

# First Book Award supports junior faculty on road to publication

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**Assistant Professor of History Emily Callaci, left, and Assistant Professor of German Hannah Vandegrift Eldridge.**

Historian Emily Callaci and German scholar Hannah Vandegrift Eldridge are the winners of the First Book Award for junior faculty, presented by the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Center for the Humanities.

Callaci and Eldridge will each have the opportunity to hand-pick a group of senior scholars to provide guidance and feedback on their evolving manuscripts.

Funded by a short-term humanities programming grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the First Book program is open to all tenure-track, junior faculty in the humanities and related social sciences with manuscripts that are near completion. The goal is to turn promising manuscripts into first-rate books.

This year's recipients will draw on the expertise of scholars both within and outside of their own fields of study to ensure that the work reaches broad audiences across disciplinary boundaries.

Callaci, who has developed an unusual set of source materials for her research on the history of African nationalism and urbanization in postcolonial Tanzania, will bring scholars together to help her situate her project, "The City and African Socialism: History, Urban Culture and the Politics of Authenticity in Tanzania" within a broader theoretical and historical context. She describes her materials, from fashion photography, slang vocabulary, and Swahili pulp novellas to popular songs and public health pamphlets as "a new kind of public archive," one that has required her to develop new methods of interpretation. She hopes to place her work in conversation with scholarship from urban anthropology, English, urban studies, media studies, and communication.

Eldridge brings philosophy to bear on the close reading of German lyric poets Hölderlin and Rilke and argues for the potential of lyric poetry to address the condition of human finitude in unique and meaningful ways. She will bring philosophers together with literary scholars to help orient her project towards a multi-disciplinary audience and prepare her book for publication.

Past recipients of the First Book award include Karma Chávez (Communication Arts), Daniel Ussischkin (History), Jordan Zweck (English), Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen (History), and Mitra Sharafi (Law). Ratner-Rosenhagen's book, *American Nietzsche: A History of an Icon and His Ideas* has been awarded the American Historical Association's biennial Dunning Prize for best book in U.S. History, the 2013 Society for U.S. Intellectual History Award for the best book in American intellectual history, and the Morris D. Forkosch Prize from the Journal of the History of Ideas.

Details about past recipients and information on how to apply for the award are available on the Center for the Humanities' website (<http://humanities.wisc.edu/opportunities/for-faculty/first-book/>).

**Story by Megan Katz, Center for the Humanities**

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