College of Letters & Science
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

# The Past in The Present

News for Alumni & Friends from the Department of History | 2025-2026




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- *Teaching "A Global History of Now"*
- *UW–Madison Launches a Puerto Rican Studies Hub*
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Cover image: Historical document featured in *The Art of Freedom* poster session of the *Freedom Seekers* Symposium on April 23, 2026. The open page of The Pennsylvania Gazette showcases references to individuals fleeing slavery. (Read more on page 2)

Photo Credit: Ueda Photography

# Department of History Chair's Welcome

Dear friends,



As I write this, spring has arrived in Madison, and with it come the familiar signs of semester's end at the University of Wisconsin — warmer days, graduates in caps and gowns crossing campus, the terrace at Memorial Union humming with activity as the sun chairs come out, and a wave of goodbyes as students head home for the summer or, for those finishing their degrees, into the next chapter of their lives.

This year, the History Department has its own farewell to make. As many of you know, we are saying goodbye to the Mosse Humanities Building. This fall, we will join seven other departments in Irving and Dorothy Levy Hall, a newly constructed building at the corner of Johnson and Park Street. My colleagues and I have had our last classes and our last department meeting in the Curti Lounge, and we are now waist deep in boxes and moving carts as we pack up the offices and classrooms that have been home to the History Department for the last 57 years. Those of you who have spent time in the Mosse Humanities Building in the winter know that there are as many reasons to celebrate the move as there are to mourn. But this building has been home for a long time and has been witness to countless stories in its classrooms, offices, and hallways.

It's not all tears and goodbyes in the History Department these days. Despite the very real challenges facing higher education, my colleagues continue to produce the sort of exceptional work in both research and teaching that sets our department apart. Their work in the classroom is bearing fruit not only in teaching prizes (congratulations to Brandon Bloch for being awarded a campus wide Distinguished Teaching Award!), but also in larger numbers of students taking History courses. While the crisis in the humanities is far from over, students are showing up and remain eager to acquire the critical thinking, writing, and abstract reasoning skills that are central to a degree in History and will be essential in the job market of the future. I am pleased to report that the number of students receiving History majors and certificates have spiked to levels higher than at any point since at least 2010. We are excited to welcome them in the Fall from our new offices and classrooms in Levy Hall, where we look forward to witnessing new stories from a new generation of History students.

In this issue of *The Past in the Present*, we crack the window a little to give you a look inside some of the remarkable work happening across the department. Whether it is the innovative teaching that Monica Kim and Giuliana Chamedes are doing in their class "The Global History of Now," the interactive digital research project, "Freedom Seekers," conceived and built by Gloria Whiting, or the Puerto Rican Studies Hub, a multi-disciplinary center focused on the study and celebration of Puerto Rico that was started in part by Jorell Meléndez-Badillo, I am excited to show you a few examples of the innovative work that my colleagues and our students are doing. Thanks so much to you all—our supporters and friends who make much of this work possible. We look forward to welcoming you all to see us in person in Levy Hall in the Fall.

On Wisconsin!



# *Freedom Seekers: Stories of Black Liberation in the American Revolutionary Era and Beyond*




As the United States approaches its 250th anniversary, public conversations have turned more and more toward questions of freedom, citizenship, and historical memory. *Freedom Seekers*, a digital humanities project—led by UW-Madison E. Gordon Fox Associate Professor of History Gloria Whiting and a team of scholars and students—recovers the lives of people often absent from traditional historical narratives of the Revolutionary era.

*Freedom Seekers* tells the stories of enslaved people who helped spur an unprecedented Revolutionary-era challenge to slavery and racial inequality. The *Freedom Seekers* project digitally publishes rigorously researched but popularly accessible stories that reconstruct the lives of people of color who fled slavery in pursuit of freedom across the British Atlantic world. Each of these stories begins with a newspaper advertisement written by the aggrieved enslaver, which describes the escapee or "freedom seeker," as the project calls them. These advertisements, together with other historical sources, allow scholars to tell the stories of people who valued freedom above all else. The project shows readers that white Patriots were by no means alone in their struggle to achieve what Thomas Jefferson immortalized in the Declaration of Independence as "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

In this moment of heightened attention to the Revolutionary era, *Freedom Seekers* offers a way to engage with untold but important histories that complicate conventional understandings of the nation's founding. By centering the experiences of enslaved people who pursued liberation on their own terms, *Freedom Seekers* challenges its readers to reconsider whose stories define the history of freedom in America.






# *Freedom Seekers* Symposium

April 23, 2026




*Freedom Seekers* recently hosted a public symposium, entitled "Stories of Black Liberation in the American Revolutionary Era and Beyond." Nearly 200 guests gathered at the Wisconsin Historical Society to learn about the digital project and explore stories of people who fled slavery during the Revolutionary era.

The event, presented by the UW–Madison History Club and University Place by PBS Wisconsin, with support from many campus partners, took place just months before the 250th anniversary of American independence. Professor Whiting and her team timed the project to culminate at this time of interest in the American story of freedom. *The Art of Freedom* Poster Exhibition featured the work of researchers who had carefully reconstructed the stories of freedom seekers. Attendees were able to speak with undergraduate and graduate student researchers, see original documents, and examine featured narratives. Following this, Professor Gloria McCahon Whiting delivered a keynote storytelling lecture entitled *Freedom Seekers: Declaring Independence from Slavery during the American Revolution*.





photos by Ueda Photography

# Behind *Freedom Seekers*: Student Researcher Spotlights



### Isaac Lee, Ph.D. Candidate

Freedom Seekers provides graduate students crucial opportunities to develop their research, writing, and mentorship skills. Isaac Lee is a PhD candidate in History exploring the histories of race, slavery, and colonialism in the early modern Atlantic world. He has written three stories for the Freedom Seekers project: one about an interracial group of Rhode Island runaways, another about enslaved woman named Bina who escaped into British-occupied New York City, and a third about a mixed-race man named Ishmael Mux who escaped from New London, Connecticut. Isaac has also served as one of the Freedom Seeker project's graduate project assistants. Isaac describes Freedom Seekers as an exercise in "history from below," in which scholars (including student-scholars!) use small pieces of evidence to reconstruct erased or lost historical worlds. In addition to his own research on freedom seekers, Isaac says the most rewarding part of his work has been supervising undergraduate researchers and guiding them through the processes of archival interpretation and revision.

photos by Ueda Photography

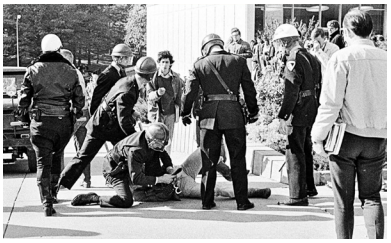
### Sara Ortenzio

*Freedom Seekers* offers undergraduate interns an introduction to historical research as well as instruction in how to write about the past for broad audiences. Sara Ortenzio recently graduated from UW-Madison with a Bachelor of Science in Genetics and a certificate in History. As a *Freedom Seekers* intern, Sara researched enslaved women and children in the Caribbean for her story about an enslaved person named Monday. She also explored slavery's relationship to horse racing in early North Carolina for her story about Charles Thompson. (The stories Sara wrote about Monday and Charles Thompson, along with close to a hundred other stories authored by dozens of students and scholars, can be found on the project's website.) Sara joined the project after taking courses on early American history, slavery, and archival research with Professors Gloria Whiting and Simon Newman. She notes that one of the things she has most enjoyed about working on *Freedom Seekers* is learning how other scholars, such as Professor Whiting, present their own historical work.



