



# Alberta Institute for American Studies Newsletter

DATE 2010

## Chrystia Freeland Discusses the US and the New Global Elite

Chrystia Feeland, Reuters Global Editor-at-Large

Speaking to an audience of University of Alberta students, faculty and the general public on March 24th, Freeland discussed the differences between our generation's super wealthy and those of America's Gilded Age.

## Coming Events in 2011-12

- US AMBASSADOR DAVID JACOBSON delivers the annual Tory Lecture, September 21st, 7:30-9:00pm, Myer Horowitz Theatre, University of Alberta.

CONFERENCE ON "CANADA, US AND CHINESE RELATIONS IN MARITIME SECURITY: THE ARCTIC AND THE SOUTH CHINA SEA." September 22nd-23rd on the University of Alberta Campus. Co-sponsored by AIAS, the China Institute and the Canadian Circumpolar Institute.

### ALSO LOOK FOR:

- CONGRESSMAN RICK BOUCHER on US telecommunications policy and US climate change policy
- PROFESSOR JASON PIERCESON, University of Illinois, on American judicial activism
- PROFESSOR JEREMY MOUAT, Augustana Campus, on the Columbia River Treaty

Dates and locations for these events can be found at:  
[www.americanstudies.ualberta.com](http://www.americanstudies.ualberta.com)

## AIAS WELCOMES FULBRIGHT VISITING CHAIRS

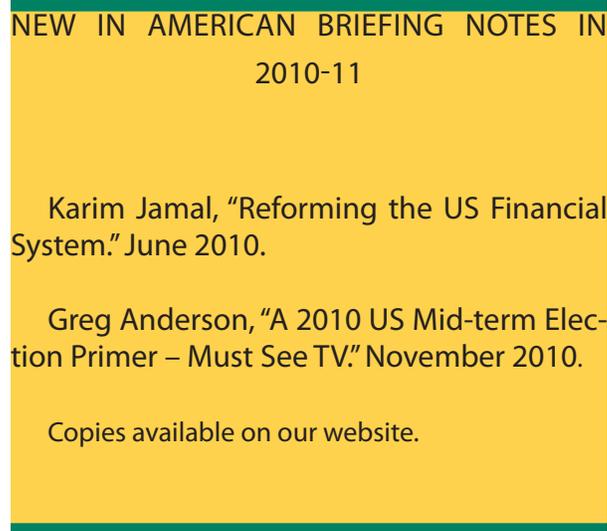
This past year, the Institute hosted two visiting faculty as Fulbright Visiting Chairs in American Studies.

Mr. Patrick Forrest, an executive with the US Department of Homeland Security and Adjunct Professor of Law at George Washington University joined AIAS from January to April to pursue research on Canadian and American responses to mass refugee crises. During his time at the University, he delivered the inaugural Alberta Fulbright Lecture in American Studies – a new initiative of the Institute and the Canada-US Fulbright Program – during International Week in March. He also gave public lectures on US immigration policy and American foreign policy with respect to religious prosecution.

From April to July, AIAS was pleased to host Professor Brent Sohngen of The Ohio State University. Sohngen, an environmental economist, delivered a public lecture on the impact of US climate change policy on land use and forestry and furthered his collaborative research with faculty from the Department of Rural Economy.

This September, AIAS will welcome Professor Jason Pierceson of the University of Illinois who will conduct research on comparative judicial activism in Canada and the United States.

The Fulbright Visiting Chair in American Studies is an important part of the Institute's efforts to expand research collaboration between the University and institutions in the US and promote its visibility. In support of the Fulbright program at the University of Alberta, AIAS launched the Alberta Fulbright Lecture in American Studies which highlights work by Fulbright scholars at the UofA.



### NEW IN AMERICAN BRIEFING NOTES IN 2010-11

Karim Jamal, "Reforming the US Financial System." June 2010.

Greg Anderson, "A 2010 US Mid-term Election Primer – Must See TV." November 2010.

Copies available on our website.

## INSTITUTE INAUGURATES CULTURE AND HISTORY PROGRAM

AIAS was pleased to expand its research program this past year, initiating a new program in American Culture and History that balances its existing public policy focus with new work in the humanities. This new program helps build a deeper understanding of the United States, informing both the bilateral Canada-US relationship and public policy research.

