

Perspectives on History

The Newsmagazine of the American Historical Association | 55: 5 | May 2017

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Newsmagazine of the American Historical Association

Volume 55, No. 5 ♦ May 2017

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On the Cover

Historians gather evidence from periods of social, cultural, and political ferment to understand how change happened in the past. In this issue, David Pace and Andrew K. Koch, both experts on teaching and learning, assess where our discipline stands in these areas and where it could go. Pace and Koch believe that rigorous, meaningful history education should be available to all students but question its current direction. If we are in the midst of a storm—or heading into ominous waters—teaching and learning should be uppermost in our minds.

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Perspectives on History

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Townhouse Notes

Professional envy—wanting what another person has—pervades our community, silently. Although several academic blog posts and online magazine articles about envy turn up with a Google search, nonacademic writers have explored it with far less hesitation, as Theresa McPhail pointed out in *Vitae* last year. Envy penetrates our ranks, but its invisibility makes measuring its depth impossible. Nor, really, can we comprehend its history.

In the absence of much direct evidence, historical practice turns us to context. Like people in most employment sectors today, historians work in climes of scarcity. With what seems like glee, some government officials demand obscene belt-tightening in public resources, including higher education and other knowledge-producing institutions. Working conditions decline within and outside academe, as do employment prospects. In higher education, scholars without the possibility of tenure often have little job security, but even those who have tenure fear its demise. Ideally, every grant, every prize, every book contract, every positive journal review leads to professional advancement and other tangible rewards. But in an environment of scarcity, there might seem to be

only so many of these opportunities, for scholars in fields large and small.

Envy can complement the competitiveness that comes naturally to many seeking advanced degrees. Competition isn't a bad thing—it can spur ambition and creativity—but it's not the same as competitiveness. In a discipline that still bases success largely on individual achievement, individual loss can lead to a gnawing feeling that a peer is getting something you deserve in equal measure. (That just might be the case.) In other words, envy can come from external circumstances, the way the discipline is set up, and what we experience inside ourselves, too.

Prescriptions for therapy or mindfulness or yoga or medication or more sleep or gentle tea to overcome professional envy would be inappropriate. Individuals might be able to overcome it in ways that work for them. Our community—considering its smallness and somewhat insular nature—won't likely be able to address it directly, but when we think about what happens to the discipline in hostile climes, we can perhaps give ourselves a break. Envy is not a productive emotion, but the conditions that provoke it are real.

—Allison Miller, editor

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the editor:

I am amazed at the editorial staff's ability to discern the ethnicities, sexual orientations, and backgrounds (region, socioeconomic strata, etc.) of the ladies and gentlemen in the photograph of the 1934 annual meeting such that they can proclaim them as lacking diversity ("On the Cover," February 2017). I expect simplistic, racist analysis from my less skilled students, but not from *Perspectives*. For shame.

Williamjames Hull Hoffer
Seton Hall University

Allison Miller responds:

It's no secret that at its founding in 1884, the AHA was composed of white men of Anglo-Protestant, patrician backgrounds. Additionally, our pre-publication research on the photograph, picturing a 1934 dinner celebrating



The photograph of the AHA "Founder's Banquet" (1934), which ran on the cover of the February 2017 issue of Perspectives

the founding of the Association, showed that the people at the head table were all white. All the women at the table were spouses of the men, leading one to surmise that those pictured were heterosexual (although as Professor Hoffer hints, plenty of LGBTQ people have been in straight marriages).

This spatial arrangement reflects another well-known fact: women were visible in the profession mostly as wives. The business of the Association was largely conducted unofficially at a

men's retreat convened by J. Franklin Jameson, pictured at the table. Women AHA members were not permitted to attend the retreat or the notorious "smokers"—clubby social occasions at the annual meeting that doubled as job interviews. For many years, too, the AHA leadership was concentrated mostly among men from elite East Coast universities, leading to the formation of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association (today the Organization of American Historians) in 1907.

Finally, the pipeline: most of these elite universities maintained informal quotas on undergraduate admissions for whites from religious, ethnic, and class backgrounds that didn't match existing student bodies, making it difficult for these minorities (especially Jews) to penetrate the ranks of graduate schools likely

to produce AHA leadership. Of the guests at the table, only two had "ethnic" names: the British Orientalist De Lacy O'Leary and the Russian archaeologist and ancient historian Michael (Mikhail) Rostovtzeff, both of whom were born and educated outside of the United States.

Given these facts, it's not at all "racist" to say that the 1934 Founders Dinner celebrated exclusivity in the profession: a tradition of exclusions by race, class, ethnicity, gender, and religion. There is no "shame" in acknowledging facts, however unflattering. We can only hope they are facts no more and continue to work toward broader inclusivity.

To the editor:

The AHA and *Perspectives* constantly cover the fact that there is a decline in history majors and undergraduate history enrollments across the country. Frankly, this has been an issue we've all been reading about for many years now.

We all know that there is a decline in interest in the history major by many college students given the push by colleges, school districts, and all levels of government to ensure students are learning 21st-century skills and meeting the needs of the new job market, often through STEM majors. We've also been reading more and more about alternate job prospects for PhDs and what other aspects of work they can do outside the collegiate system. However, as a secondary educator and a learning specialist at a local college, I have another concern: the Association is not casting a wide enough net to reach its members who may not hold a PhD but still have a general interest in the Association and the perpetuation of the study of history for the benefits it confers on students of all ages.

More needs to be done to involve more secondary educators who teach global history, geography, US history and government, economics, Participation in Government and International Baccalaureate programs, and, of course, the AP courses, which range from world history to human geography and everything in between.

The Association has made a good start, by including profiles of people in professions outside the college system and covering ongoing issues in the AP US History exam. But more needs to be done. To increase membership and awareness about the AHA, and the issues and concerns that all historians have, the Association should extend outreach efforts to include more secondary educators, both within the AHA and through the conversations the AHA has externally. Has the AHA reached out to such associations as the National Council for the Social Studies and its state affiliates to expand membership and gain another perspective on history education?

Everyone, consider the professional development secondary educators could gain by collaborating with professors and communicating with each other to minimize the gap between the senior year of high school and the freshman year of college and the skills needed to succeed in a college/university atmosphere. Think of the new teaching methods secondary educators could share with college professors to help enhance teaching methods and methodology to make class more interactive, as well as to share information about differentiated technology, technology use in the classroom, Bloom's Taxonomy, and the methodology of critical thinking and metacognition to help our students excel at a higher level.

The AHA is taking the appropriate steps to be more inclusive of the larger audience of historians and educators, but more should be done!

Emil Moussa

Byram Hills High School/Manhattanville College

Elizabeth Lehfeldt (vice president, AHA Teaching Division) responds:

The AHA values input from members about how it can better support the teaching

of history from K–12 through doctoral education. This work is central to our mission and has expanded considerably over the past decade. The AHA has worked closely with the National Council for the Social Studies, including work on both the construction of the C3 framework and the advisory board of National History Day. We have partnered recently with the College Board to sponsor symposia about the three AP history exams. Educators have the option of adding a subscription to The History Teacher to their AHA membership, and we are actively working to provide resources for educators from all levels at our annual meeting and on our website. This year's annual meeting included a K–12 workshop co-sponsored by the College Board and eight sessions specifically directed at K–12 educators. The Association also regularly advocates on behalf of K–12 educators. Most recently, the Association protested a Mexican American studies textbook submitted to the Texas State Board of Education to meet the state's new Mexican American studies standard in high schools. The text contained many inaccuracies and was not based on rigorous historical research. We successfully lobbied to have it removed from consideration.

We welcome suggestions from members on how to continue to expand this work.



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Check out the AHA website for resources on **five skills** you can develop in graduate school to shape your career path.

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- Collaboration
- Quantitative Literacy
- Intellectual Self-Confidence
- Digital Literacy

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Race, Class, and History in the Trump Era

Tyler Stovall

One of the striking aspects of American politics during the era of Donald Trump's presidential campaign and administration has been the popular focus on white working-class voters and working-class whites in general. Trump's strong support from non-college-educated whites, a designation that maps imperfectly onto social class, has prompted a new level of interest in these individuals and communities. In particular, commentators have argued that their experiences have led to a new populist revolt against immigration, neoliberal globalization, and center-left politics. Historians, sociologists, journalists, and others have published tomes on white working-class life and politics, exploring the

reasons for their anger, and Trump's victory has given these studies new prominence.¹ In a nation that rarely discusses the politics of social class, this is noteworthy. Moreover, the emphasis on the *white* working class suggests that Americans are only comfortable talking about this issue when it is racialized and intersects with identity politics. This image of the working class is also frequently gendered, focusing on men working in factories rather than, say, waitresses or day care providers.

Many scholars have written about race, class, and the intersection of these two social realities in America and the world, and it is worth considering some of this scholarship in the light of contemporary politics. The modern historiography of race and class

mirrors, to an important extent, contemporary political concerns about the relationship between the two. The contrast between those on the left who champion anti-discrimination and identity politics, and those on the populist right who condemn cultural elites in the name of white working people, has its parallels in historiographical discussions of the relationship between racial identities and class structures, between people of color and workers—too often considered mutually exclusive. Efforts to continue discussion of this crucial relationship and push it beyond academia can offer historians a positive way to contribute to contemporary politics.

Discussions of class in general, and the “working class” in particular, have a long and



Gage Skidmore/Flickr/CC BY-SA 2.0

Donald Trump appears at Mesa Gateway Airport in Mesa, Arizona, in December 2015.

complex history in American life.² How does one define class: by types of employment, income levels, levels of net worth, educational levels, or consumer patterns and other cultural frameworks? Often viewing the term “working class” as a suspicious referent for Marxism, many Americans have preferred instead to label themselves, and American society as a whole, middle class. As a result, even unions frequently proclaim their attachment to middle-class values and note their role in the construction of middle-class society after the Second World War. By the 1960s, invocation of the working class seemed to be disappearing, as the major social conflict in American society appeared to be between the middle class (or “silent majority”) and the underclass, both defined in racial terms. When I once taught Carlos Bulosan’s great novel of Filipino working-class life *America Is in the Heart* (1946) to a senior seminar, the students largely considered it a portrait of an ethnic underclass rather than a memoir of working-class life. The renaissance of the concept of the white working class during the Trump era speaks both to the rising inequality of American society, the fact that working people do not enjoy the same opportunities their parents benefited from during the postwar economic expansion, and to the image of white workers as oppressed, not so much by capital but by cultural elites and coddled minorities. This new focus on class reasserts and reinforces the idea that class conflict is to a significant degree racial conflict.