You can engage with the project's growing archive of narratives and learn more about its work at **https://freedom-seekers.org/**.

# Teaching "A Global History of Now"









In Spring 2025, the Department of History launched a new course, History: 146: A Global History of Now, where undergraduates can explore the deeper historical roots of urgent issues confronting our societies in the present moment. This groundbreaking course arose from an idea of Associate Professors of History Monica Kim and Giuliana Chamedes. Together, Professors Kim and Chamedes envisioned a course that would provide students with the tools of historical analysis to understand the present moment through the lens of global empire, revolution, and capitalism..

The course provides an opportunity for students to make connections between past and present moments in history and to understand how history can be applied in today's world. While the course brings together students from various disciplines and with diverse career paths, many enter the course with a shared goal to practice history in the world and to get involved in the present moment. With such an expansive range of topics that could be covered within the course and with a constantly shifting present, each semester's syllabus is unique. In fact, the course is designed to be dynamic; Professors Kim and Chamedes rewrite and revise lectures and the syllabus in response to ever-changing global events. Yet, despite the changes in each iteration of the course, core objectives carry across each semester. Students are trained how to ask historical questions about current political crises. They are taught strategies and given tools to investigate the long histories of present moments. Through various assignments and course materials, they learn the power of storytelling and writing.









A Global History of Now utilizes collaborative teaching, a format that is more common in other disciplines but novel for History. As the idea of a team-taught history course took shape, two additional team members joined on board who also work on global history: Professors Daniel Williford and Jorell Meléndez-Badillo. Daniel Williford specializes in French colonialism in the Middle East and Africa and History of Science. Jorell Meléndez-Badillo brings expertise on archives, socialism and anarchism, and Caribbean History, with a special emphasis on Puerto Rico. Professors Kim and Chamedes bring their own unique expertise: Monica Kim is a historian of U.S. foreign policy, particularly during and after the Korean War, and Giuliana Chamedes is a historian of international history, with a special interest in European internationalist movements. A great strength of designing a team-taught course with a group of diverse specialists, the teaching team models for students history in action. Students witness historians working together, sharing information, and asking questions of one another.

The resonant themes and unique format of the course has shown an interest among UW-Madison students for teaching that involves collaboration and practical application. Two semesters into teaching History 146, the course is already immensely popular with undergraduate students. Enrollment has filled quickly, not only with History students, but also with students across disciplines. The course provides an opportunity for students to practice applying a historical lens and the investigative skills they are taught in the classroom to an ever-changing global present.

# UW-Madison Launches a Puerto Rican Studies Hub



Professors Aurora Santiago-Ortiz and Jorell Meléndez-Badillo (Photo by Althea Dotzour / UW-Madison)

Since October 2025, the Puerto Rican Studies Hub has been establishing itself as a vibrant center for research, instruction, and community engagement at UW–Madison. Supported by funding from a $3 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Puerto Rican Studies Hub is the first of its kind of initiative in the Midwest, uniting scholars, students, artists, and community members to explore and interrogate the history, culture, and diasporas of Puerto Rico.

Based in the Department of History and led by Associate Professor of History Jorell Meléndez-Badillo and Assistant Professor of Gender & Women's Studies and Chicanx/e & Latine Studies Aurora Santiago Ortiz, the Hub's vision expands beyond just the horizons of a traditional program. Meléndez-Badillo, who is from Aguadilla, is a historian of working-class intellectual traditions and radical thought. Santiago Ortiz grew up between San Juan and New York; her work centers on student movements and community-based

research. In their own words, they see the Hub as the "center of a wheel," whose spokes connect UW–Madison to Puerto Rican communities and scholars across the Midwest, the United States, and Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rican studies has a long and storied history at UW–Madison. First emerging through decades of student activism, faculty scholarship, and interdisciplinary collaboration, the development of Puerto Rican studies has followed patterns of Puerto Rican migration from the East Coast to the Midwest. For Meléndez-Badillo, this legacy made the university a "dream job," one that continues the legacies of earlier generations of scholars and sustains efforts to expand the field. Since 2022, he and Santiago Ortiz have worked to continue the traditions of studying Puerto Rico from a Latin and Caribbean perspective from within the field of History.

At its core, the Puerto Rican Studies Hub aims to create a pipeline that supports scholars and community members at every stage, from undergraduate students to established researchers, while remaining grounded in the field's community-driven origins. The Hub is organized around three pillars: the first, Imagining Puerto Rican Futures, involves programming, guest speakers, and a mentorship program that allows junior members of the field to connect with professors and researchers. The second, Solidarity Ecosystems, is a scholarship system that highlights the work of students, scholars, artists, and writers, supporting Puerto Rican studies through academic fellowships and scholarships. The third, Learning and Unlearning Together, connects the Hub to the community through lecture series, culinary festivals, film festivals, and a study abroad program to travel to Puerto Rico. Together, the Hub's events have already drawn strong engagement, including a 200-person inaugural performance by Los Pleneros de la Cresta and a well-attended lecture by historian Francisco Scarano.

In addition to Hub-sponsored events, Meléndez-Badillo recently worked on a collaboration with music artist Bad Bunny, for whom he wrote historical narratives exploring Puerto Rico's past and present that accompanied a 2025 album. The project brought Puerto Rican history to millions of listeners worldwide, a dynamic way for Puerto Rican scholarship to move beyond the classroom. With Bad Bunny later headlining the 2026 Super Bowl halftime show—the first Spanish-language performance by a solo Latino artist on that stage—the collaboration amplified conversations about Puerto Rico's history, culture, and political status on a global scale.



UW-Madison Emeritus Professor A. Francisco Scarano, a leading historian of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, speaking at the inaugural lecture of the Puerto Rican Studies Hub's Francisco Scarano Lecture Series on October 28, 2026.

The Hub also places a large focus on the interdisciplinary nature of Puerto Rican studies, bringing together scholarship and perspectives from history, anthropology, gender studies, geography, and the arts. Both Meléndez-Badillo and Santiago Ortiz see the Hub as a magnifying lens for understanding broader questions of empire, migration, and identity. For them, Puerto Rico represents a telescope through which students and community members can understand so many processes and phenomena, connecting Puerto Rican Studies to United States and Atlantic history, American studies, Latin American studies, and Chicana studies. Santiago Ortiz and Meléndez-Badillo emphasize how the Puerto Rican Studies Hub is an extension of the Wisconsin Idea: fostering knowledge that serves communities within and beyond the University and creating a place for anyone to participate in shaping the future of the field.

# 57 Years in the Mosse Humanities Building

For past and present-day UW-Madison students, the George L. Mosse Humanities Building is a more than familiar presence. Standing between Library Mall and Bascom Hill, its long hallways, closed courtyard design, seemingly infinite stairwells, and its signature brutalist style have become fixtures of campus life. But the Humanities Building has been defined as much by routine as by architecture, and for those involved in the Department of History, it is a decades-old hub of instruction, advising, and everyday academic life.

