

undergraduate  
semester in  
*dialogue*



FALL 2004  
Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue  
Simon Fraser University



A graduate of Simon Fraser University's Arts and Culture program, **Jessica Denning** chose the Undergraduate Semester in Dialogue Program to assist her in gaining practical skills for her career. As an artist, advocate and/or an administrator, she aspires to be involved in the enhancement of the artistic and cultural life of Vancouver, the city she was born and raised in. From a young age she has been dancing, singing and, more recently playing the guitar. As a stage manager in high school, she stumbled into her passion. In her early post secondary studies, she completed a diploma in Technical Theatre at Capilano College prior to attending SFU. Through fieldschools, exchanges and traveling on her own, Jessica's adventures have allowed her to engage in foreign artistic practices, and experience firsthand the architecture, public art, libations and festivities that serve as an entry point to her understanding and connection with other cultures.

**Douglas D. Durand** is in his second year of Liberal and Business Studies at SFU's Integrated Studies Program, and has probably been to more places than you have. He grew up in a small Anglophone village near Quebec City, but has also lived in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, San Francisco, Victoria, London, England and now Vancouver. In the mid 1990s, Doug developed a passion for rowing, which took him all the way to Amsterdam to compete and win a silver medal in the 1998 Gay Games. Doug moved to London in 2000 to work for the Arts Council of England but before settling in Vancouver in 2003, he traveled around the world for six months. Unlike most students enrolled in the Undergraduate Semester in Dialogue, crossing their fingers, and hoping for a future job in the arts, Doug has been doing that for years. His arts administration career spans more than two decades, during which time he has enjoyed a professional association with many of Canada's major ballet and contemporary dance companies. Doug was the founding Executive Producer of the Victoria Dance Series, and continues to work with that organization as its Community Outreach Director. He is also currently under contract with the Dance Section of the Canada Council for the Arts, as writer and editor of a collection of personal stories from dance artists engaged in various community cultural development projects across the country.



In her final year of a Communications and English double major with a minor in Publishing, **YuWei Gao's** university experience has been enriched by her extra-curricular activities. One of her major commitments has been the student-run newspaper, *The Peak*. She has been the Arts Editor for four semesters, and more recently, the Production Editor during the past summer term.

Through the co-op program, she spent some time in Ottawa, which afforded her the opportunity to travel in Central Canada. Recently, she took the last six weeks of the summer to tour Europe. The highlight of the trip was being able to experience the many different cultures and art first hand. YuWei takes a great interest in the Vancouver arts community, and she is hoping this course will provide her with the opportunity to become more actively involved. The unorthodox educational environment of this class will also give her a nice break from her four previous years of traditional university pedagogy.

After High school **Brian Geary** enrolled in flight school and completed the 6-month helicopter training program. After struggling to enter the flight industry he enrolled at Douglas College and during his first year became editor of the news section of *The Other Press*, Douglas College's newspaper. For the next year he decided to transfer to Simon Fraser University (SFU) for sociology and philosophy. Since arriving at SFU Brian has become an active member of the sociology student union, as well as the undergraduate representative on the departmental appointments committee for the sociology department. During his third year of undergraduate study he was fortunate enough to go to England on exchange with the University of Leeds. He spent an entire year studying, working, and travelling throughout England, and went on to travel throughout Europe, the Middle East and India for several months afterwards.



**Mary e. Glasgow** was born and raised in Abbotsford, where she was home-schooled for a time, as well as attended public school. She has an inquisitive nature, and refuses to accept things at face value. Mary is the second oldest girl in a family of six children: three girls and three boys. “Our family is symmetrical,” says Mary. “I appreciate that.”

Before enrolling at SFU, she attended the University College of the Fraser Valley. There, she worked at *The Cascade*, UCFV’s student newspaper, as the photography editor and later as the arts & entertainment/sports editor. Mary is currently finishing a major in Communications at SFU.

In 2000, Mary spent six months living with a family in Mexico City and volunteering with a local church. She was impressed by the extraordinary art in Mexico City’s museums and streets. She enjoys creative writing and reading, and particularly enjoys the works of Madeline L’Engle. Through her experience working for the Abbotsford Arts Council, Mary has become excited about how art can nurture communities.

Originally from Toronto, **Melissa Harendorf** moved to Vancouver two years ago to study at SFU. She chose to major in Communication because she thought it would be a good way to pursue her interests in media, language, and culture, and also a good way to channel her angst. In her spare time, and much too often during her homework time, Melissa likes to play the violin, cook, go for walks through the city, and bemoan the fact that there are no brick buildings in Vancouver. She also volunteers at Out On Campus, SFU’s queer student centre. If it were all up to Melissa, there would be bakesales every day, and university education would be like a four-year undergraduate semester in dialogue.



