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# PERSPECTIVES ON HISTORY

Volume 59: 7  
October 2021



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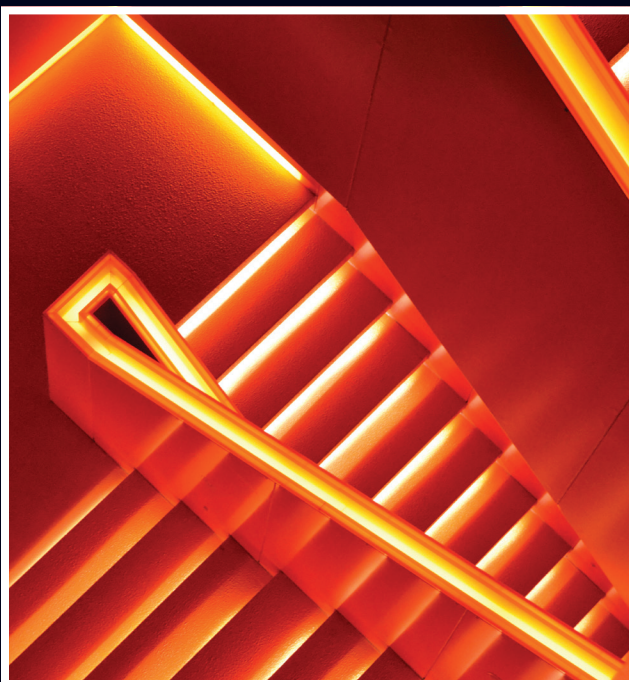
*The Foreign Relations Series at 160*

ADAM M. HOWARD AND KRISTIN L. AHLBERG

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*Encouraging Students to Master Skills with Specifications Grading*

LUKE CLOSSEY AND ESTHER SOUMAN



## ON THE COVER

Luke Clossey and Esther Souman decided to approach assessment in a new way. Blending their experience in paramedicine and gaming, they focused on helping students master specific, essential skills before “leveling up” to the next more difficult or creative assignment. They found that “Evaluating without Grading” enabled students to concentrate on skill mastery and offered themselves flexibility. This issue features their reflection on this approach to students’ academic development.

*Gabriel Izgi/Unsplash*

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ASHLEY E. BOWEN AND OLIVIA RICCHE

## TOWNHOUSE NOTES

*Progress toward a Simple but Audacious Goal*

A year ago, Ashley outlined “A Simple but Audacious Goal” in this column. In short, at the AHA, we believe that *Perspectives*’ “content and its author pool should reflect the diversity of the AHA’s members.” We began taking proactive steps to improve the breadth of our coverage and to recruit new authors to write for the magazine.

An important part of this effort was moving beyond using “gut feelings” about topic coverage and author diversity as a barometer of success. To that end, we started collecting anonymous, voluntary, and self-reported demographic data from authors after publication and began tracking the tags used to categorize posts. We then compared that data to the AHA’s membership demographic data (also voluntary and self-reported, reflecting only about 50 percent of the membership). This data helped us evaluate the publication in a more nuanced way than we have in the past. It also confirmed some of what we already believed about the magazine and revealed areas that require our attention, particularly around content coverage.

According to the self-reported data from 58 percent of 158 authors (excluding staff, Council members, letters to the editor, and In Memoriam writers), *Perspectives* authors are slightly more diverse than the AHA’s membership. For fiscal year 2021, July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, 58 percent of authors identify as women (55 percent) or nonbinary (3 percent), but these groups make up just 41 percent of the membership. Our author pool remains predominantly white (74 percent) but less so than the overall membership (83 percent). Educational background is also slightly more diverse among *Perspectives* authors than it is for the AHA. While the majority hold a PhD (68 percent), an additional 23 percent reported that the MA was their highest degree earned. This is quite different from the membership, in which 83 percent hold PhDs and just 12 percent hold an MA as their highest degree. Finally, the authorship more widely represents various employment sectors, from higher education (50 percent) to libraries and archives (8 percent),

and “other fields” (15 percent). Although a majority of members work in higher education (73 percent), other fields are much less represented in the membership.