The department has not always been housed in Humanities. Prior to the building's opening on November 17, 1969, History was located in Bascom Hall. As the department continued to grow, plans for a new humanities building began to emerge in the late 1950s. Faculty from the Departments of History, Art, and Music—including future Humanities Building Committee Chairman E. David Cronon—worked together to advocate for a larger shared space and resources that could better support an expanding academic community, including, notably, a copy center. The building that would become the Humanities building was ultimately designed by Chicago architect Harry Weese and constructed at a cost of approximately $10 million, bringing together the departments of History, Art, and Music under one massive roof. In 2000, the Board of Regents renamed the building in honor of George L. Mosse, the influential and beloved German-American historian who taught at the university for more than thirty years.



art by Doug E. L. Haynes

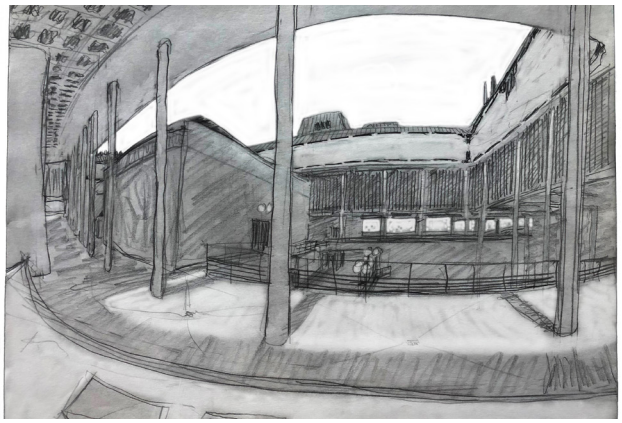
Over the decades, the Mosse Humanities Building has become one of the most heavily used academic buildings on campus. Today, more than 70,000 credit hours across dozens of departments are taught in the building annually, with over half of the History Department's own courses held there. Familiar spaces like 3650 Humanities Hall host classes for thousands of students each semester across disciplines including History, English, and Computer Science, while smaller classrooms like 1131 Humanities and the fifth-floor William B. Hesseltine Room—named for another long-time professor and mentor in the department—have provided the setting for tens of thousands of hours of lectures, discussions sections, and seminars. Another room, the Curti Lounge, named for Professor of History and Pulitzer Prize winner Merle Curti, was initially designated as a faculty lounge and is now known for hosting dozens of History meetings and events every year.

For students, the Humanities Building experience is defined by its persistent rhythms: navigating seven floors of labyrinthine hallways; mapping routes to class from 22 entrances; and planning what to wear for classrooms that run hot or



The site of the Humanities Building in May 1966, prior to construction. Box 257, 9/2 Collection, NS-1758 436N7B, May 13, 1966, University of Wisconsin-Madison Archives (Madison, Wisconsin).

*right, top*: art by Doug E. L. Haynes
*right, middle*: Cars parked alongside the new Humanities Building.
Photo by Karin Denissen, News and Publication Service, Box 257, 9/2 Collection, University of Wisconsin-Madison Archives (Madison, Wisconsin).
*right, bottom*: art by Doug E. L. Haynes







cold. Myths of the Mosse Building, too, have become legendary across campus: the building is haunted by the ghost of its own architect; its sheer sloping walls and "bomb-shelter" design was created to ward off protestors; or even that the building itself may have been built reading the architectural plans upside-down. These experiences have defined a generation of students, professors, and scholars who have all traversed the halls of Mosse Humanities Building.

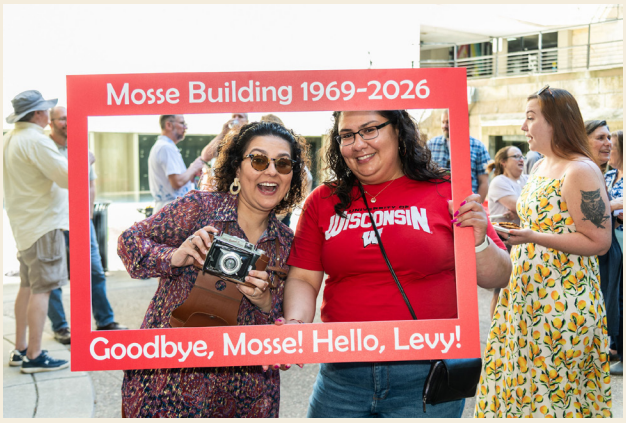
At the same time, the building's status is also marked with its own challenges. Over the past decade, occupants have endured structural issues including water damage, inconsistent heating, outdated classroom technology, and limitations in accessibility. Familiar to History faculty and students, the revolving door outside the main office has remained broken for years, ventilation systems are loud and disruptive, and many of the seats in lecture rooms are the same wooden-backed installations in place since the building's construction almost sixty years ago. Efforts to modernize have been constrained by the building's infrastructure, and estimates for comprehensive repairs have approached over $62 million.

Yet, it is precisely these quirks that have made Humanities such a notable heart of intellectual activity on campus. Faculty, students, and alumni all point to the building's role in fostering the UW-Madison experience, facilitating academic engagement through large lecture courses, small seminars, conversations in the hallways and stairwells, and a shared sense of community—oftentimes despite the building's physical challenges. Loved and hated, the building's size and scale, both on Park Street and in the heart of the History department, are historic, unique, and will be hard to replace in many aspects.

As the History Department relocates to the new Irving and Dorothy Levy Hall in July, the move signals a shift toward updated facilities, classroom environments, and new forms of collaboration. At the same time, the new building will aim to bring together that same sense of community and brilliance that the George L. Mosse Humanities Building has provided throughout the department's history.

# UW-Madison History Department Says Goodbye to Mosse Humanities Building

An Open House was held on May 15, 2026. Faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends of the UW-Madison History Department gathered together to say farewell to the building that the department has called home since it's opening in 1969.












Photographs by ArrowStar Photography













## Get involved!

Want to help shape our major's professional futures? Consider being a career mentor! Career mentors might provide advice on how to get started in their field, read over resume or cover letters, or help current students build their networks.

Contact Christina Matta at christina.matta@wisc.edu for more information.

# History. We're Making it.

Since the first History class at UW-Madison more than 100 years ago, alumni and supporters like you have helped us fulfill our education mission.

UW-Madison's Department of History is in the top tier of history departments globally. We enroll over 6,600 undergraduate and graduate students in our courses and our faculty win teaching and research awards every year.

Please consider making a gift to support the History Department.



Photo by ArrowStar Photography

### Giving Options:

**Giving Online**
Make a gift online through the UW Foundation at:

https//supportuw.org/giveto/history.