**Jennica Davis** is from Salt Lake City, Utah and has been in Vancouver two years. She came here to study visual art and communications, and to experience a new view of current political situations. Her interest in the Semester for Dialogue comes from a passion for art and an investment in social change through art. She was involved in the 11:11 art collective in Salt Lake City, producing and distributing provocative art. Jennica plans to finish school at the University of Oregon in Eugene, where she also eventually plans to open a space for artists of all media to display and sell their art with a vegan cafe attached. This entrepreneurial spirit runs in the family as both Jennica's mother and grandfather ran their own stores.

**Karma Lacoff** is in her last semester at Simon Fraser University. An enthusiastic dancer and musician, she is excited about the opportunity to revisit these passions that have taken a backseat to school in the last few years. She spent her childhood dancing the cha-cha in the kitchen with her mother, a Ballroom Dance teacher. She has a strong connection to music through her father's profession in the music industry and also due to her parents encouragement to pursue musical involvements. Her participation in the Ballroom Dance community in Edmonton and her experience playing the Double Bass have both influenced her life and her view of the role of art.

Karma has continued to be involved since she transferred from Edmonton and she has enjoyed being dedicated to her school community through the Residence Hall Association and the Residence Orientation. She spent her summer coordinating programs designed to welcome new students to SFU. Having completed her Anthropology major and Gerontology minor requirements, Karma is enthusiastic about ending her undergraduate degree with a unique experience that encourages active engagement with the community. Karma brings to the program a vitality and refreshing approach to helping creativity work towards concrete results.



**michael lithgow** is a Community Economic Development student with a background in community radio and community television. michael is a founding director of Vancouver's ICTV, Independent Community Television Cooperative and for the past three years served as executive director. More recently, michael curated the Art of Fact Video Exhibition, an exhibition of video art exploring the boundary between journalism and art. michael hopes to pursue graduate studies exploring the role of participatory models of communication within a framework of locally controlled community economic development.

An English and Humanities joint major, **Stephanie McKinnon** is very much involved in school life. Not only is she a member of the English Student Union and the SFU Senate, she is also one of the founding members of the West Coast Poetry Festival Society. Her involvement with the Poetry Festival has inspired her to further her interest in the arts. When she's not busy with school, she enjoys martial arts, music, and video games, and she spent the summer working for a promotional tour with Xbox and Muchmusic. Stephanie is interested in the learning possibilities presented by the Dialogue Program.



**Tyler Mounteney** is an Art & Culture and Anthropology joint major in his last year of undergraduate study. He is also a working musician, playing bass / guitar and singing in the Vancouver bands the Hoodwinks and the Regional Hats. Both bands have released CDs, with the Hoodwinks set to release a third CD this fall. Tyler was born and raised in Vancouver, and is looking forward to living in Halifax where he and his wife, Alanna, hope to visit on exchange next September.



**Mayana Slobodian** was born in Alert Bay, B.C. and raised in the Hotel Slobodian in Victoria. She spent her high school years involved in the arts: singing, dancing and acting. Her academic background is in Communications, where she focuses on acoustic communications related to broadcasting and the making of music. Her passions stretch from movies to newspapers and most recently, into the world of tap dancing. Mayana started hoofing two years ago and spent some time this year living in New York City with her brother, volunteering and dancing at the Broadway Dance Centre. She discusses her experiences with tap in N.Y. with light in her eyes!

Along with her passion for tap is one for traveling. As a child Mayana spent time in South Africa and in the South Pacific, living with her family while her father worked as a doctor and her mother served in the community. These experiences have given her a strong sense of her individual responsibility to the world around her. The Semester in Dialogue will provide opportunities for Mayana to explore how she can combine her personal and academic interests and put them in action now and in the future.



Close to completing her degree specializing in Anthropology, **Lisa St. Cyr's** interests began to shift directions; towards various expressions of art, as well as differing mind-body healing modalities. She is eager for this unique opportunity within the Dialogue semester, to be exposed to "Art," in such a holistic (as well as personal) way. Lisa feels very focused on the direction she is now heading towards, and yet remains open to the impact of new ideas — the possibility for an expanding imagination. Currently she is studying Modern dance, and intends to pursue Modern, as well as other dance forms (such as Flamenco, and Bharata Natyam) more intensively upon graduation. Looking on, she aims to achieve an MA in Dance/ Movement Therapy; but until then, is excited to explore dance and "human embodiment," as art forms, as well as their link to emotional and social healing.

**Jennifer Stevenson-Zerkee**, newly married, is a History major and Humanities minor at SFU, with plans to study archiving and eventually work in a museum environment. She is excited about the Art and Community program because she wants a change from the theories and abstract ideas she has studied in her other courses, and is interested in the current topics and "real-life" projects promised by this course. Jen has previously studied graphic design, works in a photography lab, and has always had an interest in visual arts and art history. She spent the summer combining her love of history with her love of art by exploring Italy with her sister.