In the historiography of modern America, it is hardly possible to separate studies of race and of class. Both social and cultural history have frequently given pride of place to social and political distinctions grounded in race, class, and gender, and the interactions between them. Feminist historiography, for example, has devoted a great deal of attention to the ways in which skin color both unites and divides women, and much of the scholarship on racialized groups considers their positions in labor market structures. Many historians have also considered the relationship between class and gender. To take one example, Ruth Milkman has argued that the role of women in unions has largely been overlooked by both labor and women’s historians.³ The rise of whiteness studies since the early 1990s constitutes one of the most important recent historiographical interventions in the interplay of race and class. Historians have also used Kimberlé Crenshaw’s

concept of intersectionality to explore this relationship.⁴ As a result, today a serious historian cannot write about working-class life in America without considering its racial and gendered dimensions and fault lines.

At the same time, the discussion of the racialized nature of class in modern historiography has taken place in a context of post-Marxism and a retreat from the study of labor. Over time, historians have moved from a critique of labor history focused only on unions and socialist parties to a rejection of social class as not just the central determinant of social structure but as significant in general. In my own field, the history of modern France, this shift has been especially notable. The great social history studies of the 1970s and 1980s, in which American historians of France made their mark on the field, have largely given way to a new focus on colonial and postcolonial history. Whereas the former often focused on class and working-class formation and consciousness, the latter have tended to emphasize racial identities in both colonies and metropole. While the older model of social history rarely dealt with questions of racial difference, it is also true that much of the new cultural history of colonialism often neglects issues of labor and class. I recently attended an excellent panel discussion on the history of colonial labor in France during the First World War, and was struck by the extent to which the presenters approached the topic as a study in colonialism rather than labor. It is worth noting that the same is not true of French historians of France, who continue to write extensively about the social history of labor.

There are distinct parallels between the historiography of race and class, and the current debates over white working-class politics in America. Those who focus on the latter group as key to the victory of Donald Trump frequently accuse American progressives of neglecting class issues in favor of a focus on race and gender discrimination, of giving greater importance to affirmative action and gender-neutral bathrooms than living wages. At the same time, much of the new commentary on working-class life not only privileges whiteness but also embraces a kind of identity politics. Titles like *White Trash* and *The New Minority* strongly suggest a perspective grounded less in socioeconomic class analysis and more in cultural studies of oppressed social groups. To take one hot-button issue, current discussions of

immigration often deal more with cultural and political fears of newcomers, and less with the impact of immigration on working-class living standards.

Cultural approaches to questions of race, class, and gender have added immeasurably to historians’ understandings of difference, both past and present. The challenges posed by globalization, rising inequality, and the new populism underscore that these levels of difference interact in a variety of ways, and such intersectionality remains key to understanding contemporary politics. In the era of Donald Trump, the importance of declining working-class standards of living cannot be overstated, but one must also show how they affect not just whites but peoples of color as well. References to the “good old days” or “making America great again” (calls for the intervention of historical reasoning if there ever were ones) should be understood both as reactions to increasing diversity and to the very real decline in middle-class incomes since the late 20th century. Since the 1970s both racial tolerance and income inequality seem to have grown dramatically, and, by considering this issue in historical perspective, historians should play a key role in understanding and explaining why (or why not) this is so. The stakes, social, cultural, and political, could not be higher.

Tyler Stovall is president of the AHA.

Notes

1. Nancy Isenberg, *White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America* (New York: Viking, 2016); J. D. Vance, *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis* (New York: Harper, 2016); Arlie Russell Hochschild, *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right* (New York: New Press, 2016); Justin Gest, *The New Minority: White Working Class Politics in an Age of Immigration and Inequality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
2. See Nelson Lichtenstein, “Class Unconsciousness: Stop Using ‘Middle Class’ to Depict the Labor Movement,” *New Labor Forum*, May 23, 2012.
3. Ruth Milkman, ed., *Women, Work, and Protest: A Century of US Women’s Labor History* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985).
4. Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1991).



“Balancing” the Books

History Education Should Teach Students Complex Variation in Perspective

James Grossman

I generally see government officials’ interest in history in the same way that I see broader public engagement with it—as a good thing. Every year, the National Humanities Alliance sends a contingent of humanists and humanities supporters to Capitol Hill to inform and update legislators about the activities of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, programs in international education, and other humanities-related work. We encourage support for these vital organizations and look forward to meetings with staff of members on both sides of the aisle whose “boss” (the preferred term on the Hill) has a reputation as an avid reader of history. We might disagree on specific issues—including historical interpretations and the quality of different books—but I appreciate the give-and-take with our discipline and the acknowledgment that history and historical thinking are important elements within public culture.

But any healthy interest that government officials have in history should not translate into attempts to dictate the content of what scholars teach in the classroom or learn from the sources. The AHA recently collaborated with historians in Texas to help the state’s board of education reject a deeply flawed textbook whose disdain for facts complemented—indeed facilitated—its generally racist demeanor. A few years ago, we denounced Virginia’s use (quickly discontinued) of a fourth-grade textbook that pointed to thousands of African Americans purportedly volunteering to help defend the Confederacy. In both cases, the texts were prepared without the participation of professional historians. In too many states, decisions about what is taught in history classrooms are made by non-professionals whose fealty is to an ideology rather than to sound disciplinary practice. We have input only when we insist on it.

Hence, our letter to the governor of Arkansas in April, appended below and sent after a leg-



Stuart Seeger/Flickr/CC BY 2.0

The Arkansas State Capitol

islator introduced the following amendment to the state’s public education code:

6-16-149. Prohibited course materials.

A public school district or an open-enrollment public charter school shall not include in its curriculum or course materials for a class or program of study any book or other material:

(1) Authored by Howard Zinn from the years 1959 through 2010; and

(2) Concerning the books or other materials under subdivision (1) of this section.

At the urging of more practical censors, the legislator added this qualifier three weeks later:

(b) A public school district or an open-enrollment public charter school that includes a book or other material under subsection (a) of this section in its curriculum

or other course materials shall present the book or other material in a balanced manner that considers other opinions and points of view.

This might seem reasonable. But to me it smacks of a double standard: why require balance for some assigned historical materials but not others? Moreover, the concept of “balance” in this context is itself complex and controversial, and I will leave an extended discussion of it to a future column. Various controversies, from creationism (as a “point of view” appropriate to public school science education) to the stubborn persistence of discredited (and racist) views of slavery and Reconstruction point to the limitations of “balance” as a workable approach to controversial issues in any context. History education should teach students the difference between simplistic dichotomies and complex variation in perspective.

This is not the first time the AHA has encountered unqualified state officials presuming to assess the quality of historical scholarship. As my letter to Governor Hutchinson states, the AHA will provide any state commission, legislature, education department, or other entity with the names of qualified historians to act as peer reviewers for any aspect of a history curriculum. The AHA does not stand to gain materially from such advice. What prompts us to act is not profit but the 1889 congressional charter that established our organization “for the promotion of historical study.” We owe it to our students and members, to the taxpayers, and to future citizens to provide professional oversight of our discipline.

Letter to Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson

April 4, 2017

Governor Asa Hutchinson
State Capitol Room 250
500 Woodlane Ave.
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Governor Hutchinson,

It has come to the attention of the American Historical Association that the agenda of the Education Committee of the Arkansas General Assembly includes HB 1834, which would prohibit any Arkansas public school “from including in its curriculum or course materials for a program of study books or any other material authorized by or concerning Howard Zinn.” I hope that you will advise your allies in the legislature to oppose this egregious micromanagement of the work of Arkansas teachers, in addition to the intrusion into their classrooms and curricula.

The AHA is the largest association of professional historians in the world. Our 13,000 members include college professors, secondary school teachers, advanced students, and public historians working in museums, national parks, and innumerable other venues. The professional standards we articulate and promote are cited frequently inside and outside the academy. These standards include the participation of professional historians in the development

of guidelines or requirements for history education. Just as the state of Arkansas would surely reject the legislative prescription of medical texts, or specific athletic practice routines, without consulting professionals in those disciplines, it should not make decisions about the teaching of history without comparable consultation. The American Historical Association encourages the state to step lightly in its prescription of educational content and to consult with professional historians before issuing instructions as to the details of history education, whether in the public schools or other venues such as state parks or monuments.

The central issue regarding this legislation is not the quality of Professor Zinn’s scholarship. Assessments of his work vary among professional scholars, and the AHA would be happy to recommend highly qualified peer reviewers in Arkansas to participate in any aspect of curriculum development, design, or review. The Texas Board of Education, for example, has recently expressed its gratitude for our assistance in their textbook review process. We can offer names of historians teaching at all education levels and working in various institutions beyond the classroom.

I hope that the bill never reaches your desk. If it does, I strongly urge a veto.

Sincerely,
James Grossman
Executive Director

James Grossman is executive director of the AHA. He tweets @JimGrossmanAHA.

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The Quick Rise of The Slow Professor

Resisting the “Culture of Speed” in the University

Kritika Agarwal

As summer approaches, so do social media updates about not accomplishing enough work before the end of the term. Conversations turn to the merits of various summer writing regimens, with plans for actual vacations met with “Oh, you must be so disciplined in your work.” Academics face stress and overwork throughout the year, with schedules that aren’t as flexible as they seem and vacations in name only. One analysis likens the level of faculty burnout to that of health professionals. The modern university demands more and more in the way of publication, assessment, evaluation, and service, while cutting salaries, departmental budgets, and time available for research, writing, and professional development.

Enter *The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy*, by Canadian English professors Maggie Berg and Barbara K. Seeber. Emblazoned with a snail—the mascot of the Slow Food movement—the book advocates surviving academia’s culture of speed and efficiency by going Slow. Calling themselves Slow Professors, Berg and Seeber write, “We believe that adopting the principles of Slow into our professional practice is an effective way to alleviate work stress, preserve humanistic education, and resist the corporate university.”