**Giving By Mail** (use attached envelope)

Send a check made payable to the UW Foundation (indicate "Department of History Annual Fund" on your choice of specific fund) to:

University of Wisconsin Foundation
U.S. Bank Lockbox 78807
Milwaukee, WI 53278-0807




Photo by Taylor Wolfram / UW-Madison

## 2026 Undergraduate Students Awards and Scholarships

**Bella Adams**—Goldberg Scholarship in History

**Karim Aitelhassouni**—William F. Allen Prize; Orson S. Morse History Scholarship

**Isodore Borock**—David McDonald Prize

**Isabelle Bubnick**—Alice D. Mortenson Russian History Award

**Ian Burton**—Alfred Erich Senn Prize

**Eva Bushman**—William F. Allen Prize

**Ella Capodanno—**Roan Vaughan Civil Resistance Prize

**Phoebe Clark**—Alice D. Mortenson Russian History Award

**Emma Crain**—Paul Glad Prize

**Claire Czajkowski**—Alice D. Mortenson Russian History Award

**Rosa Fabian**—Steven A. and Barbara S. Jaffe History Scholarship; Alice D. Mortenson Russian History Award

**Anika Feinsilver**—Paul J. Schrag Prize; Margaret E. Smith-Esther Butt History Scholarship

**Matthew Foley**—John De Novo Prize

**Noe Goldhaber**—Roan Vaughan Civil Resistance Prize

**Chloe Herlitzke**—Willard L. Huson Scholarship

**V Hernandez-White**—Willard L. Huson Scholarship

**Claire Hoppe**—Philip Levy Research Award in History

**Julianna Horn**—John De Novo Prize

**Jixiang (Tiger) Hu**—William F. Allen Prize; Willard L. Huson Scholarship

**Tony Jing**—William K. Fitch Scholarship; Alice D. Mortenson Russian History Award

**Lauren Kelly**—Andrew Bergman Prize; Fred Harvey Harrington Prize

**Ali Maldonado**—Beland Family Research Award in History

**David Meister**—Andrew Bergman Prize

**Bella Moore**—Davis/Gerstein Undergraduate Research Award

**Abby O'Callaghan**—American Indian History Prize; Orson S. Morse History Scholarship

**Sreejita Patra**—Curti Prize

**Collin Phajit**—John Sharpless Scholarship

**Mia Pyle**—Digital & Public History Prize

**Evan Randle**—Steven A. and Barbara S. Jaffe History Scholarship

**Andrew Sayers**—Alice D. Mortenson Russian History Award

**Faith Shimon**—Baensch Prize

**Erin Sitrin**—Paul Glad Prize

**Haleigh Smith**—Digital & Public History Prize

**Aaron Stettner**—Harvey Rabin Prize

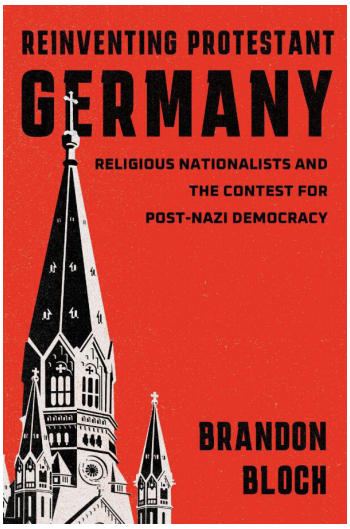
**Henri Stilling**—LGBTQ+ History Prize

**Valery Vayserberg**—Alice D. Mortenson Russian History Award

**Parker Wall**—William A. Brown Writing Prize for Black History

**Elizabeth Yray**—Andrew Bergman Prize

# Faculty and Staff News

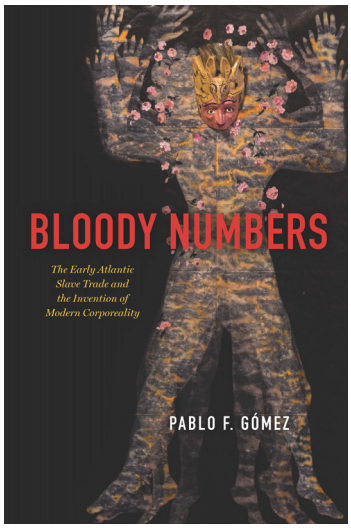



**Brandon Bloch** received the William J. Kiekhofer Teaching Award, a campus-level award for an assistant or associate professor in the College of Letters and Science. His first book, *Reinventing Protestant Germany: Religious Nationalists and the Contest for Post-Nazi Democracy*, appeared with Harvard University Press in August 2025.

**Ashley Brown** attended the Tennis History Conference at Wimbledon in London in December where she presented, "A Trailblazer and Her Allies: Althea Gibson, Alice Marble, Mary Hardwick, Sarah Palfrey, and the Integration of Tennis." She also published two articles this year: "Jackie Robinson and Althea Gibson Were Trailblazers in Golf, Too," at PicturingBlackHistory.org and "What Happened to the Black Male Tennis Star? Maybe It's Masculinity," at FirstandPen.com.

**Emily Callaci**'s book, *Wages for Housework*, has been awarded the Norbert Blei/August Derleth nonfiction book prize, which is awarded each year to a book written by a Wisconsin author. In 2027, she will be a Braudel Fellow at the European University Institute in Florence.

**Eric Carlsson** co-organized and delivered the opening address at the first-ever international conference dedicated to the seminal eighteenth-century German theologian Johann Salomo Semler. The conference—Johann Salomo Semler und die Aufklärung: Religion, Geschichte(n), Wirkung/Johann Salomo Semler and the Religious Enlightenment: Histories, Contexts, Legacies—was held at Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg in October 2025.




**Pablo Gomez**'s new book, *Bloody Numbers: The Early Atlantic Slave and the Invention of the Modern Corporeality* was published by University of Chicago Press. The book examines how, through their material practices, Iberian Atlantic slave trading communities made human bodies articulable with a new set of ideas about finance, facts, objectivity, and measurable risk that emerged in the early modern era. In July 2026, he will be the keynote speaker "Distinguished Lecturer" at the annual meeting of joint meeting of the History of Science Society (US) and the European Society for the History of Science in Edinburgh.

**John Hall** was named a senior non-resident fellow for the Global and National Security Institute at the University of South Florida and appointed director of UW's Officer Education Program (encompassing each of the university's ROTC programs).

**Patrick Iber's** book, *Poverty of the Imagination: The Cold War and the Social Science of Development in Latin America*, is forthcoming in 2026 with University of Chicago Press.

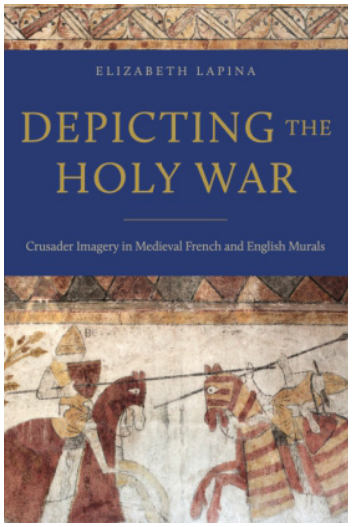
**Steve Kantrowitz** received two major honors this year. In the fall he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Southern Denmark (Syddansk Universitet), where he has been a Fulbright professor and collaborated with researchers in their American Studies program. This spring he received an Andrew Carnegie Fellowship, a major award that will allow him to spend two years writing his next book, *Who is an American? The Contested History of U.S. Citizenship*.

