



College of Humanities & Social Sciences  
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## THE COMPASS SPRING 2016

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## 2016 CHSS SENIORS OF DISTINCTION



The CHSS Seniors of Distinction ceremony honors students chosen by their departments as exemplifying "the best in the discipline." (Seated from left to right) **Michelle Fortunato, La'Nise Ambrose, Ellen Bonitatibus, Acacia Hutton, Kaitlyn Adams, and Cindy Rubiano-Gomez** (Standing left to right) **Wesley Volz-Price, David Marko, Ryan Boonstra, Francesca Mundrick, Dean Cindy Vitto, Andrea Quinn, Josiah Domico, Thomas (Nick) Rosa, and Nicholas Mason**



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SPRING 2016

# The Compass

The Newsletter of the  
College of Humanities & Social Sciences



## COLLEGE TO WELCOME NEW DEAN

WHEN STUDENTS return for the fall semester, a new dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences will greet them.

Dr. Nawal Ammar will join the College as dean on August 1, replacing Dr. Cindy Vitto, who will return to her cherished role as professor after a fall sabbatical.

Vitto has served as dean of the College since its founding in July 2012, when the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences became two schools: the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the College of Science and Mathematics.

Ammar earned her doctorate in cultural anthropology from the University of Florida and has been the dean of the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology since 2007. Previously, she taught in the Justice Studies program at Kent State University.

A prolific researcher, Ammar has authored three books, edited two books,



published more than 50 papers, and secured external funding from more than 20 successful grant proposals.

Administrative change is already underway in the Dean's Office. Dr. Kristen diNovi, formerly assistant dean of the College, is now assistant dean of the flourishing Thomas N. Bantivoglio Honors Concentration at Rowan University. Stephen Fleming has

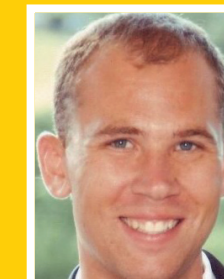
taken her place as assistant dean of the College, bringing experience he gained as the professional residential learning coordinator for University Housing at the University of Delaware and most recently at Rowan.

Elsewhere in the College, the Department of Geography & Environment will shift to Rowan's newly established School of Earth & Environment on July 1. Geography scholars will collaborate with internationally known paleontologist Ken Lacovara, founding dean, to build the school into a nationally prominent entity that prepares students for careers in a host of fields. ■

## TUMULTUOUS TIMES IGNITE CAREER INTEREST FOR ALUM

DURING ROSS KLEINSTUBER's undergraduate years at Rowan University, the world was in turmoil.

"I was at Rowan for 9/11 and the beginning of the Iraq War in 2003, so I developed a social consciousness and wanted to be more aware of what was going on in the world," said Kleinstuber, '04.



It was a difficult time, to be sure, but one that sparked his interest in sociology, which his dedicated professors encouraged.

Dr. Wanda Foglia, professor of law and justice studies, engaged Kleinstuber in her research with the Capital Jury Project, which researches how capital jurors reach their decisions. Kleinstuber's interests followed him into graduate school, as he earned his master's degree and doctorate from the University of Delaware, and into his academic career. He is currently an assistant professor in the Division of Social Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown.

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Dr. Sandra Joy, professor of sociology, was another of Kleinstuber's mentors. "She certainly inspired me to think about the world in a different way," he said. "She was hugely influential in my academic and political world view."

Kleinstuber and Joy collaborated on research that will appear in the University of Pennsylvania's *Journal of Law and Social Change*. He also authored a book based on his doctoral dissertation, *Hegemonic Individualism and Subversive Stories in Capital Mitigation*. In addition, his research has been cited in an amicus brief on capital punishment delivered to the Delaware Supreme Court.

"My work is entirely driven by a desire for what I perceive to be social justice," he said. He is also driven by a desire to see his students thrive: "I want them to get the best jobs that they can get — inspire them to think about the world differently and have them be successful," he said. ■



## PROFESSOR HELPS POTENTIAL VOTERS INTERPRET POLITICAL STORMS

AS AMERICANS RIDE THE churning waves en route to this year's general election, Dr. Anne Pluta, assistant professor of political science, is analyzing the ongoing incidents that continue to perplex voters.

A contributor to FiveThirtyEight, a website offering commentary based on public opinion polls, politics, economics, and more, Pluta has explored how Donald Trump has used Twitter in his campaign, how religion influences voters, and other topics. In addition, assorted media outlets seek Pluta's political analysis.

"I think public scholarship is really important," said Pluta, who earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in history and her doctorate in political science. "I think too often in the academy we get trapped in our ivory towers and we don't share information with the broader public. That often makes us look irrelevant and uninvolved in everyday conversation."