With over 15,000 copies sold since it was published last year, *The Slow Professor* has become the top seller for the University of Toronto Press. Demand for the book has been so high that the press has struggled to keep it in stock. For many readers, the book comes at the right time. While some credit it with promoting the conversation about the corporatization of the university, others see it as granting them agency to engage in more humane modes of being within the workplace of higher education.

Since the late 1980s, the Slow Food movement has encouraged an ethos of care, pleasure, and a concern for the environment—the opposite of fast food, its adher-



Pixabay

With the snail as its mascot, the Slow movement challenges destructive industrialization and the obsession with speed and efficiency.

ents say. Emphasizing an unhurried lifestyle, Slow Food removes food from an industrial context and returns it to the human. Slow, as a philosophy, now extends to other facets of life: Slow education, Slow fashion, and even Slow science. A new incarnation, *The Slow Professor* takes the “corporate university” as its opponent.

A corporate university, as much of the literature on the subject—including Frank Donoghue’s *The Last Professors: The Corporate University and the Fate of the Humanities* (2008) and Bill Reading’s *The University in Ruins* (1997)—describes it, treats students like customers, rewards research that has an economic payoff or measurable results, and promotes the casualization of teaching labor while increasing administrative bloat. “Rebranding scholars as key players in the knowledge economy,” Berg and Seeber write, “the corporate universi-

ty emphasizes instrumentalism and marketability.” Because humanistic education and scholarship are not always quantifiable, their status within the university has become increasingly precarious. “I’m not going to get a grant to study Jane Austen from a corporation,” said Seeber in an interview with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation recently.

The reasoning appeals to many professors. Bill Caraher, a historian at the University of North Dakota, says that the “assembly line has become a dominant model” for the university, with “dehumanizing effects” on students as well as faculty. “Everything has to be quantified, everything from student learning outcomes to number of articles published,” says Caraher. This “accounting culture,” as Berg and Seeber refer to it, rings true for other professors, too. Cynthia Wu, associate professor of transnational studies

at the University at Buffalo, says, “If a task or some kind of job cannot be turned into a line on a CV, or something that can be included on an annual report, then I don’t think that the people in power regard it all that favorably.” “There’s a lot of pressure to produce,” adds Yovanna Pineda, associate professor of history at the University of Central Florida, and it extends to all facets of a professor’s professional life, including research, teaching, and service.

What Berg and Seeber call a “culture of speed” compounds academic pressure to increase productivity (by working on weekends, for example) and manage time down to the last second (writing at 4 a.m., before the children wake up). These expectations, Berg and Seeber write, not only lead to stress, mental health problems, and the feeling of time poverty, they also stifle creativity. The corporate university’s desire for quick outcomes and publications often comes at the cost of the time, thought, and struggle required to produce deep humanistic inquiry. As Wu says, universities are not “attuned to the calm and the quiet that is needed to foster intellectual life.”

Berg and Seeber look to the principles of Slow as a solution. “Slow professors,” they write, “act with purpose, taking the time for deliberation, reflection, and dialogue, cultivating emotional and intellectual resilience.” Slow means practicing a “pedagogy of pleasure” so that both teachers and students take joy in teaching and learning, and conducting research that is grounded in understanding and reflection. They urge readers to take simple steps to incorporate Slow in their daily lives: going for a walk, turning off digital distractions, taking the time to read, entering a class mindfully. “We see individual practice as a site of resistance,” they write.

This advice has encouraged many to make small, positive changes in their personal and professional lives. Jennifer Barker-Devine, associate professor of history at Illinois College, says that the book has helped her become more deliberate about the tasks she takes on and to reassess her priorities by asking, “What do I really need to be doing, what are my obligations at this moment?” Answering that question, she says, may mean putting a research project on the back burner when midterms are due as opposed to worrying about competition or trying to

“get ahead.” For Pineda, who made several changes in her life after reading the book, the philosophy boils down to joy. To lower her stress levels, for example, she joined a yoga club and a gym. “The philosophy that I took from it is to slow down, stop doing what you’re doing, and do something joyful because that’s what life essentially is,” she says. “It’s not staying in your office until midnight.”

Some also see the Slow movement as a challenge to rethink the way they teach. Barker-Devine says that as a young female assistant professor, her courses were extremely content driven. “I would rush through lectures” and make “my classes as hard as I possibly could” in an attempt to appear rigorous, she says. Now she focuses more on the needs of the students and what they should know. She points to the AHA Tuning project as something that’s made a difference in her teaching. “What’s interesting about the Tuning project is that content is not a priority. And I remember being

*Demand for the book has been
so high that the press has
struggled to keep it in stock.*

shocked by that,” she says, noting Tuning’s emphasis on critical thinking skills like “reading, writing, analysis, speaking.” While Barker-Devine embarked on this process before she read *The Slow Professor*, she says the book helped her “justify” the pedagogical changes she’s made.

For Caraher, Slow principles are most applicable in research. A scholar of ancient history and an archaeologist, Caraher is a proponent of “slow archaeology.” “The goal of slow archaeology,” he wrote in the *North Dakota Quarterly*, “is to find ways to consider critically the impulse toward efficiency, standardization, and fragmentation.” Being Slow therefore can mean pausing to consider the use of technology and digital tools in research. For example, the ability to “search vast quantities of scholarly literature” in digital databases, he says, has reduced the likelihood of serendipitous discovery. “A Slow historian,” then, Caraher says, “is becoming more

critical and more aware of the role of efficiency, the role of productivity, and the language of industrial practice.”

It is easy to find critiques of *The Slow Professor*. Andrew Robinson, a sessional instructor (the term for contract faculty in Canada), calls the book “a grotesque example of tenured faculty privilege.” A review in *Radical Teacher* notes that in “mistakenly trusting that changing the self will change the world . . . the authors offer individual interventions that cannot defend against structural problems.” Barker-Devine agrees with these critiques but notes that tenured faculty can help create “a more humane climate” on university campuses. “If you are able to slow down yourself, think about how you can help change the atmosphere on campus. How do you treat your adjuncts? Your graduate students? What messages are you giving them about their work and what it is that they have to do?” She also notes that faculty have the power to “promote small changes that can make big differences.” Wu says that *The Slow Professor* prompted her to reflect more on her professional direction. “I’m mid-career now,” she says, and “I’m interested in potentially assuming positions of institutional leadership. It makes me think hard about the type of administrator I might want to be when I have that kind of power, and when I have more leverage to change the terms of higher education.”

Berg and Seeber proffer optimism along these lines. In challenging the culture of speed, they argue, Slow could change the university from the inside out. Caraher adds that the discipline of history itself offers interesting possibilities for resisting industrial practice: “History in many ways still preserves aspects of craft in how we do things.” “We’ve preserved this approach of studying the past that defies simple methodological standardization,” he says. “If any discipline is likely to produce the Slow alternative to the corporate university, it’s likely to come out of history, the humanities, or the fine arts.” And that is reason enough not to despair. As Wu says, “There are a lot of problems in the way institutions of higher education are run, but there is a lot of good that can and does come out of them.”

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Historian, Program!

Self-Help for Digital Neophytes

Seth Denbo

Harvard University Library now lists, among proprietary databases and other e-resources to which the university subscribes, a website called The Programming Historian (programminghistorian.org), which offers free online tutorials on digital methods, tools, and techniques. Not just for Harvard, The Programming Historian, launched in 2007, is a free and open resource that anyone can access and use. It's also unique in the world of online education—its lessons are primarily created by, and geared toward, historians.

Scholars looking to develop digital history skills today have a range of options. Many graduate programs now include digital methods and skills training. Historians can also look for resources in other departments on campus, in the library, or at training institutes. But The Programming Historian offers another, autodidactic model that uses the web to offer materials that can help scholars find digital solutions to common problems.

When Douglas O'Reagan needed to create an online digital archive, for example, he turned to The Programming Historian for help. At the time, O'Reagan was lead archivist for the Hanford History Project, which manages the US Department of Energy's collections related to the Hanford site of the Manhattan Project. Once O'Reagan had identified Omeka—an open source web publishing platform—as the right tool for the job, he taught himself how to use it with the help of The Programming Historian. O'Reagan describes the tutorials on the website as “very well done, very useful . . . they broke things down into clear steps.”

With over 50 published tutorials, the site has a wealth of resources on a broad range of topics. These include relatively straightforward things such as using Markdown (a simple markup language) to more complex activities such as textual analysis or GIS (Geographical Information Systems). Some lessons are explicitly related to the disciplinary work of historians, such as “Geocoding Historical Data Using QGIS” and “Creating Network

Diagrams from Historical Sources.” Others, including “Creating New Items in Zotero” and “Introduction to the Bash Command Line” are of more general interest. With so many options, The Programming Historian can be daunting in its breadth. In a review, Cameron Blevins (Northeastern Univ.) suggests that the site is best used to help solve specific problems instead of general education about digital history methods.

What's unique about The Programming Historian is that it teaches skills through examples that are suited to historians. Many lessons use real historical data and pose historically relevant questions. For example, a tutorial by Martin Düring (Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) on network analysis is built around a case study of a first-person narrative written by a Jewish Holocaust

Many lessons use real historical data and pose historically relevant questions.

survivor. The tutorial approaches the case study with historical questions such as “How did social relationships help Jewish refugees to survive in the underground?”

The Programming Historian is run and managed by an international editorial board, much like a scholarly journal. Tutorials undergo a process of peer review by outside experts who provide feedback and recommend revisions and improvements. “Reviewers are selected on the basis of their expertise, just as you'd expect for a journal,” says Adam Crymble, a member of the editorial board and digital historian at the University of Hertfordshire. “Reviewers see themselves as colleagues helping to test and refine lessons before they go live.”

