

**Humanities professors Licia Calloway and Michael Politano attended Jessie Ball DuPont seminars at the National Humanities Center from June 1 – 22, 2008, in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.**

English Professor Licia Calloway attended a seminar entitled *The Globalization of American Literary Studies*, which was ably led by Dr. Peter Mallios, Associate Professor of English and American Studies at the University of Maryland. Guest facilitators included Anna Brickhouse of the University of Virginia, Caroline Levander of Rice University, Robert Levine of the University of Maryland, and Timothy Marr of the University of North Carolina, all of whom are represented in the critical volume *Hemispheric American Studies*. The seminar attracted eleven faculty participants from duPont-sponsored institutions.

Prof. Politano participated in *Human Nature: Ethical implications of biological, cultural, and technological transformations*, which included 17 participants covering English, Psychology (social, evolutionary, developmental, and clinical), Religion, Philosophy, Chemistry, Biology, Agricultural Science, and Political Science from Transylvania, St. Andrews Presbyterian, Elmira, Bluefield, Univ. of Mary Washington, The Citadel, Bethune-Cookman, Hollins, The University of the South, Meridith, Wesley, Goucher, Ferrum, Bridgewater, Florida Southern, and Davidson.

The first week was: Human nature: Naturalism and natural selection. It was led by Alex Rosenberg, R. Taylor Cole Professor of the Philosophy of Biology at Duke University.

Second week was: What makes us human? Led by Jesse Prinz, John J. Rogers Professor of the Philosophy of Psychology at UNC-CH.

Third week was: What do we want human nature to be? Led by Allen Buchanan, James B. Duke Professor of Philosophy and Biomedical Ethics, Duke University.

The scope of the course was an empirically-based reflection on human nature—what makes us distinct, what makes us human, what pressures are being exerted on our human nature by pharmacological, bio-medical, genetic, and technological advances? Topics covered were Darwinian mechanics, evolutionary psychology, cultural and psychological transformations and variations, evolution of morality, evolution of personality, evolution of pair-bonding and implications for social and cultural transformations, development of social and cultural structures, and ethics of genetic interventions and enhancements of human traits. Particularly interesting were the “just so” stories—stories that have developed about human traits (e.g., pair-bonding, aggression, etc.) which are based on scant and unverifiable evidence but which have an element of intuitive “truth” to them and which have become ingrained in our moral views and world views as valid explanations of human traits/characteristics. Dr. Politano found the seminars to be a “mind-expanding, engaging, collegial, rejuvenating experience led by some really top-notch individuals and contributed to by the variety of intelligent participants from so many different discipline perspectives.”