**Christina van der Kamp** is currently in her second year at SFU. Her travels abroad as well as her experiences in pursuing a fine and performing arts minor have given her a uniquely broad appreciation for, and interest in, the arts. She is also completing a certificate through SFU's Centre for Sustainable Community Development. This background has inspired Christina's participation in the Semester in Dialogue, where she would like to further explore how physical and cultural environments can create and enliven a sense of community. Christina has already gained an appreciation for community-building through her experiences working with a local youth sail training organization.



**Monica Weitzer**, who hails from Portland Oregon, gave up skateboarding at an early age to take up swing dancing, and has been a passionate swing dancer ever since. Monica is in her second year at Simon Fraser University, having transferred from Portland Community College, and is now majoring in modern dance in the fine arts department. When asked why she chose this field of study she tells of a group of five dancers (herself included of course) who recognized the desperate need of the community dance center to be managed effectively, and who went on to run and improve this important community center. Monica took on several important roles in this situation, including marketer, director, event planner, dance instructor and usher. Due to this experience she is now pursuing a career in community arts organizing/administration and feels that a dance background will add greatly to this enterprise. This semester in Dialogue is perfectly suited to her pursuits. Monica has taken an active role in three dance troupes in her time, two of which she helped to create. Monica is currently choreographing dance pieces, teaching and overseeing practices of her current swing troupe.

Monica is intensely passionate about dance and has practiced a wide array of genres, a few of her favorites include Modern, African, Argentinean Tango and of course, Swing. Monica is also a well-traveled individual who has had the good fortune to participate in a month-long exchange with a family in Switzerland, and has also traveled widely throughout Europe. Monica has a sincere interest in hiking, camping, rock climbing and all sorts of outdoor activities and would like to practice them much more in the years to come. The future looks bright for this focused 22 year old achiever!! :)



**Emily Williamson** is approaching completion of her double major in Archaeology and Communications at Simon Fraser University. An early expedition to Pompeii solidified a passion in discovering, understanding, and preserving past human life and art: “As so much valuable art is lost over human history, archaeology is a way of gaining insights and perspectives into the past and into artistic practices.” While attending SFU, Emily participated in an indigenous excavation. Always seeking an adventure, Emily has left her footprint on almost every continent combining her love for travel with her academia, including a field school to Greece and an exchange to Japan. Most recently, Emily returned from a trip to China and the Tibetan Grasslands. While travelling she also enjoys taking photographs, sampling the local cuisine, and “attempting” to speak the native tongue. She is an athlete, a pianist, an avid photographer, and a lover of milk chocolate chip oatmeal cookies.

Have you ever noticed a young man with a gold-coloured pocket watch removing posters from telephone poles? If you have, you may have already met **David Wilson McLeish**, an Arts & Culture Major at Simon Fraser University and a fond scavenger of found materials for his collages.

In addition to pursuing art, David is interested in Philosophy, Cultural Studies, and Communications. He has encountered issues related to these disciplines through his involvement with the SFU student newspaper, *The Peak*. During his three years at *The Peak*, he worked as graphics editor, arts editor, and most recently, as productions editor.

Though this is his final semester of undergraduate studies, it is not the end of David’s academic career. He hopes to attend graduate school and eventually earn a Ph.D., perhaps adding to his already well-stamped passport in the process (he has travelled to Mexico City and Mainz, Germany with the non-profit organization, Children’s International Summer Villages, and attended SFU’s Prague field school this summer.)

Like many of us David, has yet to decide how his academic and artistic interests will meld in the future; however, he is content to see where the moment will take him.



**Brett Ziegler** has intentionally and unintentionally been making desirable and undesirable sounds for 22 years. Please be advised that these sounds travel in packs. Gangs of these sounds have been known to earn him awards as a saxophonist (Musicfest Canada), vocalist (B.C. Interior Jazz Festival), pianist (Vancouver Music Festival), and composer (Canadian Electroacoustic Community). They have also been known to annoy people. Sorry about that. The Undergraduate Semester in Dialogue concludes Brett's undergraduate studies at Simon Fraser University. He is completing an interdisciplinary Bachelor of Arts in Music and Communications, with a minor in Computing Science. Brett appreciates the interesting approaches to sound and music that SFU has offered him, particularly during his time as a research assistant for the World Soundscape Project. He has loved virtually every second he has spent in a recording studio, and wishes to continue to develop professionally as a player, a voiceover artist, an engineer, and a producer. Brett also enjoys singing and acting, and will be performing the role of Lieutenant Wright in *The Secret Garden* — his tenth Gateway Theatre production. He hopes this semester will give him the foundation to answer and ask more questions about the importance of being an artist, the schism of commercial and non-commercial art, individual versus communal expression, the implications of multicultural and intercultural, the sacred and secular in art, and more.