**Devin Kennedy**, along with **Florence Hsia**, established the new Campus Center for the Humanistic Study of AI and Uncertainty, which opened in January 2026. In 2025, as steering committee members, the two secured a $500,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for the Center, which will support faculty and graduate student research and a visiting scholar in residence. The Center focuses on the study of AI from a humanistic and social scientific perspective, drawing on fields including history, philosophy, Science Technology Studies, and Communication Arts. As one of the Center's first fellows, Devin is conducting research on his next project, a history of theoretical computer science, its role in the broader discipline, and its function in AI research.

**Emma Kuby** published an article in

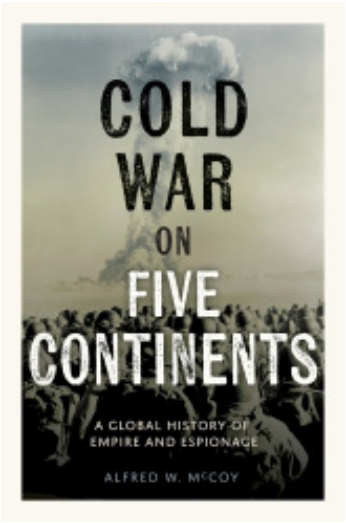
# Faculty and Staff News

*French Historical Studies* titled "'Queens of the Earth' with Women to Serve Them: White Freedom and Black Unfreedom in Flora Tristan's Feminist Imagination." The piece is her first foray into the nineteenth century. She also published an essay about forced labor—this one on her usual post-1945 turf—in the edited collection *Cold War Liberalism: Power in a Time of Emergency* from Cambridge University Press.



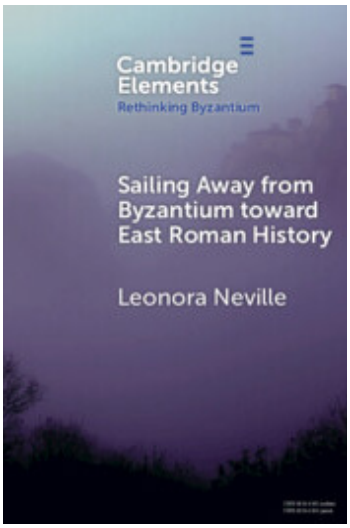

**Elizabeth Lapina**'s second monograph, *Depicting the Holy War: Crusader Imagery in Programs of Mural Paintings in France and England in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, was published with Penn State University Press in 2025. She also published an article, "Elite Tents and the Hustle for Power on the First Crusade," in the journal *Crusades* later in the same year.

**Alfred McCoy** recently published a new book titled, *Cold War on Five Continents: A Global History of Empire and Espionage*, which is, at a conceptual level, a sequel to his first book *The Politics of Heroin*, which was first published in 1972 and is still in print. Over 50 years ago, he took a semester off from Yale graduate school and circled the globe, tracking the heroin trail and meeting some of the most famous covert operatives of the Cold War era. Back then, he mined those interviews for the mere facts of time, person, and place to frame his first book's narrative. But




now for this current book he returned to those individuals to grasp a fuller, fourth dimension of their lived lives as consequential historical actors in shaping the conduct of the Cold War. This interpretation of that global conflict has had a positive reception and has been the subject of interviews on PBS Wisconsin, the news show "Democracy Now!," and with journalists in Amsterdam, Lisbon, London, and Mexico City.

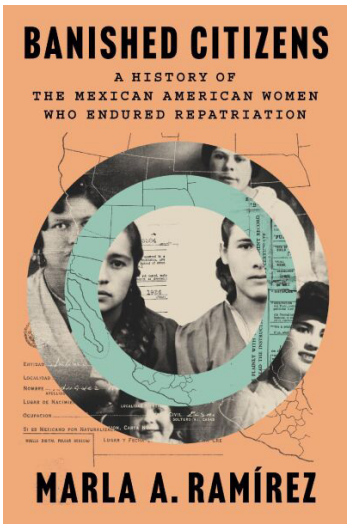
**Viren Murthy** published two essays, "Hegelian Critiques of Capitalism: Rethinking Modernity Through Speculative Metaphysics", in *Owl of Minerva: Journal of the Hegel Society of America* and "Umemoto Katsumi, the New Left and the Critique of Civil Society," forthcoming in *Political Thought and Japan's New Left Movements: Transformations in Radical Theory*, (Christopher Perkins and Ferran de Vargas eds). In April, he gave a keynote lecture entitled, "Rethinking Tradition and Modernity: Reflections on Romantic Anti-Capitalism," at the conference on "Indigenous Imaginaries: Breaks and Continuities in the Historiographies of South Asia and Hawai'i", University of Hawai'i at Manoa. He is currently Director of the Center for South Asia.




**Leonora Neville** published a new book, *Sailing Away from Byzantium toward East Roman History*, and an article in the centennial volume of the journal of The Medieval Academy of America: "Western Supremacy and 'Byzantium'." *Speculum* 101.1, 2026, 76-81. Given that "Byzantine" means "frustratingly complex" far more often than "the Roman empire in the medieval east Mediterranean," Neville's writings have been pushing her colleagues to rethink their field without the rubrics inherited from 18th-century European ideas about historical periodization. While on sabbatical she gave two lectures in Greece, four in Turkey, and finished a draft of a big book on religion and government in the east Roman empire.

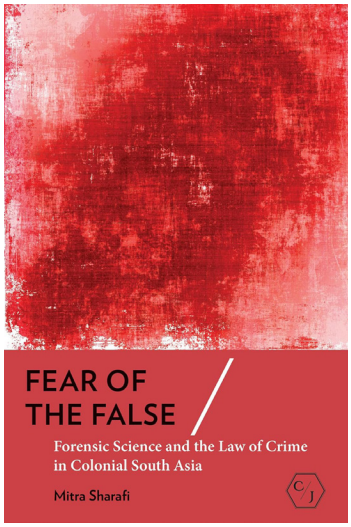
**Marla Ramírez**'s book, *Banished Citizens* (Harvard University Press, 2025), has received a strong positive

# Faculty and Staff News




reception. Since the book's publication, she has delivered over 45 invited book talks throughout the country, including serving as a panelist at the L.A. Times Festival of Books. *Banished Citizens* was named a Best Nonfiction Book of the Year by *Kirkus Reviews* and won several book awards, including the Mary Nickliss Prize in U.S. Women's and Gender History by the Organization of American Historians, the Philip Taft Labor History Award sponsored by Cornell University, the Sal Castro Memorial Book Award in Chicano History from UC-Santa Barbara, the Theodore Saloutos Book Award from the Immigration and Ethnic History Society (IEHS) and the IEHS First Book Award, as well as the School of Industrial and Labor Relations and the Labor and Working-Class History Association's best book in American labor and working-class history prize.

**Mitra Sharafi**'s second book was released in April 2026 with the Corpus Juris series of Cornell University Press: *Fear of the False: Forensic Science and the Law of Crime in Colonial South Asia*. A symposium on her work came out in *Modern Asian Studies* (November 2025): "Symposium on Mitra Sharafi, 'Abortion in South Asia, 1860-1947: A medico-legal history." This symposium features comments by historians of abortion in times and places other than colonial India, along with a response from Sharafi. She is also currently serving as president of the




American Society for Legal History, the leading scholarly society in legal history. Sharafi is the first ASLH president based at UW-Madison and the first South Asianist in this role.