Crymble and historian Katrina Navikas (Univ. of Hertfordshire) recently published

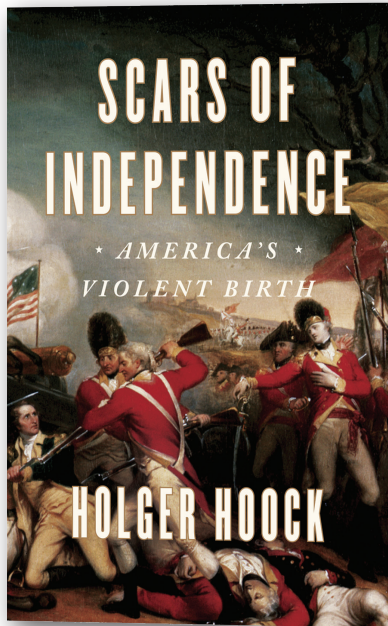
a methodological article in the *Journal of Victorian Culture* in which The Programming Historian had a direct impact on their scholarship. They adapted the code Crymble had developed for the tutorial “Using Gazetteers to Extract Keywords from Sets of Free-Flowing Texts” to turn Chartist newspaper announcements into a digital map of grassroots meetings in the early 1840s. The map enabled the two scholars to argue that Chartist activities in London were “part of the everyday rather than the extraordinary.” The methodologies developed as part of this lesson enabled Navikas and Crymble to contribute to a long-standing scholarly conversation about a key modern political movement.

Tutorials often espouse a philosophy for the use of computational tools by humanities scholars. “Sustainable Authorship in Plain Text Using Pandoc and Markdown,” for example, includes a section called “Principles” that sets out why the recommended practices benefit scholars in the humanities. At the core of these principles is the idea that the tools used should support scholarly needs and ensure that the work can be easily saved for the long term and reused for other purposes.

The project is active and growing, with several more tutorials in the works. In 2016, The Programming Historian won a DH Award, a community award given by digital humanists. There is also a team currently translating the tutorials into Spanish. Even though The Programming Historian doesn't fall into the usual category of digital resources, listing it on library catalogs will facilitate discovery and enable more historians to take advantage of the possibilities offered by digital research. By lowering barriers to doing digital scholarship, vibrant, community-driven projects such as The Programming Historian are vital to the future of the discipline.

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Advocacy Briefs

AHA Speaks Out against Proposed Budget Cuts, Executive Order Restricting Entry

Historical research and discourse are vital to a vibrant civic culture, and the American Historical Association continues to speak out against proposed federal actions that would disrupt historians' work. On March 16, the Association asked members to contact their representatives in Congress to protest recommended cuts to humanities and social sciences programs in the Trump administration's "America First" budget blueprint. The full text of the action alert can be found on *AHA Today* (blog.historians.org).

The AHA also spoke out against President Donald Trump's revised executive order restricting entry into the United States (EO 13780). The American Historical Association applied the discipline's professional standards to the revised directive, which cites historical evidence in support of the policy restricting immigration and refugee resettlement, and found that it does not pass historical muster.

AHA Condemns Second Draft of Executive Travel Ban

In his revised executive order (EO) on immigrants and refugees, President Donald Trump has removed some controversial elements of the directive it replaced. Given these changes, the American Historical Association has evaluated the new order and here responds to both the evidence presented in support of the policy and its implications for the work of historians, students, and other educators. History is a discipline that begins with questions and impartially marshals evidence before generating answers. A compelling argument requires facts presented in context. This EO offers little context, inclines more toward assertion than evidence, and uses scattered examples to draw conclusions that stand contrary to facts.

Citing "recent history," the order notes that "hundreds of persons born abroad have been convicted of terrorism-related crimes

in the United States." A historian looks for context. The United States is home to millions of people "born abroad." Of all the lethal terrorist acts that have been committed since September 11, 2001, and could be labeled "jihadist," none of the 13 individuals involved were from the EO's six banned countries. Eight were born American citizens. Of the non-lethal jihadist attacks in the US during the same period, only three attackers entered the US from countries included in the ban. Most acts of terrorism committed or planned in the United States have involved primarily native-born, white men.

The scattered examples are equally unconvincing to scholars accustomed to the standards of our discipline. The new EO cites "two Iraqi born nationals admitted to the United States as refugees in 2009." Each was convicted of terrorist acts committed in Iraq. The Justice Department has been clear on this: "[n]either was charged with plotting attacks within the United States." The "native of Somalia" referenced in the EO, convicted of a plot in Oregon, came to the United States as a child and was radicalized here. He has been emphatically identified by the US attorney for that district as an instance of "homegrown" terrorism.

The EO's sole reference to substantial numbers states that "300 persons who entered the United States as refugees are currently the subjects of counterterrorism investigations by the Federal Bureau of Investigation." No evidence for this claim has been forthcoming; the FBI has been silent regarding the list of 300 persons. In 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy made a comparable accusation to which hindsight has not been kind: "While I cannot take the time to name all the men in the State Department who have been named as members of the Communist Party and members of a spy ring, I have here in my hand a list of 205."

An edict lacking rigorous evidence invites inconsistent and arbitrary enforcement. The blanket ban on the issuance of visas to the nationals of six Muslim-majority countries, with provisions for waivers to be made on a case-by-case basis and under uncertain circumstances,

leaves open the possibility—even the probability—that the order will be administered erratically. We have already seen this with the arbitrary and inappropriate detention of historian Henry Rousso at a Houston airport. Unpredictability encourages vigilantism; the attendant inflated risk to prospective immigrants and visitors will have a chilling effect on the presence of international students and scholars who benefit our classrooms, global diplomacy, and the international interchange of ideas.

If EO 13780 seems less harsh than did EO 13769, due to a multitude of exceptions and opportunities for appeal, the context remains a presidential rhetoric that favors building walls (literal and figurative) and only reluctantly criticizes a rising tide of hostility toward people whose status as Americans is considered provisional. We note especially the recent painting of swastikas on college campuses, including buildings in which historians work.

President Trump's new executive order stands at odds with the values stated in our nation's founding documents, its proudest moments as a beacon and refuge. The new policy persists in demanding that the number of refugees accepted into the United States drop from 110,000 to 50,000, quashing the hopes of men, women, and children already in various stages of a thorough (even "extreme") vetting process. This reduction in refugee admissions, based on a rhetoric that ties national security and well-being to ethnicity, evokes the refugee crisis of the 1930s, when the US government issued many fewer immigration visas than it could have under existing laws to Jews fleeing Nazism.

Our traditions include exclusion, to be sure. The United States, through legislation and executive decision, has denied admission to many who sought only safe harbor and just treatment under law. Historical research has taught us that rather than keep us safe, those moments kept from our shores—and in some cases, implicitly sentenced to suffering or even death—individuals who could have contributed to our communities. We could have done better then; we can do better now.



The History Classroom in an Era of Crisis

A Change of Course Is Needed

David Pace

This is not a time for business as usual. In a “post-truth” age of “alternative facts” and “fake news,” historians must ask fundamental questions about our public roles. We might think of ourselves as above the fray, viewing developments with a certain detachment. But as soon as we enter the classroom, we become historical actors whose choices have broad consequences. We have a moral obligation to think seriously about how we, as a discipline, can help strengthen democratic institutions.

Over the last four decades, our research and writing have made great strides toward including gender, race, class, and the environment in the collective understanding of the past, thus helping to prepare society for the challenges of the 21st century. But if generating academic histories was sufficient, we would not be facing such apparent challenges to democracy. What is needed is not just access to new narratives about the past, but also a broader ability to weigh evidence, balance competing arguments, and consider emotionally charged topics. And the history classroom is an ideal location for providing students with such mental tools. Effective teaching can prepare and empower students for their role as citizens in ways that weaken the power of demagogic appeals.

History teaching can also play a role in combating a second element contributing to the current weakening of democratic institutions—the growth of inequality. It is very appealing to imagine that the history classroom is a level playing field, where students’ willingness to work hard determines their level of success. But, as a recent special issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (December 19, 2016) argues, colleges can be instruments of inequality. Students arrive in our classes with very different levels of preparation, and these often correlate with levels of economic and social advantage. If the race and social background of

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in History

Since the late 1990s, academics from across the disciplines have been systematically exploring teaching and learning in their fields. They have sought to break out of the pedagogical solitude that has long marked academia by producing a body of literature that would allow instructors to build on the work of others to find new, more effective ways to increase student learning.

History has been well represented in the scholarship of teaching and learning. Historians made the work of researchers in education schools and other fields more readily available, and they have conducted their own studies to foster greater understanding of how students learn history and explore approaches that can be most effective in their courses. Since 2005, the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in History has helped to coordinate this work around the world and to share it through publications and presentations and through its website at <http://www.indiana.edu/~histsotl/blog/>. —D.P.

our students can predict their grades, and if a D, F, or W in an introductory history course is frequently a prelude to academic disaster—as Andrew Koch argues in the article accompanying this one—our courses can be a one-way ticket to a life of marginality and one more step in the creation of a society in which inequality undermines the foundations of democracy.

Ineffective teaching and evaluation strategies can reinforce these divisions, sending a message to privileged, “pre-educated” students that they are worthy and marginalizing the rest. Unless we can make the “rules” of the history “game” available to more students and reenergize those who have lost hope for academic success, the grades we give can be another part of the process of separating haves from have-nots.

These challenges clearly require new and creative responses. Giving more As, as some instructors feel pressure to do, does nothing

to provide students with the intellectual skills needed to become effective citizens. And students’ vulnerability to demagoguery cannot be solved by replacing one narrative with another. It is important to stress that the task is not a matter of creating more future historians. Exposure to historical reasoning, not memorizing facts, will better serve even students who take only a single history course.

Thus, if we are to work against the de-democratization of our society, we must devote significant time and energy to making our courses training grounds for critical thinking and pathways to success for those who have been deprived of educational opportunity. What is most needed now is a change not in what we teach, but rather in how we go about teaching it. If students do not learn to evaluate material critically, it does not matter which topics we cover.

To offer more students the education that they deserve and that society needs

Kozzi2/depositphotos

► As our society heads into uncertain times, historians should redouble efforts to improve teaching and learning.

them to obtain, we need to rethink some of the most basic strategies that underlie our teaching. It is no longer adequate to perpetuate a practice simply because that was the way we were taught. Since the ways we share the past shape the future, we have a responsibility to put as much thought into imparting historical thinking as we do into creating content.

This work would be overwhelming if individual history instructors had to undertake it alone. Fortunately, the age of the hermetically sealed classroom is over. The Tuning movement (see historians.org/tuning) focuses our energy on student learning and demonstrates the value of that learning to the public. And the interdisciplinary scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) demonstrates that the reasoning processes that drive traditional historical research can be put to work to better understand the challenges of teaching history.

Ineffective teaching and evaluation strategies can tell privileged, “pre-educated” students that they are worthy and marginalize the rest.