If we were buoyed by the relative diversity of our authors, we were disappointed by the breadth of our content. Although the distribution of coverage across our three primary areas of focus—research (44 percent), teaching and learning (24 percent), and professional life (27 percent)—was about what we wanted to see, particularly given that articles can be tagged with both a research topic and a teaching tag, we could have better aligned our coverage of research topics with our members’ interests. In fiscal year 2021, articles tagged North America, a category dominated by US history, constituted approximately 25 percent of our coverage, roughly mirroring the 27 percent of members who report the United States as a topic of interest. However, members’ second- and third-most-common interests, Europe and Latin America, respectively, were not as well represented. Instead, we tended to publish articles on current events in historical context and public history. In some respects, the focus on the United States and current events is easy to dismiss in 2020 and 2021. There was an election, a pandemic, an insurrection, and coordinated attacks on the practice and teaching of history in this country. However, we believe that we can better serve members interested in non-US topics and fields, such as religion and gender and sexuality.

This data is imperfect and limited. We relied on a small set of authors to respond to an optional survey. The tags we use are only an approximation of topics, and they lack nuance and subtlety. However, we believe that this transparency is vital to creating a publication that can cultivate the community of historians and promote our work. **P**

*Ashley E. Bowen is editor of Perspectives on History; she tweets @AEBowenPhD. Olivia Ricche is a junior at the University of Alabama and was a research and publications intern at the AHA in the summer of 2021.*



## Recently Published Online in *Perspectives Daily*



Courtesy Joseph R. Stuart

### Professional Practice and Effort Rewarded

Kevin Diestelow

Should undergraduate students attend the AHA annual meeting? One attendee emphatically says yes.

### Cement Talks

Vyta Pivo

In studying the concrete manufacturing communities of the Lehigh Valley, Vyta Pivo used ethnography to add new layers to her understanding of the worker experience.

### Bowling Together

Joseph R. Stuart and Jeffrey J. Turner

Two graduate students write about how their friendship helped them through their PhD program.

Plus Member Spotlights, Grants of the Week, and more!

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JACQUELINE JONES

## BIOGRAPHY'S OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS

*Confronting Your Subject as Both Person and Persona*



In the summer of 1899, the anarchist Lucy Parsons was in her element, holding forth on Chicago street corners and condemning the United States' incursion into the Philippines. Parsons and other radicals saw the Spanish-American War as an exercise in imperialism on behalf of American economic interests. One day in July, her 21-year-old son, Albert Parsons Jr., told her that he planned to join the army and serve overseas. She was enraged. She hauled him before a judge and had him declared legally insane, though by all other accounts, that was not the case; a high school graduate, he was now working as a clerk. The judge remanded him to Elgin Asylum, north of Chicago, where he languished for years, apparently tormented by inmates and guards alike because of his infamous mother. He died there of tuberculosis in 1919.

I had chosen to write about Parsons because of the vast amount of relevant historical material available. She was the widow of Albert Parsons, wrongly accused and then hanged for his role in the Chicago Haymarket bombing of 1886. Parsons was notorious in her day; the mainstream press covered her almost obsessively, especially during the period between 1886 and 1900. She gave many speeches reprinted in newspapers; wrote social commentary, poetry, fiction, and editorials for various radical magazines; and published and edited two short-lived newspapers during her long lifetime (1851–1942). She spoke in terms that seem familiar to us today, denouncing the growing gap between the rich and poor, arguing for the necessity of labor unions, and warning about the displacement of workers by machines. I did not lack for her writings or for newspaper accounts of her lecture tours around the country.

As Parsons's biographer, I considered Lucy Parsons's treatment of her son unfathomable, cruel in the extreme. I wondered how I could write about Parsons with the dispassion that a biography demanded. I knew I should

somehow contextualize or account for this incident in her life, but that was no easy matter.

The writer Carolyn Ashbaugh wrote the first full-length biography of Lucy Parsons in 1976. It occurred to me that online sources and the proliferation of genealogical material—census data; historical newspapers; and birth, marriage, and death records—might open vast new possibilities for exploring Parsons's life. A new biography of Parsons struck me as a good way to explore radical politics in America's Gilded Age.

I wondered how I could write about Parsons with the dispassion that a biography demanded.

I began this research project intrigued by Parsons qua agitator and provocateur. She showed remarkable courage in defying police officers and judges, insisting on the right of the laboring classes to use dynamite as a weapon, and embracing a violent rhetoric that tested the limits of the First Amendment. However, I failed to anticipate some of the occupational hazards of writing a full-length biography about someone who seemed determined to withhold details about her own background and state of mind. What I discovered was a woman who suffered multiple traumas throughout her life and who needed to remain in firm control of her public persona, no matter the personal costs.

I found myself wondering how I should deal with aspects of her life that left me baffled, mystified: Should I elide these details if I could not explain them? Speculate about her motivations, even in the absence of evidence related to her interior life? I soon realized that I had to explore Parsons as a whole person and not try to fit her into the conventional narrative that portrayed her as the heroic widow of a Haymarket martyr.