**Sarah Thal** has joined 20-odd colleagues over the last few years to contribute to research for the British Museum's recent special exhibition on samurai. Her related article, "Steadfast Resolve: Stoicism, the Way of the Samurai, and the Struggle over Japan's National Character," appeared in a special issue of *Japan Review* on "Global Samurai."

**Matt Villeneuve** published a new book, *Instrumental Indians: John Dewey and Indigenous Schools*, with University of Pennsylvania Press in 2026.

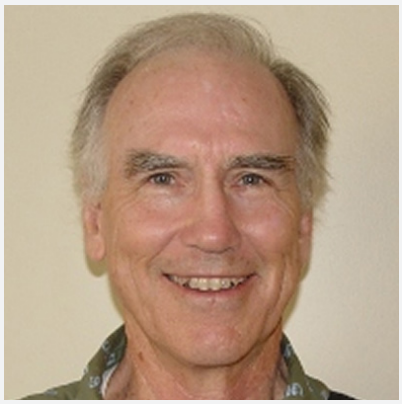
**Gloria McCahon Whiting**'s recent book won a series of accolades this year. Titled *Belonging: An Intimate History of Slavery and Family in Early New England*, the book was awarded the American Historical Association's 2025 Prize in American History for outstanding first book on any subject relating to United States history. In addition, the book was awarded the John Winthrop Prize for the best book on the seventeenth century by the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, the Peter J. Gomes Memorial Book Prize by the Massachusetts Historical Society, and Francis Richardson Keller-Sierra Prize from the Western Association of Women Historians. Whiting continued work on her public-facing digital humanities project on slavery, independence, and the American Revolution, which can be found at https://freedom-seekers.org/ (See page 2)

## Staff News

Career Development Manager **Christina Matta** received the College of Letters and Science Mid-career Advising Excellence Award this year. The award recognized Christina's many outstanding accomplishments, including her pioneering a funded internship program, coordinating a formal mentoring program for undergraduates, and producing a weekly newsletter that is considered "one of the most valuable resources found at UW."

**Carol Čizauskas**, Department Administration Associate, was a recipient of one of this year's University Staff Recognition Awards. The selection committee noted her high level of professionalism and organizational skills. The committee highlighted her leading a team of student workers in a special project to digitize 50 filing cabinet drawers of faculty personnel files—some more than 75 years old—in preparation for the move to Levy Hall.

## Congratulations Michael Cullinane



Congratulations to **Michael Cullinane**, Associate Director of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, upon his retirement this summer. Dr. Mike, as his students affectionately call him, has been a Faculty Affiliate in the Department of History since 1991, teaching Intro to Southeast Asian History and Southeast Asian Refugees of the Cold War courses every year. By his estimate, he has taught over 5,500 undergraduates at UW-Madison and regularly offered a faculty-led honors-only discussion section in his courses. In addition, Dr. Mike mentored dozens of teaching assistants during his 34 years at UW-Madison, having also served as the advisor of 9 undergraduate theses in History and as a member of the defense committees for 9 MAs and 9 PhDs in History. He has extensive research in the Philippines, with interests in 19th and 20th-century Philippine social, political, and demographic history, including the book *Chinese Mestizos of Cebu, 1750-1900*, which won the Philippine National Book Award in 2023.

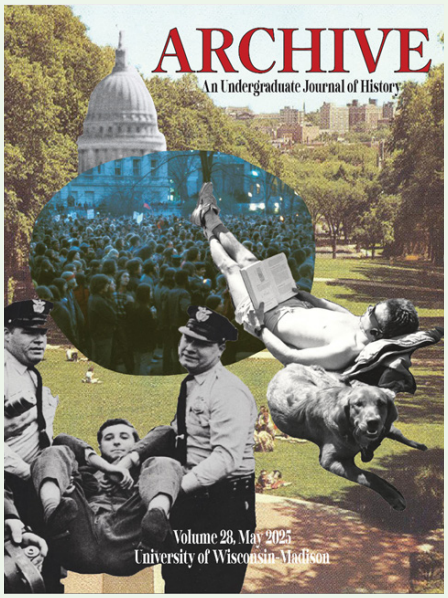
## *ARCHIVE*

*ARCHIVE* is UW-Madison's undergraduate journal of history. Since the previous issue of *The Past in the Present*, the 28th edition of ***ARCHIVE*** has been published.



The 2025 Editorial Board included Editors-in-Chief Lauren Kelly and Emmett Robison, as well as Editors Isabelle Alyn, Anika Feinsilver, Molly Hunken, Callie Knoch, Houye Lyu, Mia Pyle, Jay Riccabona, Erin Sitrin, and Ji Zhao. The students worked hard to produce a volume that encompasses writing from students at universities across the country. Professor Kathryn Ciancia, served as faculty advisor to the editors as they worked on the publication.

Stay tuned for the 29th edition of *ARCHIVE*, which will be published summer of 2026.




Read the 28th and past editions of *ARCHIVE*:

https://history.wisc.edu/undergraduate-program/archive/

# 29 Semesters of History 601: Historical Publishing Practicum

For many undergraduates, academic writing ends with the submission of a paper, but for the student editors at *ARCHIVE*, that is where the process starts. *ARCHIVE* is an award-winning journal of history published annually by undergraduate History majors, in partnership with the History Department and the UW-Madison chapter of Phi Alpha Theta. Each spring semester, the editorial board enrolls in History 601: Historical Publishing Practicum, taught by the journal's faculty advisor, with the goal to publish that year's volume of the journal.

In summer 2026, *ARCHIVE* will publish its 29th volume, led by Editor-in-Chief Mia Pyle. Pyle was joined by editors Clarissa Brown, Eva Bushman, Juliet Chin, Anika Feinsilver, Arwen Lyons, Emmett Robinson, Arthur Ruiz, Thomas Sime, and Haleigh Smith and advised by Professor Elizabeth Lapina. *ARCHIVE* receives over 100 submissions from undergraduate students from across the nation and beyond each year. Working in teams, the editors read, evaluate, re-read, and rank dozens of papers, a process that Pyle—a Junior majoring in History and English—describes as one of the most time-intensive parts of the experience. The editors provide detailed feedback, justify selection or non-selection, and determine together which pieces will make the final edited volume.

As Pyle explains, "It's not just about whether something is good or not, it's about explaining why and making sure the author gets the time and attention their work deserves." Lauren Kelly, 2025 Editor-in-Chief and a senior graduating with degrees in History and Biology, notes the uniqueness and prestige of the *ARCHIVE* experience, "We're a cut above other undergraduate journals… no one else has the same process we do. Most of the time, they publish them as they are—which is excellent—but there is something very collaborative about what *ARCHIVE* does."

The most notable thing about *ARCHIVE* is not just the hands-on, rigorous process of reviewing, editing, and publishing—it's the student-run engine of collaboration and quality. "By



undergraduates, for undergraduates," says Kelly. "It feels incredible to contribute to our own academic ecosystem." The journal itself has had a profound impact on the editors themselves. Both Pyle and Kelly described *ARCHIVE* as one of the most influential experiences in their development as students, writers, and readers, pushing them to think more critically about things like argumentation, evidence, and purpose.