There is already a great deal of material that can help instructors develop forms of teaching that more effectively draw students into historical thinking. Every year, the annual meetings of the AHA and the Organization of American Historians include more sessions on teaching and learning, and the website and newsletter of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in History (<http://www.indiana.edu/~histsotl/blog/>) makes publications and meetings in the field available. The rich literature on history in K–12 classes by educational researchers like Sam Wineburg, Linda Levstik, and Keith Barton; new perspectives on the history survey by historians like Lendol Calder; the decoding of historical thinking by the History Learning Project; and the Historians on Teaching website of Alan and Jeanne Booth only hint at the treasury of ideas now available. The tools



Marc Monaghan

AHA president Tyler Stovall (center) greets a student group from Humboldt State University at the 2017 AHA annual meeting in Denver. Students must be central to historians' practice.

that we need to respond to our challenge are at hand, and more will come.

But we must find new ways to bridge theory and practice. One prototype could be the preconference SoTL workshop at the 2017 AHA annual meeting; the workshop could be replicated at all major historical conferences. The International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in History (ISSOTL) is exploring new ways to make its website a space for sharing ideas. (Any historian interested in being a part of this effort can contact me at dpace@indiana.edu.) But in the long run, the most effective way to make such efforts an integral part of our profession is to ensure that new instructors begin their careers not only with a solid grasp of the literature in their field, but also with a grounding in knowledge about student learning and a full toolbox of strategies for helping their future students assimilate historical thinking. Models for graduate courses in historical pedagogy are available on the ISSOTL in History website, but to implement them, PhD programs must have the political will to reconceptualize graduate education. (The second phase of the AHA's Career Diversity for Historians initiative will tackle teacher training in doctoral education.)

Political will is also needed to bring this activity more squarely into the realm of institutional rewards and recognition. The process of rethinking our courses simply

will not occur on a large enough scale if it is treated as a purely individual responsibility, separate from the collective responsibilities of our discipline. We must be willing to rethink institutional norms of hiring, promotion, tenure, and salary to better reflect those activities that contribute to the common good. The scholarship of teaching and learning and model course portfolios can help us assess excellence in teaching-related projects and foster mechanisms for outside review of teaching. But this requires new thinking and a willingness to break with the past.

As a discipline, we can, of course, decide to view the apparent decline of political reasoning as a problem for high school civics teachers and ignore the role that ineffective teaching can play in reinforcing patterns of inequality. But if we accept that we have a collective responsibility to work against the forces delegitimizing democratic institutions, the path to action almost certainly passes through the history classroom. The origins of de-democratization and inequality may lie elsewhere, but we face a moral choice as to whether our courses will be part of that process.

David Pace is professor emeritus in the Department of History at Indiana University Bloomington, a winner of the AHA's Eugene Asher Award, and president of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in History.

Many Thousands Failed

A Wakeup Call to History Educators

Andrew K. Koch

In his essay “Many Thousands Gone,” the 20th-century novelist and social critic James Baldwin observed, “The story of the Negro in America is the story of America—or, more precisely, it is the story of Americans. It is not a very pretty story[.]” In the passage and the essay, Baldwin pointedly condemns how popular culture reinforces stereotypes of African Americans. But had he written the essay today, more than 60 years later, he could have just as easily been describing what is going on in introductory US history courses.

Because, in 2017, the story of African Americans enrolled in introductory US history courses is the story of the course itself. More precisely, it is the story of all students, particularly those from historically underrepresented backgrounds, who enroll in the course. And it, too, is not a pretty story. This may seem hyperbolic, but it is supported by evidence.

Over the past three years, 32 colleges and universities have worked with the nonprofit organization I serve—the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate

Education—to produce a study of introductory US history courses. This analysis was conducted with the help of my colleague, Brent M. Drake, the chief data officer at Purdue University and a research fellow at the Gardner Institute, who also helped with the data analysis in this article. The Gardner Institute’s mission is to work with postsecondary educators to increase institutional responsibility for and outcomes associated with teaching, learning, retention, and completion. Through these efforts, the institute strives to advance higher education’s larger goal of achieving equity and social justice. I had the privilege of presenting the findings as part of a preconference workshop at the 2017 AHA annual meeting.

Our data set includes outcomes for nearly 28,000 students enrolled in an introductory US history course at one of the 32 institutions during the academic years 2012–13, 2013–14, and 2014–15. These institutions included 7 independent four-year institutions, 6 community colleges, 2 proprietary institutions, 5 public research universities, and 12

regional comprehensive public institutions, and all agreed to have their data included in the study. From the data, we sought aggregate and disaggregated rates of D, F, W (any form of withdrawal), and I (incomplete) grades in introductory US history courses. While not perfectly representative, the data allow for meaningful scrutiny of who succeeds and who fails in introductory US history courses.

The range of DFWI grades in these courses across the 32 institutions was 5.66 percent to 48.89 percent, and the average DFWI rate was 25.50 percent. This means that nearly three quarters of all students enrolled earned a C or better. One could argue that this DFWI rate results simply from upholding standards and rigor. But troubling trends emerge upon disaggregating the same data by demographic variables—trends that may very well reveal that the term “rigor” enables institutionalized inequity to persist.

Race, family income levels (based on whether a student receives a Pell Grant), gender, and status as a first-generation

Fig. 1: Rates of D, F, W, or I Grades in Introductory US History by Demographic Group

Demographic Group	DFWI Rate
Asian American	17.37%
Caucasian/White	21.36%
Not First Generation	22.14%
Not Pell Grant Recipient	22.65%
Female	22.67%
COURSE AVERAGE	25.50%
First Generation	26.13%
Male	27.18%
Nonresident Alien	28.26%
Pell Grant Recipient	28.49%
Two or More Races	31.42%
Hispanic/Latino	32.85%
American Indian/Alaska Native	40.51%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	41.73%
African American/Black	42.37%

college student are the best predictors of who will or will not succeed in introductory US history courses. As fig. 1 shows, the likelihood of earning a D, F, W, or I grade is lower for Asian American, white, and female students who are not first generation and do not receive a Pell Grant. It is higher, sometimes significantly higher, for every other demographic group.

Some see failing a course as beneficial: it can be a reality check that helps students learn what is necessary to succeed in college and may even help point toward programs for which they are “better suited.” The problem with that consoling argument is the fact that for some students, failure in even one course such as introductory US history predicts ultimate dropout from college altogether.

Institutional dropout rates show that the students who took introductory US history, were otherwise in overall good academic standing, and opted not to return to the institution the following year were over twice as likely to have earned a D, F, W, or I in the course (42.87 percent) than retained students in good academic standing (19.27 percent). Failure in the course, therefore, was not necessarily an indicator of being a bad student—because these students were otherwise in good academic standing—but was directly correlated with students’ departure decisions. Adding to these disturbing data are two national studies that show that college students who do not succeed in even one of their foundational-level courses are the least likely to complete a degree at any institution over the 11-year period covered by the studies.¹

When one considers the characteristics of students who are more likely to earn a D, F, W, or I in an introductory history course alongside the retention and completion implications, it is clear that there is a problem. And this problem is that many well-established approaches to teaching introductory history and other foundational college courses may be subtly but effectively promoting inequity.

This ugly picture can only get worse if teachers and professionals charged with supporting enrolled students continue with a business-as-usual approach. According to the Western Interstate Commission of Higher Education’s report, *Knocking at the College Door*, high school graduating class sizes are shrinking. At the same time, the

very same populations that are least likely to enroll and succeed in college—underrepresented minority, first-generation, and low-income students—will constitute larger percentages of high school graduates and beginning college students.² While they might not lack the cognitive wherewithal to learn and succeed, they often lack the cultural capital and sense of social belonging their more advantaged counterparts possess. A single failure can confirm preexisting attitudes that “I’m just not college material” or that “I don’t belong here.”

But there is hope: methods and means that can help counter these trends. Such methods include increasing expectations for our students, engaging with them, and directing them to available academic support.

Our knowledge about what works in postsecondary teaching and learning has advanced significantly since the end of the 20th century. New approaches include the use of evidence-based, active-learning strategies in college courses of various sizes. These strategies improve outcomes for all students, especially those from the least advantaged backgrounds.³ Also showing great promise is the use of embedded (therefore required) support for all students—since, as the higher education researcher Kay McClenny notes, “at-risk students don’t do optional.”⁴ And providing early and frequent feedback in courses—increasingly by using predictive analytics and intervention mechanisms—also has benefits.⁵

So now that you know this, what will you do? Will you examine data from your institution to see if comparable trends exist in the courses you teach? If you find them, will you explore the resources available to you and use them to redesign your courses—both their structure and the way you teach them? Will you reach out to students? Will you explore professional development activities provided through your institution’s center for teaching excellence or through entities like the American Historical Association’s Teaching Division or the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in History?

In an era of “alternative facts” and “extreme vetting,” it is easy to feel powerless. But the issues in introductory history courses—a form of vetting, too—existed long before the atmosphere following the 2016 election. That is not an alternative fact. If inequity in the United States concerns you, and inequitable outcomes exist in the courses you and your colleagues

teach, then it is important to remember that you have agency to address this.

As historians, we know that we are agents of history acting in history to shape it. Therefore, I encourage you to shape history by reshaping the history courses you teach. In the process, you may very well be creating a much more hopeful and “prettier” story.

Andrew K. Koch, PhD, is chief operating officer of the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education. The data informing this analysis will be the subject of a further Gardner Institute report, by Koch and Brent Drake, on introductory courses in multiple subjects and student outcomes.

Notes

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Making Digital History Accessible

Stephanie Kingsley

Without digital history, says PhD candidate Hollis Pierce (Carleton Univ.), he would have had little opportunity to engage the discipline at all, since a neuromuscular disorder prevents him from pulling books from shelves in the library stacks. But with a screen reader—a program that converts text to synthesized speech or other output, such as a Braille device—he can pore over digitized texts. After completing a thesis tracing the development of the book from a less to a more accessible medium as it expanded beyond print, Pierce has turned to studying the history of accessibility at Carleton. With his adviser, Shawn Graham, Pierce also co-organized THAT-Camp Accessibility, a workshop designed to raise awareness of the issue in the digital humanities, in 2012. He's one of many pioneers in bringing digital history to disabled people. Since 20 percent of Americans qualify as disabled under the Americans with Disabilities Act, such efforts should draw everyone's attention.

