustrates the award-winning quality of student work produced within our journalism program. We are also highlighting the SJSU production of a short film adapted from John Steinbeck's "*Breakfast*"; while not directly part of our Borderlands theme, it addresses many of the same issues. Professors Cathleen

Miller, whose work is profiled in this issue, and Virginia San Fratello, whose installation at the U.S./Mexico border went viral this summer, are actively engaging these issues of Borderlands within their own writings and design work.

At the intersection of student work, college programming, and faculty research, we are seeing the importance of these issues within the College of Humanities and the Arts. Please see <http://www.sjsu.edu/humanitiesandarts/Borderlands/index.html> for our list of events throughout 2019–20. And we hope to have just as dynamic a programming season around these themes in 2020–2021.

Exciting things are happening in the College of Humanities and the Arts as we highlight the power and importance of the arts and humanities within our world today. Please join us for these explorations!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Shannon Miller', is centered on the page. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent 'S' and 'M'.

Shannon Miller

Dean, College of Humanities and the Arts