*ARCHIVE* also offers development in leadership and communication. As Editor-in-Chief this year, Pyle managed a large team of student editors, choosing editors to hire, coordinating timelines, delegating assignments, and making important—and sometimes difficult—decisions. At *ARCHIVE*, students gain important new skills, including critical review, adhering to tight timelines, multilateral communication, and administrative fundamentals. "This is such an important class because I applied all the technical things I learned in History into a physical project. The Humanities have a negative stigma about 'What are you going to do with that?' *ARCHIVE* shows that you can turn it into something really cool."

*ARCHIVE* remains deeply collaborative, as each editor navigates new spaces of History that may be unfamiliar to them. "We aren't necessarily professionals in the subject we're publishing on. It is the most complex process, because of that," says Pyle. "But working together in a short time period and making one goal—it's really incredible."

Faculty advisors provide guidance and expertise when needed, but the journal's direction is driven mostly by the students themselves. As a result, *ARCHIVE* fosters a unique intellectual community that allows students to work together in a professional environment that builds both independence and mentorship. As *ARCHIVE* continues to grow, both editors hope to see it expand its reach into publishing more work, experimenting with new formats like art and music, and continuing to define the sphere of what undergraduate scholarship looks like. For the students involved, however, its impact is clear: *ARCHIVE* is more than just a journal. It is an experience that truly transforms how students write, think, and see history.



*ARCHIVE Editorial Board 2026*

### *Notes from the Advisor | Prof. Elizabeth Lapina*

"In the first few weeks, they spent countless hours reading hundreds of pages of articles on a wide variety of topics. The students were good at both making their case and listening to one another when selecting articles to publish. The discussions were amicable and productive, and the group was happy with the results. The harder part yet was working with the authors with firmness (changes had to be met) and deadlines had to be met) and appreciation of their work.

After choosing the best articles, the editors discussed and revised each article in pairs or small groups, making sure that the argument made sense, that it was backed with evidence and that it was easy to understand for readers unfamiliar with the topic. This exercise made the editors better writers not only of history papers, but of whatever texts they will have to write in their future careers."

# Mosse Teaching Fellowship Spotlight:
# Teaching "Sports and Violence in the Middle Ages"

**by Christopher Herde (Ph.D. candidate)**





Thanks to the support of the George L. Mosse Program, I had the opportunity to design and teach UW's first-ever course on the history of sport in the Middle Ages during the Spring 2026 semester. Twenty-eight students joined me for what ultimately became an incredible tour of the stadiums, gambling halls, and polo-fields of the medieval world. Over fifteen weeks we read chariot fan graffiti from the 6th century; debated the legality of chess according to 9th-century Islamic law; played a 14th-century form of Italian street tennis in the courtyard of the Humanities building; and decoded the score sheets from 16th-century jousting tournaments. We tracked the movement of falcons and falconry across the Middle East and Europe and read through the earliest Spanish accounts of the Mesoamerican ballgame of *Ullamaliztli*.

Every week we examined not only a new sport but a new sporting culture, examining how athletes, fans, and their critics reacted and responded to one another, to their neighbors, and to the legacies of their predecessors. We addressed big questions about the universality of play, the ways in which communities define themselves through games, and the morality of leisure. We barely scratched the surface of these questions during the semester, but I am confident that these students will carry on exploring these ideas long after this class has ended.

The students did a phenomenal job connecting the course material to their own experiences as athletes, historians, scientists, fans, and even sports-cynics. For example, they engaged in tough conversations about violence in entertainment and the gamification of warfare. Their final papers were incredibly creative and a blast to read. It turns out grading is a lot of fun when you're jumping between a history of Japanese falconry, an analysis of modern British fox-hunting controversies, and a comparison of Roman gladiators to the WWE.

I overheard students talking about how surprised they were to be enjoying a paper-writing assignment, and others complaining that the semester wasn't long enough to explore their topics as far as they wanted. They were enthusiastic adopters of a hands-on learning approach, often staying late after the game-recreation classes to experiment with their own interpretations of the given sport's rules and sources. They regularly asked questions that I hadn't even considered and approached every "I don't know" with a chorus of inventive proposals and ideas. What instructor could ask for more?

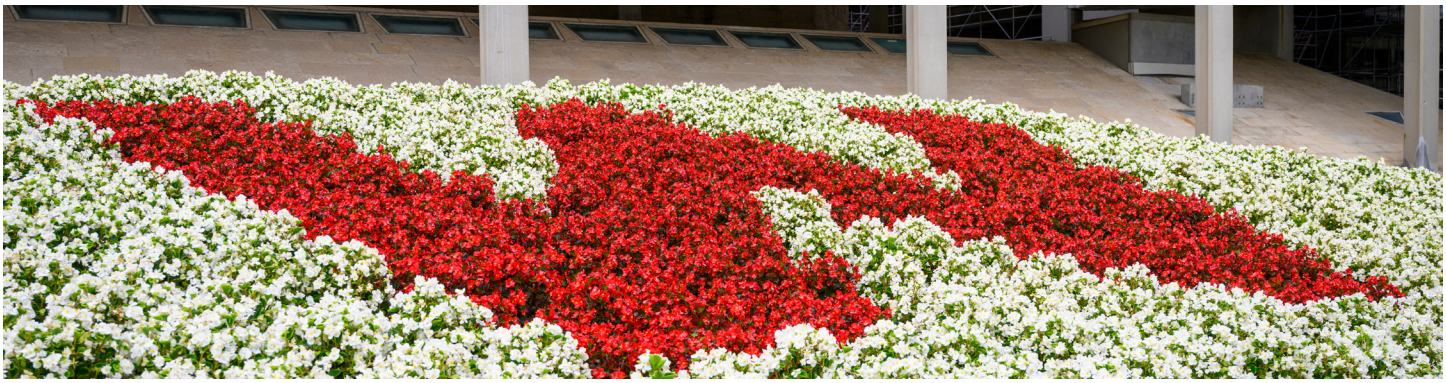


Photo by Althea Dotzour / UW-Madison

## *Selected Graduate Student Awards and Fellowships, 2025-2026*

**Deep Acharya**—United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Summer Residency

**James Barnes**—History Department Capstone Award in Teaching

**Maddy Culpepper**—History Department Innovation in Teaching Award

**Ludwig Decke**—United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Summer Residency

**Yadhav Deerpaul**—IRIS Summer Fieldwork Award, summer 2026

**Baiyi Du**—Levi Prize for Outstanding Second-Year Paper

**Patrick Eickman**—WISC Fellowship

**Ana Fernandez**—History Department Early Excellence in Teaching Award

**Jack Hynick**—Baensch Prize in Wisconsin History

**Marcus Kelly**—History Department Early Excellence in Teaching Award

**Ik Kittisenee**—Liebniz Institute of European History Fellowship

**Emily Lobenstein**—UW Capstone TA Award

**Shatrunjay Mall**—Doris. G. Quinn Fellowship

**Kyle Miron**—L&S Teaching Mentor

**Tomás Pino**—History Department Early Excellence in Teaching Award

**Elizabeth Price**—History Department Early Excellence in Teaching Award

**Larissa Reddit**—History Department Innovation in Teaching Award

**JJ Reynolds-Strange**—History Department Excellence in Teaching Award

**Sofia Rivera**—Tinker-Nave Short-Term Field Research Grant

**Mariana Sarkis Olson**—Conference on Latin American History James R. Scobie Award

**Alex Scheepens**—Schrag Prize for Outstanding Papers in German Jewish History

**John Tobin**—History Department Excellence in Teaching Award

**Emily Tran**—Paul Glad Prize

**Jade Wang**—UW Early Excellence TA Award

**Emma Wathen**—2025 American Association for the History of Medicine Shryock Medal

**Yuji Xu**—History Department Excellence in Teaching Award; Holtz Center for Science & Technology Studies Research Fellowship; Association for Asian Studies Conference F. Hilary Conroy Award