When most nondisabled historians hear the word “access,” things like freely available digitized sources and open-access tools probably come to mind. But digitization does not guarantee accessibility, and the technologies with which historians share their work can exclude as often as they include people with disabilities. An image of an archival manuscript letter is useless to a blind historian; audio files of oral histories without transcription or captions are inaccessible to users with hearing impairments. And the innovative visualizations that have become popular with digital historians privilege sighted people.

According to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) (<http://bit.ly/2oPk3W0>), published by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), accessible content is “perceivable” to all users and offers all users the same chance to interact with the content. Accessible content must also be understandable in formats that can be interpreted by assistive technologies (such as a screen reader), and “current and future user agents” (including humans and assis-



Courtesy American Foundation for the Blind, Helen Keller Archive

With a robust set of keywords and extensive descriptions, the American Foundation for the Blind's archival images of Helen Keller are accessible to all users.

tive technologies) must be able to interpret it. Inaccessible digital content, therefore, would include scanned photographs (not perceivable to a blind person) and websites that can't be navigated by keyboard (which a person who can't use a mouse wouldn't be able to interact with). WCAG provides information about making historical materials readable with the wide range of assistive technologies now available.

A great deal of exciting work is underway to make archives accessible. In digitizing its Helen Keller Archive with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the American Federation for the Blind (AFB) aims to “pioneer the most accessible archive in the world” (<http://bit.ly/2nYvoAt>). This means taking accessibility into account while designing the user interface and throughout the digitization process. People with a variety of disabilities and from different professional backgrounds

test the archive. Each document is scanned, then AFB archivist Helen Selsdon and four volunteers transcribe its content to make it accessible by screen readers and through a Braille display. They also provide descriptions of marginalia and other features that would not be included in the text otherwise.

Images naturally present particular challenges. “There's a lot of great info in those photos,” says AFB director of web operations Crista Earl. “How did people live? What furniture did they have? How old were they?” So extensive descriptions accompany images, such as one that reads: “Helen Keller seated in her kitchen at her Arcan Ridge home in Westport, Connecticut. She is smiling as she peels potatoes that are set on a plate on the table in front of her. She wears a transparent apron over a dress that has a choker V-neck; the dress fabric has small light color dots and flowers on a dark background. The kitchen counter and window are visible behind her”

(<http://bit.ly/2oi2cUF>). Deaf users and users who are deaf-blind can access the Keller materials, too. Historical videos include closed captioning, audio description, and complete transcripts of original narration and audio description.

In another accessible digital project in the planning stages, Brenda McClurkin and Sarah Rose (Univ. of Texas at Arlington) won an NEH grant to create a consortium to develop an online portal for collections related to disability history (<http://bit.ly/2ptTQtP>). The consortium's goals are to spread awareness of disability history, encourage collection of it, and make materials accessible. The consortium will need to work with participating archives to improve accessibility, which varies widely depending on available resources. "We want, from the beginning, to make sure accessibility broadly defined is part of it," says Rose, and this conviction comes from experience. In

Digitization does not guarantee accessibility, and the technologies with which historians share their work can exclude people with disabilities.

working on UTA's accessible digital archive, Texas Disability History, McClurkin, Rose, and their colleague Ramona Holmes collaborated with the Office for Students with Disabilities Adaptive Resource Center to test the site, not just for screen readers for blind users but for users with hearing impairments, mobility impairments, and various cognitive and developmental disorders, such as cognitive spectrum disorder. This work will ultimately inform the consortium's efforts to establish archival accessibility standards.

Central to the work of the AFB and UTA is the philosophy of universal design: all design choices should be made with the goal of being as accessible to as many people as possible. Historians have found that implementing universal design has ramifications beyond making their work accessible to disabled people—accessibility touches all

A Guide to Accessibility

Getting Started

- ◆ Begin incorporating accessibility as early as possible in a project.
- ◆ Make sure people using assistive technology are involved in the project.
- ◆ Run developed websites or projects through an online evaluation tool to identify areas for improvement.

Resources

- ◆ W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 (<http://bit.ly/2blKahy>)—the World Wide Web Consortium's guidelines for making web content accessible
- ◆ W3C Web Accessibility Evaluation Tools List (<http://bit.ly/1sacZlz>)—a filterable list of tools, many of which offer free demos
- ◆ WAVE (<http://bit.ly/2oPhzXQ>)—a browser extension that checks a web page for accessibility and identifies problem features
- ◆ The A11Y Project (<http://bit.ly/1m6Z286>)—a collection of resources and GitHub-based community intended to make implementing accessibility easier
- ◆ The American Federation for the Blind's "Creating Accessible Websites" resources (<http://bit.ly/2oEkKzq>)
- ◆ "Disability, Universal Design, and the Digital Humanities," George H. Williams, *Debates in the Digital Humanities* 2012, <http://bit.ly/2oEgeku>

users. For the Keller archive, Helen Selsdon found it necessary to create a robust set of keywords not only for the topic "blindness" but for all aspects of Keller's experiences. "What many people don't realize about Helen is the breadth of her life," explains Selsdon. "Someone who doesn't really know about her can go into the Browse function and see that" in the keywords. The archive is therefore not only accessible to those with disabilities but to people who simply don't know much about Helen Keller. McClurkin echoes this idea: "Accessibility might also mean cognitive accessibility, making a site searchable by people who aren't familiar with the content, or to a variety of ages. Building good sets of keywords that help people navigate the collection is essential."

Designing online historical work with accessibility in mind has also prompted some historians to find alternative ways to represent ideas. Shawn Graham, Carleton University history professor and Hollis Pierce's

adviser, says, "The technologies that we have need to be interrogated as much as anything else—it's the technologies that permit or disallow different kinds of history to be done or to be taught." Inspired by Brian Foo (who experiments with representing social science data with sound), Graham is translating archeological data on coin hoards in Roman Britain into sound along a path; the user will experience "aural density" in places of greater economic activity. Unlike digital history projects that rely on visualization, the project will be accessible to people with vision impairments.

In an added benefit, experimenting with sonic representation has opened the door to a new way of experiencing history. "Part of the work of sonification is to make data strange again," Graham reflects. Much digital history privileges sighted people, but removing that bias allows for manifold ways of interpreting the same information. It also enables historians with disabilities to bring

their own perspectives to the conversation. Catherine Kudlick, professor of history at San Francisco State University and director of its Paul K. Longmore Institute on Disability, argues that by not making their work accessible, historians “are missing out on the insights of people that have potentially really creative ways of thinking about the world.”

All of these experts advise historians interested in making their work accessible to begin thinking about it as early as possible. It’s easiest at the very beginning of a project to incorporate simple features, such as properly ordered headings (via <h1> to <h6> tags, for the HTML-savvy) or image descriptions (via alt attributes on image tags). Reverse-engineering projects can be both costly and time-consuming. David Trowbridge, who developed the mobile history

app Clio from a homegrown project into a nonprofit foundation, recently analyzed Clio’s accessibility with an eye toward improving it. Although screen readers can interpret the app, he noticed certain quirks—heading tags were out of order, maps bore insufficient descriptions, and screen readers construed footnotes as random numbers—that he would have improved much earlier if he had tested Clio for accessibility. Now Trowbridge plans to incorporate these insights into his Clio style guide and the way he teaches his students to create entries.

Because there are a variety of disabilities, there are also a multitude of approaches historians can take to make their work accessible. Shawn Graham notes, however, that while you probably won’t be able to make your digital history project accessible to

everyone, it’s still important to try to make it accessible to more people. “It’s iterative,” he says. “You try to reach as many people as you can.” Digital history prides itself on reaching a wider audience via the Internet; by taking accessibility into account, historians can move closer toward fulfilling that mission of inclusivity.

Stephanie Kingsley is associate editor, web content and social media, at the AHA. She tweets @KingsleySteph.

Editor’s note: The online version of this story, and other content on historians.org, is accessible by screen reader. We are in the process of evaluating our site for ways we can improve user experience. Please contact Stephanie Kingsley at skingsley@historians.org with feedback.

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Washington Insiders

A Sneak Preview of the 2018 AHA Annual Meeting

Antoinette Burton

While the world has been preoccupied with the conduct of US democracy in the last few months, members of the AHA Program Committee have been busy soliciting and reviewing session proposals for the January 2018 meeting in Washington, DC. The program, which is still taking shape, promises not just a rich set of offerings but ample evidence—if we have need of it—that scholars and teachers and students of history across the country and the world are working hard to bring the past alive not just for the present, but for the future as well. We anticipate a program positively brimming with new historical research—and, as importantly, with ways of debating about history and its meanings in scholarly settings, in classrooms, and with the wide variety of audiences we aim to be in dialogue with as practitioners of the craft.

Program Committee members are well aware that our work can seem mysterious. Not only do we rank and select from the nearly 400 session proposals submitted each year, we actively solicit proposals and judge their suitability for inclusion. Typically, about 10 percent of the sessions that end up on the program have been solicited by the Program Committee.

Each year, the AHA president organizes sessions, too. These often deal specifically with the theme of the meeting, which the president also determines. (Many historians are under the impression that the Program Committee favors proposals that adhere to the theme, but this is not the case.) Under the intellectual leadership of AHA president Tyler Stovall, the 2018 theme is “Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism in Global Perspective.” It is proving a timely guidepost for thinking about the present through the past.

One of the presidential sessions and plenaries being developed addresses the slave trade in global perspective, while another will focus on the Brexit referendum and its aftermath. We will hear about UNESCO and the problem of race, and we will com-



Marc Monaghan

Annual meeting sessions (like this one in Denver 2017) elicit spirited conversation.

memorate the 25th anniversary of Thomas C. Holt's *The Problem of Freedom* (1992). With the help of Program Committee member Trevor Getz and AHA Council member Jim Sweet, Stovall is also sponsoring a session in honor of Jan Vansina, one of the founders of the modern field of African history, who passed away in February 2017.