Gradually, I came to understand that Parsons's turbulent early years and subsequent personal losses shaped her life; enslaved for her first 14 years, she was forcibly removed from Virginia by her owner to central Texas around 1863. In the late 1860s, she had a baby boy, but when she left Texas for Chicago as a married woman (in 1872 or 1873), she did not have a baby with her. Her daughter Lulu, born in 1881, died nine years later. The death of her daughter and what she called the "judicial murder" of her husband affected her deeply.

After her husband's conviction in the summer of 1886, Parsons began to claim that she was born to Mexican and Native American parents in Texas. She assumed the persona of a Latina, though she never pretended to be able to read or speak Spanish. She hid the story of her early life in Virginia from her adoring audiences, preferring to keep them guessing about the circumstances of her birth.

As Parsons's biographer, I had the responsibility to understand her as a full person.

Despite her public show of bravado, she lived a hard life, constantly worrying about money—and about her own reputation as an uncompromising, take-no-prisoners radical. Her son's plan to enlist threatened that reputation.

Lucy Parsons's racial identity and her decision to have her son committed to an insane asylum were not the only troubling aspects of her life I had to confront and explain. I was also struck by her apparent studied indifference to the plight of Chicago's Black population over her lifetime. She claimed to be a radical's radical, disdainful of virtually all American institutions. She denigrated organized religion and the Republican, Democratic, and Socialist political parties, and she had contempt for suffragists because, she said, the vote was a waste of time for everyone. Parsons presented herself as a more thorough critic of American society than other radical labor leaders of the time. Consequently, I was mystified by her refusal to address the obvious racial prejudices of many members of the white laboring classes—prejudices that divided workers from one another and strengthened the power of employers.

And, too, somewhat surprisingly, Parsons rejected the call for nonmonogamous relationships in contrast to "free

love" anarchists such as Emma Goldman. Parsons argued that the nuclear family was the foundation of a just world and that children must be certain who their parents were. Her contemporaries called her out for her hypocrisy, for in her widowhood, she carried on at least one highly publicized affair with a young married man, the father of two children. She apparently shared Goldman's commitment to female sexual liberation—or license—but refused to admit it in her writings or speeches.

Lucy Parsons's life contained a large element of performance. She delighted in upending the contemporary stereotype of the anarchist as a scruffy, bearded old man and in disappointing audiences who expected a pitiful widow with a pathetic story to tell. Instead, she gave them a fashionably dressed firebrand, eloquent in her denunciations of the ruling classes. As her biographer, I had the responsibility to understand her as a full person and not just the creature of people who found her merely exotic—or dangerous.

For historians, biographical research can reveal the everyday workings of larger historical forces in a particular time and place, but it can also reveal the psychological complexities of any one person, complexities that might remain a mystery to the biographer—and, indeed, in Parsons's case, a mystery even to those who thought they knew her well. **P**

*Jacqueline Jones is president of the AHA.*

JAMES GROSSMAN AND BETH ENGLISH

# AHA AND OAH JOIN COALITION TO COMBAT MISINFORMATION

*The Integrity of History Education Is at Stake*

The American Historical Association and the Organization of American Historians (OAH) have joined Learn from History, a coalition of more than 25 organizations that oppose efforts that would limit the ability of educators to maintain the scholarly integrity of courses in US history. Drawing on careful survey research, and knowledge of what is in fact being taught in American classrooms, the Learn from History (LFH) coalition seeks to combat deliberate misinformation about the current state of history education and the ways that historians write about and teach the centrality of racism to the evolution of American institutions. The OAH and AHA have signed on to the coalition because we agree on these imperatives and because our organizations bring to the table our standing and expertise as historians.

Neither organization is new to this controversial landscape. This past June, we joined 147 other associations, including higher-education accreditors, to condemn legislation that was introduced or enacted in 27 state legislatures with the aim of discouraging or prohibiting the straightforward coverage of topics in which issues of racism, sexism, and other “divisive” concepts arise. Seeking to frame these concepts as aberrant to the nation’s founding principles and arc of progress, laws such as Texas House Bill 3979—“relating to the social studies curriculum in public schools” and signed into law on June 15, 2021—prohibit slavery and racism from being taught as “anything other than deviations from, betrayals of, or failures to live up to, the authentic founding principles of the United States, which include liberty and equality.” Such laws, the June statement made clear, “risk infringing on the right of faculty to teach and of students to learn” and “seek to substitute political mandates for the considered judgment of professional educators, hindering students’ ability to learn and engage in critical thinking across differences and disagreements.”