**Jieon Yoo**—History Department Excellence in Teaching Award; Samuel Flagg Bemis Dissertation Grant; Northeastern History Graduate Student Association Global History Paper Prize

photos by ArrowStar Photography














**The Department of History Celebrates Graduate Commencement**

A doctoral hooding ceremony and dinner celebration was held at the Fluno Center on May 9, 2026 to honor History and HSMT PhD graduates. Congratulations!

# *Ph.D.s Awarded, 2025-2026*

**Isobel (Ashby) Bloom** – US/North American History
*"Organizing for Life: Anti-Abortion Activism in the United States, 1980s-1990s"*
Professor Judith Houck, advisor

**Selenay Aydin** – Medieval European History
*""The 'Other' of the West: Venetian and Genoese Construction of the Turkish Identity (1220-1453)" "*
Professor Karl Shoemaker, advisor

**Zada Ballew** – US/North American History
*"A Company of Kin: The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians and the Business of Tribal Nationalism"*
Professor Stephen Kantrowitz, advisor

**Abigail Corcoran** – US/North American History
*"As the Twig is Bent, the Tree is Inclined:" Juvenile Reform and Benevolent Societies in the Antebellum United States*
Professor April Haynes, advisor

**Ethell Gershengorin** – European History
*"The Making of a Healthy Jewish Nation: Women, Children, and OZE's Jewish Medical Autonomism Project, 1912-1939"*
Professor Francine Hirsch, advisor

**Michael Kaelin** – US/North American History
*"Selected Lives: Immigrant Community and the Origins of Federal Immigration Control in New York, 1847-1882"*
Professor Stephen Kantrowitz, advisor

**Shatrunjay Mall** – IPS: South Asian & East Asian History
*"Indian Anti-Colonialism and Japan's Empire: Pan-Asianism in the Liberal Imperial Order, ca. 1900-1960"*
Professor Viren Murthy, advisor
Professor Mou Banerjee, co-advisor
Professor Louise Young, co-advisor

**Samm Newton** - History of Science, Medicine, and Technology (HSMT)
*"Expert Enclosure: Submarine Knowledge and Territory in the Gulf of Mexico and in Global Ocean Governance, 1930-2000"*
Professor Emeritus Gregg Mitman, co-advisor
Professor Elizabeth Hennessy, co-advisor

**Sara Paris** – European History
*"Documenting Crime, Narrating Transgression: Gender, Honor, and Justice in Sixteenth-Century Sienese Records and the Italian Novella"*
Professor Karl Shoemaker, advisor

**Alexandra Pasqualone** – Joint Degree: EPS & US/North American History
*"MidAmerica Meets Mideast: Education and Arab American Identity Formation in Metro Detroit, 1948-2001"*
Professor Walter Stern, co-advisor
Professor William Reese, co-advisor

**Tamara Polyakova** – European History
*"Russian Civil War in Karelian Villages Viewed Through the Lens of Hungerzss"*
Professor Francine Hirsch, advisor

**Ye Lin** - East Asian History
*"Tenko: Anti-Communist Revolutions and Socialist Ends"*
Professor Viren Murthy, advisor

**Suzanne (Rubinstein) Linot** – History of Science, Medicine, and Technology (HSMT)
*"The Body as a Marvelous Machine: Body Weight, Health, and Beauty in Argentina, 1930s-1960s"*
Professor Pablo Gómez, advisor

**Suzanna Schulert** – History of Science, Medicine, and Technology (HSMT)
*"The Personality with Which We Have to Deal: St. Elizabeth Hospital and the New Psychiatry, 1903-1937"*
Professor Judith Houck, advisor

**Emily Tran** – Joint Degree: US/North American History & EPS
*"American Reckonings: Confronting and Repressing the Racist Past and Present, 1968-1998"*
Professor Walter Stern, co-advisor
Professor Adam Nelson, co-advisor

**Patrick Travens** – European History
*"Imperial Jacobins: Colonialism, Revolution, and Local Politics in France's Atlantic Ports (1789-1795)"*
Professor Pablo Gómez, co-advisor
Professor Emeritus Suzanne Desan, co-advisor

**Jorge E. Trinidad Espinoza** – Latin American and Caribbean History
*"African Inspirations within Cuba's Audiovisual Interface"*
Professor Pablo Gómez, advisor

**Yacov Zohn** – European History
*"Tactical Representation: Political Goals in the Soviet National Soccer Team (1952-1968)"*
Professor Francine Hirsch, advisor
Professor Emeritus David McDonald, co-advisor



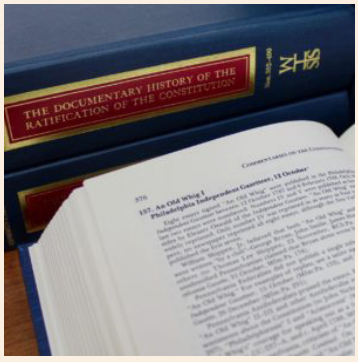
photo by ArrowStar Photography



photo by ArrowStar Photography

## The Center for the Study of the American Constitution

The Center for the Study of the American Constitution (CSAC) is a non-profit, non-partisan center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Founded in 1981 as an outgrowth of the Ratification Project—a major documentary editing project that publishes The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights series—CSAC has been involved in outreach activities relating to the Constitution, including opportunities for teachers and federal and state judges and community groups. With the strong support of the History Department, CSAC is currently in the governance process to move to the College of Letters & Science and report directly to the Dean, which will allow it to flourish in its next iteration.



# *Join the Madison History Club!*

The Madison History Club brings together UW–Madison alumni and people across Madison who are curious about the past and eager to learn and discuss history with others.

Through public lectures, book discussions, roundtables, and film screenings, the Madison History Club connects the community with the innovative research and teaching going on in the Department of History. Members guide the club's program of events. All are welcome, and we hope you will join us!

Visit the department calendar – https://history.wisc.edu/upcoming-events/ – to explore all of the History Department's upcoming public events, including History Club programs. Video recordings of some Madison History Club events are available to view at the Department of History's YouTube channel: @uwmadisonhistory.

To learn more, visit: https://history.wisc.edu/madison-history-club/




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## Stay Connected with the History Department!

Please follow us on social media and check out our website for department events and upcoming events.

history.wisc.edu

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UW–Madison Department of History

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