To round out a wide variety of proposals, the Program Committee is also working on sessions that deal with apartheid's legacy; nativism and the politics of migration in post-1945 Europe; and C.L.R. James's *The Black Jacobins* (1938) on its 80th anniversary. The year 2018 is, of course, a major commemorative year in many contexts, as we mark everything from the end of World War I to the global upheavals of 1968. We look forward to seeing how centenaries and commemorations at various scales leave their mark on the program as a whole. Among the session proposals that do cohere around the theme, there are several that engage categories of race, ethnicity, and nationalism

in medieval, premodern, and early modern contexts, or challenge their presumptions altogether. If the theme is an orientation device, it also offers scope for testing the limits and possibilities of the categories themselves. Lively debates will be happening all over the program as a result.

There are many exciting ideas and proposals unrelated to the theme, of course. Some of them, like a panel on food history at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, are linked to the city of Washington and its environs. Others, like a panel and a workshop on comics and history, explore genre and form at the boundary of word and image. Still others tackle questions that nearly everyone in the classroom now faces: how to combat declining enrollments; how to teach with and against the textbook; and how to make the most of digital tools.

Thinking outside the box when it comes to history teaching continues to emerge as an annual meeting subtheme. Be sure to bookmark the two-session workshop on

the Frederick Douglass game sponsored by Reacting to the Past, an elaborate role-playing exercise. The game will be followed by an after-session featuring David Blight and Manisha Sinha reflecting on how this kind of embodied performance of historical ideas and figures can transform the way all of those who play it understand what history is.

There is sure to be a wealth of thoughtful panels on digital history that approach the many challenges entailed from a number of different angles. One that already catches my eye is “Arguing with Digital History,” a roundtable organized by Program Committee member Kathryn Tomasek that takes a key tenet of history practice, the argument, and asks how digital history tools and methods can refine and advance it. Tomasek has also organized a session on how to do global digital history on the “semantic web” through MEDEA (Modeling Semantically Enhanced Digital Edition of Accounts). And Craig Perrier, who teaches in the Fairfax County public school system and is also a member of the Program Committee, has put together a compelling session on trans-disciplinary digital history in K–16 settings as an example of “collaboration in action.”

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, there are an extraordinary number of proposals that refract contemporary issues and crises through the prism of the past. “Race and Membership in Germany,” “New Histories of State Surveillance,” “Sexual Violence in Historical Context,” “The Culture Wars in Texas Textbooks”—each one sounds like it is taken straight from the headlines. There will also be a wealth of offerings on career development and diversity, as has been the case for several years, thanks to the AHA’s manager of academic affairs, Emily Swafford, and participants from many sectors and career stages.

There’s no denying the pressure of the present on our apprehensions of the past or, for that matter, our apprehensions about the future of the profession itself. As a matter of professional practice and intellectual conviction, we recognize that there are deep genealogies to everything that crosses our sight line, and we can hardly afford not to plumb those depths whenever and wherever possible. Even a quick glance at the list of submissions in the review portal suggests that historians are bringing their content and methodological expertise

to many urgent questions, even as they are also energetically pursuing subjects that may have little or no direct connection to today’s political or social scene. That powerful combination—of historians both in the present and outside it—is evident, whether the subject is 20th-century partition politics or 18th-century Eurasian migration or scandalous behavior in the Inquisition.

There is one session I want especially to flag because I am certain it will be a big draw: “What It Means to Be a Citizen: Student Veterans in History Classrooms,” organized by Eladio Bobadilla, a PhD candidate at Duke University and himself a Navy veteran. This panel grew directly from an article of the same title that Bobadilla wrote for *Perspectives on History* in January 2017. The issues he raised—about stereotypes, the role of war experience, and the power of history to shape veterans’ pathways beyond the GI Bill—are worthy

*Thinking outside the box when
it comes to history teaching
continues to emerge as an
annual meeting subtheme.*

of greater public attention and debate. And that’s exactly what they will get in DC in 2018. So be sure to mark your calendar for the roundtable, which will feature remarks by Paul Ortiz, Steve Aronius, and Katherine Dahlstrand, all veterans of the US Army or the Marine Corps, in addition to being practicing historians.

Though we have yet to finalize our choices, I think the Program Committee would agree that there is abundant evidence that historians of all times and places are fully, even passionately, engaged in putting the discipline to work in the various settings we find ourselves in. If nothing else, the 2018 annual meeting program will be a snapshot of what’s happening now. Antoinette Burton is professor of history at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and chair of the Program Committee of the 132nd AHA annual meeting.

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In the June Issue of the American Historical Review

Robert A. Schneider

The June issue of the *American Historical Review* has five articles covering a range of historical topics: rumors of slavery in the Caribbean, a fear of Roma people in the Habsburg Empire, China's foreign policy, political surveillance in the United Kingdom and the United States, and global debates on the norms of cultural heritage.

The first article, "Rumors of Slavery: Defending Emancipation in a Hostile Caribbean," by **Anne Eller**, deals not with slavery per se but rather with its specter. Eller notes that experiences of emancipation varied throughout the greater Caribbean, from the struggles of the formerly enslaved to carve out autonomy on small sugar islands to those on larger islands that had different modes of production. But everywhere the climate was highly charged with conflict. By the middle of the 19th century, the political consciousness of residents of the deeply rural Dominican Republic was infused with both aspirations and fears. These subaltern Caribbean residents were connected to regional news networks that brought not stories of liberation but tales of retrenchment, hostility, and dynamic imperial threats. Re-enslavement warnings, glossed and dismissed by authorities as rumor, were both detailed and widespread; they fueled the new politics of defending emancipation and independence. When Spanish authorities reoccupied Dominican territory in 1861, Dominican rebels played upon these warnings, urging solidarity in the face of this threat. The subsequent erasure of these dynamics, in both local and hemispheric narratives, highlights not only how elites willfully sought to obfuscate the connections of emancipated peoples throughout the Caribbean but also the vigilant efforts to maintain these ties, even in largely subsistence spaces, far from any plantation.

An article by **Tara Zahra** takes us to the Habsburg Empire in the early years of the 20th century. In "'Condemned to Rootlessness and Unable to Budge': Roma, Migration Panics, and Internment in the

In "'Condemned to Rootlessness and Unable to Budge': Roma, Migration Panics, and Internment in the Habsburg Empire," Tara Zahra traces state practices for governing the Roma population in Austria-Hungary in the years leading up to World War I. Unsuccessful in their efforts to fix the alleged problem of "wandering Gypsies" through either forced sedentarization or expulsion to neighboring states, Austrian authorities seized on the war as an "opportunity to resolve the Gypsy question" through the use of concentration camps. The persecution of Roma in this period, Zahra writes, "foreshadowed the

'refugee panic' of the interwar years and other migration panics since." In *The Unfortunate Gypsies*, Hungarian painter György Vastagh depicts Hungarian Roma on the move and immobilized, not by borders or camps, but by the death of their horse. Vastagh was the court painter of Archduke Joseph of Hungary, author of an ethnographic article on Hungarian Roma in the Austro-Hungarian *Kronprinzenwerk*, discussed in Zahra's article. The painting, like the drawings featured in the *Kronprinzenwerk*, visually exaggerates and codifies stereotypical qualities of the Roma—in this case, their nomadism, their poverty, and their relationship to nature. György Vastagh, *A kárvallott cigány* [*The Unfortunate Gypsies*], oil on canvas, 1886.



Habsburg Empire," Zahra traces state practices for governing Roma. In the years before World War I, the members of this ethnic group became troubling symbols of the limits of the Habsburg state's sovereignty over its borders and people. In their alleged resistance to authority, they seemed to embody both the failures of the empire's "civilizing" mission and its efforts to control mobility. A growing number of Austrian authorities began to call for the forcible internment of so-called Gypsies. This represented a shift from earlier strategies for governing Roma, which typically entailed policies of forcible "sedentarization" or

deportation. This turn toward internment took place in the context of a broad panic over uncontrolled mobility, escalating border control, and the rise of a racialized understanding of the category "Gypsy." Zahra notes that persecution of Roma in this period prefigured the treatment of refugees later in the 20th century and may shed light on the origins and dynamics of contemporary "migration panics."

"The Qianlong Emperor's Letter to George III and the Early-Twentieth-Century Origins of Ideas about Traditional China's Foreign Relations," by **Henrietta Harrison**, begins in the late 18th century and jumps

to the early 20th. Harrison first examines the famous letter in which the Qianlong emperor responded to the diplomatic mission to China led by Lord Macartney in 1793. The letter has often been interpreted as a symbol of the Qing dynasty's ignorance and narrow-mindedness. Harrison argues that looking at a wider range of archival documents reveals that it does not reflect the Qianlong emperor's response to the British embassy, which was primarily to see it as a security threat. Rather, she argues, it reflects 18th-century British concerns with protocol and their influence on Chinese and Western scholars in the early 20th century, when the letter first began to circulate widely. Harrison focuses on the scholars who edited the first volumes of published materials to emerge from the Qing archives, as well as others who used these materials to create a lasting narrative of the Qing. Looking at how the letter has been interpreted illustrates both the role of archivists as co-creators of history and the extent to which many of our ideas about Qing history are still shaped by the tumultuous politics of China's early 20th century.

"Covert and Overt Operations: Interwar Political Policing in the United States and the United Kingdom," by **Jennifer Luff**, uncovers an episode unknown to contemporaries and historians: Britain's secret interwar

bar on communists in government service. Thousands of unwitting industrial workers suspected of communist sympathies were investigated between 1927 and 1946, and many were fired or blacklisted from government employment. Contrary to popular and historical accounts, the interwar British security regime was considerably more stringent than the American one. Moreover, the two countries' security regimes were enacted by their legislatures, not imposed by executive fiat, and thus reflect the peculiarities of their respective political cultures. Comparing interwar American and British surveillance and policing of communists, Luff shows that each state developed distinctive practices that varied along a covert/overt axis: both surveillance and policing could be surreptitious or conspicuous. In the United States, publicity alerted American civil libertarians, who left a record of noisy protest for historians; in the United Kingdom, secrecy concealed state repression from British citizens and the historical record. Luff's article calls for more comparative research on modern political policing, which will enable historians to integrate the "secret state" into larger historical narratives and provide the empirical grist to revise theoretical accounts of state surveillance and social control by scholars such as Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben.