In the classroom, Pluta nurtures political science majors' interests and curiosity. She also works to instill an interest in the political process among non-majors. Because the current election has been so contentious, even students who are not interested in politics have been unable to escape election coverage, but Pluta remarks that this election should not be considered unusual.

"Through the space of American history, we probably have seen something like it before, but we've just forgotten about it," she said. "So I try to remind students that a lot of things that seem unique are not." ■

## ROSEMARY GERI SCHOLARSHIP INCREASES STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

WITH THIS YEAR'S LAUNCH of the Rosemary Geri '77 Foreign Languages Scholarship for Majors in Spanish and Modern Languages and Linguistics, two students received \$2,000 each that will help them deepen and enrich their education.

The memorial scholarship honors Rose-



mary Geri, who earned her bachelor's degree in Spanish from the University in 1977. Teaching at the Northfield Community School for 23 years, Geri was named Teacher of the Year in 2010. She traveled extensively in the United States and throughout the world.

The fall recipient, Thomas Hill, '16, is majoring in Spanish and Modern Languages and Linguistics with a minor in German Studies and concentration in International Studies. He also is earning a Certificate of Undergraduate Study in Japanese. He plans to become a professor of translation.

The spring recipient, Ana Sanchez Hernandez, '17, is majoring in Spanish and Subject Matter Education, with a concentration in International Studies. She plans to become a Spanish teacher.

Both Hill and Sanchez Hernandez will study in Granada, Spain, during the fall semester. "For foreign languages, there's nothing that compares with traveling to the country where the target language is spoken," said Dr. Marilyn Manley, associate professor of Spanish and chairperson, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. ■

## DEPARTMENT EXPANDS JAPANESE COURSES, ESTABLISHES CERTIFICATES

TO MEET STUDENTS' GROW- ing enthusiasm for Japanese language and culture, the Department of Foreign

Languages and Literatures expanded its Japanese courses and established a Certificate of Undergraduate Study (CUGS) in Japanese. This is just one of six new CUGS the department now offers.

"The more opportunities we offer for students to earn a credential in a language, the more attractive it is for them to progress in a language," said Dr. Marilyn Manley, associate professor of Spanish and chairperson, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. "They will be more motivated to continue their language study into higher levels knowing that it will be recognized on their transcript."

Students often become interested in Japanese through pop culture, such as Japanese anime, music, and fashion, said Chie Matsumura Dusk, a new three-quarter time Japanese instructor. However, she explained, they quickly become fascinated by Japanese mannerisms, traditions, and history after they begin taking the Japanese courses, and eventually they seek to tie it to their occupation or travel to Japan for their careers.

During the second year of study, Dusk encourages students to prepare for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT). "Since it is a well-recognized and worldwide standardized exam of Japanese language proficiency, if they pass the exam, students can add it to their resumes when they look for a position in the global business world," Dusk said. ■



## JOSE ANTONIO VARGAS BRINGS IMMIGRATION DEBATE TO CAMPUS

AS AMERICAN POLITICAL candidates continue to spar over the future of undocumented immigrants, Jose Antonio Vargas examined an important question on Rowan's campus in February: What does it mean to be an American?

Focusing on America's changing identity, the Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and filmmaker, who is also an undocumented immigrant, spoke to a packed house in the Eynon Ballroom in the Chamberlain Student Center. His presentation, sponsored by numerous Rowan offices and colleges, including the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, was followed by a question-and-answer session and screening of his film, *Documented*.

Rbrey Singleton, '19, a political science major from Haledon, was inspired by the presentation. "I have followed Mr. Vargas' work for over a year, and I found his discussion quite moving because of his upbeat and optimistic demeanor despite all of the hardship he has faced," he said.

Singleton was impressed to hear Vargas speak of the contributions of undocumented immigrants and more. "His message of advocacy through intersectionality resonated with

me as he stressed the importance of solidarity between minorities," he said. "As an Afro-Latino with lineage from the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua, I found this message quite poignant. I even got him to follow me on my Twitter account." ■

## PRESIDENT'S LECTURE SERIES PRESENTS CLAUDIA RANKINE

NEW YORK TIMES BEST-selling poet and National Book Award finalist Claudia Rankine explored some of the country's most troubling social issues during her February presentation as part of the President's Lecture Series.

Author of five poetry collections and two plays and an editor of several anthologies, Rankine read from her works during her talk.



"Claudia Rankine is one of the most powerful and innovative poets alive, and her probing meditations on race are particularly appropriate during these times," said Dr. Bill Freind, associate professor of English, who coordinated this event. "That was evident by the diversity of the audience, which included high school students and members of the public, as well as Rowan faculty, staff, and students."

Rankine's latest work, *Citizen: An American Lyric*, was a finalist for the 2014 National Book Award. It combines poetry, essays, cultural criticism, and images to illustrate what it is like to be an African-American in the United States. ■