

**Dean's Weekly**  
**Department of English and Philosophy**

**3 October 2012**

**Past Events**

1. On 14 September, fifteen cadets in the African American Arts Forum gathered in the Haig Room to listen to jazz and share spoken word poetry. Poets sought not only to evaluate their personal experiences, but also their roles as officers and leaders in an evolving, unstable world. Audience members included fellow poets, interested cadets, and OIC MAJ Karin Gresham, all of whom provided support and helped enrich discussion of the works. The African American Arts Forum will continue to host these jazz and poetry nights throughout the semester.



2. On 21 September, the Native American Heritage Forum, part of DEP's Cadet Fine Arts Forum, attended a Powwow at FDR Park in Yorktown Heights, NY. Like USMA's *Keepers of the Peace* Native American Powwow, it was hosted by the Redhawk Native American Arts Council and featured spectacular performances of Traditional, Fancy, Smoke, and Grass Dance, all set to mesmerizing drum and song and surrounded by a backdrop of Native American cuisine and crafts. Mrs. Magdalena Morningfire (pictured below) escorted MAJ Markley and six members of the forum on a special inside tour of this captivating cultural experience.





3. On September 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, forty cadets in the USMA Opera Forum met to watch the first two acts of Richard Wagner's "Das Rheingold," the first opera in Wagner's epic tetralogy "Der Ring des Nibelungen." OIC Dr. Marc Napolitano presented background information about Wagner's life and his various musical, artistic, political, and social philosophies. The group also discussed the issue of power vs. love, which is the central theme running through Wagner's "Ring Cycle," and connected it to the themes in later fantasy epics such as J. R. R. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings" and George R. R. Martin's "A Song of Ice and Fire." The Opera Forum will continue to analyze Wagner throughout the semester's meetings.

4. As part of DEP's outreach to the Army and continuing work with the Center for the Army Profession and Ethic (CAPE), eight members of our philosophy faculty met with the CAPE director, COL Jeffrey Peterson, and his staff to discuss ongoing projects and opportunities for future collaboration. These opportunities include support to upcoming Army wide campaigns concerning the profession as well as upcoming Army-wide education and training programs that CAPE will conduct. Faculty members and CAPE personnel also discussed future opportunities for collaboration in research and doctrine formulation. Since the start of the academic year, Department of English and Philosophy faculty members have provided input to two Army publications which will be released to the Army in 2013. These include Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 1-0 which will augment ADP 1, *The Army*, and TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-7, *United States Army Human Dimension Concept*. Currently, our faculty is reviewing a CAPE handbook on character development and conducting an effectiveness study of CAPE materials designed for the Army Master Army Profession and Ethic Trainer course. Collaboration with CAPE remains a focus for the department's outreach to the Army and a developmental opportunity for our faculty.



*Department of English and Philosophy faculty meet with the director and staff of the Center for the Army Profession and Ethic to discuss ongoing and future collaboration efforts.*

5. On Thursday, 27 September, EN101 Composition faculty hosted a visit by Dr. Kurt Spellmeyer, Writing Program Director at Rutgers University. Dr. Spellmeyer is one of the co-editors of the EN101 course text, *The New Humanities Reader*, as well as the author of several books of his own that address composition course practice and the general state of academia. At West Point, Dr. Spellmeyer led the EN101 faculty in a seminar on writing assignment sequences, participated in a lunch-time roundtable discussion of composition-related subjects, and visited several classes. This marks the second year that Dr. Spellmeyer has visited West Point and offered his expertise to the EN101 faculty.



*Dr. Kurt Spellmeyer leads a workshop with EN101 Composition faculty in the Jefferson Library.*

6. On Friday, 28 September, the Department of English and Philosophy's Creative Arts Project hosted a performance by the Exit12 Dance Company in the Haig Room. Exit12 specializes in contemporary dance interpretations of current political, military, and soldier-related themes and issues. At West Point, Exit12 performed "Re-E-volution," a dance exploration of the Arab Spring uprisings and "Conflicted," which portrays the interaction of US military and Arab cultures in the Iraq war. Cadets from EN302, which focuses on "Revolutionary Egypt," and the World Literature elective were in attendance. The artistic director of Exit12 is Roman Baca, a Marine veteran who served in Fallujah in 2005-06. Following the performance, Exit12 dined in the Cadet Mess Hall and took a tour of the central area. The Exit12 performance was the centerpiece of a visit by twelve Vassar College students as part of the Vassar Collaboration project begun in spring of AY12. The Vassar Collaboration is underwritten by an Andrew Mellon Foundation initiative designed to forge relationships between military academies and civilian liberal arts colleges. The collaboration consists of mutual visits to their respective campuses by West Point cadets and Vassar students. The intent is to give cadets and students a chance to explore each others' worlds in order to learn from differing perspectives and understand common interests and shared experiences. The specific purpose of the visit by Vassar students to West Point was to expose Vassar students to a "day-in-the-life" of a West Point cadet. In addition to watching the Exit12 performance, Vassar students attended class with cadet hosts, ate in the Cadet Mess Hall, and observed cadets taking the Indoor Obstacle Course Test. A highlight was the participation of several Vassar students in Dr. Marc Napolitano's EP367 Drama class, where students and cadets together staged scenes from Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabbler*. The next event in the Vassar Collaboration is a trip to Vassar on 25-26 October to participate in a series of workshops with artists exploring war and military-related themes. The Exit12 performance was this year's kick-off event for the Creative Arts Project (CAP). The Creative Arts Project is the Department of English and Philosophy's initiative to make artistic endeavor by, for, and about soldiers and cadets central to the West Point experience.



*Exit12 Dance Company performing in the Haig Room, Jefferson Library, 28 September.*



*Department Head COL Scott Krawczyk thanks the Exit12 Dance Company after their 28 September performance. Exit12 artistic director Roman Baca is to COL Krawczyk's right*



*West Point cadets and Vassar students in attendance at the Exit12 Dance Company performance.*



*Professor Maria Hoehn, the Vassar faculty sponsor of the Vassar Collaboration Project, at lunch in the Cadet Mess Hall with members of the Department, Exit12 dancers, cadets, and Vassar students.*