Under this program, the Institute provided funding for four projects by University of Alberta faculty:

Ohio History through Fashion Documentary Project. – Professor Anne Bissonnette, Department of Human Ecology, ALES

Still Searching: Southern singer-songwriters, American dreams. – Professor Roxanne Harde, Augustana Campus

Freedwomen in Pursuit of Liberty: St. Louis and Missouri in the age of emancipation. – Professor Sharon Romeo, Department of History and Classics

Black Feminism in the North American Press, 1827-1928. – Professor Teresa Zackodnik, Department of English and Film Studies

## AIAS Fellows Activities

AIAS Research Director Greg Anderson published several articles and book chapters this year: “Securitization and Sovereignty in Post-9/11 North America,” in *Review of International Political Economy*; “The Uncertain Politics of North American Integration,” in *Our North America*, ed. by Julian Castro-Rea (UBC Press, 2011). He co-edited *Forgotten Partnership Redux: Canada-US Relations Today* (Cambria Press, 2011) with Christopher Sands and contributed “Expanding the Partnership: States and provinces in US-Canada Relations 25 years on,” to that volume. Anderson presented papers on North American relations at this year’s meetings of the International Studies Association and Midwest Political Science Association. He and AIAS Distinguished Scholar in Residence Anne McLellan were both panelists at the Border Policy Research Institute’s conference “Bridging Differences: Past and Future Perspectives on Canada-US Relations” held at Western Washington University in April 2011.

Professor Roxanne Harde of Augustana Campus published *Reading the Boss: Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Works of Bruce Springsteen* (Lexington, 2010) which has gone into its second printing and the articles “What Should We do in America: Immigrant economies in nineteenth century American children’s fiction,” in the journal *International Research in Children’s Literature* and “Just an American Boy: American exceptionalism and Steve Earle vs. capital punishment,” in *American Exceptionalisms*, ed. by Jamey Carson and Sylvia Soderlind (SUNY Press, 2011).

AIAS Fellow and Professor of Accounting Karim Jamal continued his work with the Financial Accounting Standards Committee of the American Accounting Association. He contributed to three committee reports to the US Financial Accounting Standards Board and the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Susan Smith, AIAS Fellow and Professor of History & Classics, was the guest editor of the Spring 2011 issue of *Law, Medicine & Ethics* and contributed an essay on “Toxic Legacy: Mustard gas in the sea around us.” She also published a co-authored essay with Stephen Mawdsley, entitled “Alberta Advantage: A Canadian proving ground for American medical research on mustard gas and polio in the 1940s and 1950s,” in *Locating Health: Historical and Anthropological Investigations of Health and Place*, ed. by Erika Dyck and Christopher Fletcher (Pickering & Chatto, 2011).



## The Debt Ceiling Precipice? by Greg Anderson Research Director, AIAS

To many observers, the U.S. political system routinely looks as though it is about to go over a cliff. In recent months, the country's financial health, appeared to be on the brink as wrangling between the political parties and two branches of government played itself out on the nightly news.

The many twists and turns leading to the eleventh-hour compromise announced by President Obama on July 30 left most Americans shaking their heads in disbelief, aghast that such a high-stakes drama could be filled with such partisan rancor. Such antics have undoubtedly contributed to falling poll ratings for the President (44% job approval rating), but have also made Congress itself one of the most reviled institutions in America (18% job approval), as Real Clear Politics reports. Americans are a grumpy bunch these days. The economy has shown anemic economic growth for the past few years, some 14 million Americans are still looking for work, and nerves are fraying over prospects for a "double dip" recession. For those with jobs, nervousness about job security has prompted households to reign in spending and pay down debts. Hence, many Americans are angry at the paralysis in Washington and cannot understand why Congress and the President cannot do for the nation's finances what a weak economy has forced many to do with their personal finances.

If Americans are grumpy, dazed, and confused about the paralysis in their own political system, many non-citizens are in stunned disbelief. But the debt ceiling deal is itself a com

promise; one wrought by America's famous but messy system of "checks and balances." A quick read of The Federalist No.10 and No.51 penned by James Madison in 1787 suggests that it is messy by design. It encourages paralysis, arrests the concentration of power anywhere in government for long periods of time, and routinely generates the kind of high-stakes, bare-knuckled, theatre we have seen recently. It is a system that preserves liberty, but favors stability over radical change – the tyranny of the majority – by curbing the most heated passions that liberty can sometimes generate.

The debt ceiling debate generated plenty of mischief and shrill voices from both sides, but neither was able to win every point – despite Speaker John Boehner's claims of winning 98% of what he wanted. Yet as Madison hoped, the system he designed curbed the most partisan and extreme elements and netted a compromise. All sides are angry, the public furious that this has taken so long, and financial markets nervous that political uncertainty pushed America so close to default at all. But James Madison would have been proud that his system of "checks and balances" continues to curb at least some of the most extreme voices within.