The final article, "The Authenticity of Heritage: Global Norm-Making at the Crossroads of Cultures," by **Aurélie Elisa Gfeller**, analyzes the global debate on the authenticity of cultural heritage. It is, Gfeller suggests, a lens through which to view the process of elaborating and reshaping global cultural norms. Drawing on interviews and mostly untapped archival records from several countries, she shows that the groundbreaking 1994 Nara Document on Authenticity, which promotes "the protection and enhancement of cultural and heritage diversity in our world . . . as an essential aspect of human development," resulted from a surprising coalition of actors from across the Northern Hemisphere. At Nara, Canadians, Japanese, and Norwegians came together to challenge the prevailing Eurocentric definition of authenticity based on distinct yet partially overlapping interests. By illuminating these unexpected historical dynamics, this article suggests that global norms not only bear the imprint of geographically and temporally anchored values but also result from alliances straddling the traditional West/non-West or North/South divide.

Robert A. Schneider is professor of history at Indiana University Bloomington and interim editor of the American Historical Review.

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IN MEMORIAM

Ernst A. Breisach 1923–2016

Scholar of historiography

Ernst A. Breisach, professor of history and department chair at Western Michigan University (WMU) from 1967 to 1989, passed away in Kalamazoo, Michigan, on November 25, 2016, at the age of 93. A masterful teacher, skilled administrator, and brilliant scholar, Ernst was instrumental in establishing the modern foundations of WMU's Department of History. His scholarship in the field of historiography is internationally recognized.

Born in Schwanberg, Styria, Austria, in 1923, Ernst came of age during Adolf Hitler's rise to power. Conscripted into the German army, he served on the Eastern Front and was seriously wounded while fighting against the Soviet army. He was discharged after spending two years in military hospitals. Ernst earned a PhD in history from the University of Vienna in 1946 and a Dr. rer. oec (PhD in economics) from the Wirtschaftsuniversität (Univ. of Economics and Business) in Vienna in 1950. Between 1946 and 1952, he taught history and geography at a Realschule (secondary school) in Vienna.

Ernst first came to the United States in 1951–52 on a Fulbright scholarship to study the American higher education system. In 1953, he was hired by Olivet College, where he achieved the rank of associate professor of history. In 1957, Ernst accepted a position as associate professor with Western Michigan College of Education's Department of History. (The college became known as Western Michigan University in 1957.) Ernst became a full professor of history in 1963 and was elected chair in 1967.

During Ernst's tenure as chair, the history department initiated nearly all of the programs, with the exception of the PhD, that currently exist. In addition to continuing long-standing support for teacher training—in 1966, WMU ranked second in the nation for total number of certifications for teaching—under Ernst's tutelage, the department added a major and minor in public history in 1981, making it one of the very few places with an undergraduate focus in that field of history. Ernst also supported



Eric Breisach

Ernst A. Breisach

the MA program's primary mission to serve area teachers.

In addition to his teaching and chair responsibilities, Ernst was a prolific and highly acclaimed scholar who was lauded for his painstaking research. He authored or edited seven books—three of which were published during the period he was chair—as well as more than a dozen articles, numerous book reviews, and encyclopedia entries. Although he began his career as a scholar of the Italian Renaissance, his most well-known work focused on the field of historiography. *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern*, first published by the University of Chicago Press in 1983, has since been reissued in three editions and multiple translations. It is widely considered a standard book in the field of historiography. Indeed, many historians know it as a fundamental part of their graduate education. After he retired in 1996, Ernst wrote another highly regarded book in the field of historiography, *On the Future of History: The Postmodernist Challenge and Its Aftermath* (2003).

Ernst's meticulous scholarship received national and international recognition. In addition to his Fulbright award, Ernst received the Michigan Association of Governing Boards' Academic Excellence Award in 1988 and a fellowship from the

National Endowment for the Humanities in 1989–90. In 1983, Ernst was one of the first recipients of the WMU Distinguished Faculty Scholar Award, and for 28 years took great pride in chairing the committee responsible for selecting future award winners. Indeed, he was still serving on that committee at the time of his death. In 1998, he was one of six WMU faculty honored for their scholarly achievements as founding members of the WMU chapter of the Phi Beta Kappa national honor society.

Among his many university-wide service commitments, Ernst took special pride in his 30 years of service on WMU's faculty senate and, especially, his chairing of the former Organization of Chairs of All Academic Departments. He also chaired the WMU Assessment Committee and helped establish a revised general education curriculum in the university.

Ernst was truly a towering figure in the WMU community. A skilled administrator with many opportunities for advancement, he elected to remain in the department, where he could teach and inspire students and govern his own affairs. Ernst was a kind and gentle man with great warmth and wisdom—friends and administrators speak of his “generosity of heart.” He served as a confidant to many on campus who sought his guidance about life or university matters. He shall be missed for his good judgment, intense drive, never-failing politeness, sense of humor, and prolific scholarship. He was consistently charming and witty, even in his last years, when health problems slowed him down.

Ernst found his greatest joy in his family. He was preceded in death by his wife of 66 years, Herma, a historian in her own right. He is celebrated by his brother, Herbert (Elfi) Breisach; daughter, Nora (Rodger) Brannan; son, Eric (Tobi) Breisach; eight grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren; and special friend, Gabriele Hahn. The university, Department of History, former students, colleagues, and friends will miss him greatly.

Wilson J. Warren
Western Michigan University

Shirley A. Ort
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
(associate provost, emerita)

Marilyn B. Young 1937–2017

Historian of the United States and Warfare

Marilyn B. Young, professor of history at New York University, passed away peacefully at home on February 19, 2017, at the age of 79. She was a powerful and passionate voice, within the academy and beyond, on the importance of revealing the persistence and destruction of warfare during an age when war became normalized, yet seemed to disappear from the consciousness of everyday Americans. She made enduring contributions to scholarship on the United States and China, the Vietnam War, empire, and the long path of American military interventions.

Marilyn grew up in Brooklyn. She graduated from Vassar, then a women's college, in 1957. Offered a full scholarship for graduate school conditioned on learning Chinese and writing her thesis on US–East Asian relations, she went to Harvard, where she worked with Ernest R. May and John King Fairbank. She joined the faculty of the Residential College at the University of Michigan and moved to the NYU history department in 1980.

Marilyn took an early interest in war. As a child, she pressed her uncle, who had served in World War II, to tell her what war was like. He answered gruffly that when returning from a bombing mission, the bombardier's severed head had rolled around the plane all the way home. Then he ordered her to never ask him that question again. Marilyn honored her uncle's wish but persisted in thinking about the nature and consequences of war.

Her first book, based on her dissertation, was *The Rhetoric of Empire: American China Policy, 1895–1901* (1968). Marilyn argued that US policy toward China in the era of the Spanish-American War went beyond economic motives, turning in part on the sense of American leaders that to be a world power the United States needed a presence in Asia. The book is an early example of her great capacity to weave together international relations with domestic politics and culture.

Marilyn's second monograph, *Transforming Russia and China: Revolutionary Struggle in the Twentieth Century* (1982), coauthored with Russia scholar William G. Rosenberg, emerged from a course they taught together. The book was needed, they wrote, because an



Jay Godwin via Flickr/LBJ Library

Marilyn B. Young

American misunderstanding of revolutions made stasis instead of social change appear to be virtuous, and ignored the violence required to maintain an existing social order.

In 1991, Marilyn published her widely read and admired book *The Vietnam Wars, 1945–1990*, which was the first book to examine the war from the Vietnamese and American perspectives together. As Christy Thornton and Stuart Schrader recently put it in *Jacobin*, she “helped usher in a new approach to understanding the US war in Vietnam with a single letter”—the “s” in “wars.” In these and other works, she wrote with passion, eloquence, and wit.

Marilyn was proofing galleys of *The Vietnam Wars* as the 1990 US war with Iraq began. The event gave the book “a new, harsher, and unwanted conclusion,” she wrote in its introduction: “war continues to be a primary instrument of American foreign policy and the call to arms a first response to international disputes.” The carnage and destructiveness for people in war zones made her angry. In March 2003, she was reviewing copy edits on “Ground Zero: Enduring War” in an edited collection, *September 11 in History*, just as President George W. Bush issued Saddam Hussein a 48-hour ultimatum to leave Iraq or be attacked. Her response was a blistering postscript criticizing the Bush administration’s “puerile arrogance” for its preemptive “shock and awe” attack on Baghdad.

Marilyn enjoyed collaborating with others in scholarship and in politics. She coedited several collections of essays, including *Promissory Notes: Women and the Transition to Socialism* (with Rayna Rapp and Sonia Kruks,

1989); *Bombing Civilians: A Twentieth-Century History* (with Yuki Tanaka, 2009); two collections with Lloyd C. Gardner; and more. She was a founding member of the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars, which opposed the Vietnam War and supported improved US relations with the People's Republic of China, and was an active member of Historians Against War. She was awarded fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation and the American Council of Learned Societies, and received the Berkshire Women's History Prize for *The Vietnam Wars*.

Marilyn was elected president of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations for 2011. In her presidential address, she reflected, “I find that I have spent most of my life as a teacher and scholar thinking and writing about war.” At first, it seemed “as if war and peace were discrete: prewar, war, peace, or postwar.” But eventually “this progression of wars has looked to me less like a progression than a continuation: as if between one war and the next, the country was on hold. The shadow of war, as Michael Sherry called it fifteen years ago, seems not to be a shadow but entirely substantial: the substance of American history.” In response, she wrote, “our continuous task must be to make war visible, vivid, an inescapable part of the country's self-consciousness, as inescapable a subject of study as it is a reality.”

Marilyn was tremendously generous to students and other scholars, devoting an extraordinary amount of time to writing letters and reading drafts. She made friends wherever she traveled and often held court at La Lanterna, her favorite Greenwich Village restaurant. In her final few weeks, her apartment was often like a salon, full of friends and family from near and far.

An early intellectual companion was her fellow graduate student, then husband, the historian of China Ernest P. Young. They separated in 1986 and then divorced. She is survived by her children, Lauren Young and Michael J. Young; her sisters Leah Glasser and Carole Atkins; and three grandchildren, Oliver, Jacob, and Claudia. She is also survived by generations of students, colleagues, and friends who are likely to be found—years into the future—at Marilyn's table at La Lanterna, raising a glass in her honor.

Mary L. Dudziak
Emory University

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