As schools across the country opened for the 2021–22 school year, controversies over mask mandates surged,

sometimes with such virulence as to nudge into the background continuing efforts to stir up disputes over the history curriculum. But damage has already been done: legislation and local activism against legitimate coverage of racism as a central force in American history have left teachers concerned about retribution. A few instructors and administrators have already been sanctioned or lost their jobs. In Texas, the lack of official implementation guidance for the new legislation has some educators “making curriculum changes ‘out of caution’” and others “forgoing civics-related activities.”

The Learn from History coalition  
seeks to combat deliberate  
misinformation about the current  
state of history education.

Ongoing partisan agitation around this issue will continue, provoked and sustained by a shrewdly organized and amply funded crusade that seeks to replace evidence-based history instruction with a whitewashed version of patriotism. One of the primary spokespeople of this effort has boasted of successfully “rebranding” critical race theory to encompass just about anything that inflames his fans and benefactors. He’s right about his success, if not his subject: the term *critical race theory* is now bandied about by activists, politicians, and media personalities who haven’t the foggiest notion of what it actually means. A raft of “divisive concepts” have been contrived only to be opposed, through legislation that sometimes refers simply to the centrality of conflict and division in American history itself. In a 21st-century version of the mid-20th century’s communist conspiracies, the purveyors of these ideas conjure visions of the nation’s children being indoctrinated by educators pushing “Marxist” critical race theory in K–12 classrooms across the country.



It is against this backdrop—especially the increasingly inflammatory rhetoric around the teaching of racism and other “divisive” concepts—that the AHA and OAH have joined the Learn from History coalition, the first well-organized and well-funded mobilization to oppose campaigns of misinformation at the level of communication and public relations. The coalition’s goals are to serve as a communications clearinghouse to help educate parents, voters, and anyone interested in what is actually taught in history classrooms; to enable history teachers and their institutions to work honestly and professionally; and to “support educators in every way possible to focus on educating our students, free from intimidation, disruption, and fear.”

### Most of the organizations in this coalition represent educators broadly defined.

LFH equips a wide range of stakeholders with resources to engage in the important grassroots work of countering misinformation about critical race theory and what is taught in the nation’s classrooms. This work draws on polling data showing that a broad bipartisan majority of Americans are in favor of good history being taught; approve of social studies teachers introducing uncomfortable subjects (e.g., slavery and segregation) into their classrooms; and believe that racism has shaped public policy and social patterns in the United States. Armed with this knowledge—and standard scholarship on such topics as slavery, legally mandated segregation, lynching and continuing modes of racially motivated violence, labor practices, income data, educational disparities, and more—members of the coalition can provide parents, school boards, superintendents, teachers, and legislators with concise arguments to combat misinformation. For example, to the question “Do you oppose efforts to ban critical race theory or teaching of ‘divisive concepts?’” LFH provides the short yet effective response “Yes, because the vaguely worded bans actually censor teachers, prevent thorough, accurate, and fact-based history instruction, and ban lessons that help students learn racism is wrong.” The coalition’s materials will include sample responses to other FAQs directed at specific misinformation and will provide continuously updated data on state legislative activity and even local hot spots of debate.

To facilitate this work by its members—and their members, in turn—LFH will provide guides that can be distributed widely and readily supplemented with materials produced

by organizations like the OAH and AHA. Given the broad political spectrum represented among its members, the coalition itself will maintain a critical distance from legislative lobbying and refrain from participation in lawsuits. The tracking and materials, however, will help members who wish to take a more active stance themselves, as the AHA has done in five letters on this issue sent to legislators in three states. Individual AHA and OAH members are encouraged to bring their historical expertise to bear in conversations in their local communities by attending school board meetings and running for school board positions. LFH’s materials provide resources for these activities.

Most of the organizations in this coalition represent educators broadly defined, including organizations of school boards and superintendents. The AHA and OAH join with them to oppose cynical, politically motivated attempts to misrepresent what is taught in history classrooms and to maintain an educational landscape in which students are encouraged to explore ideas, ask questions, and develop a historical perspective drawn from primary sources and reputable scholarship. This is what we do and have done for a long time. As former OAH president Leon Litwack explained in 1995, “The indispensable strength of this nation remains our freedom to question and probe various versions of reality, to experiment with new ideas, and to undermine old dogmas and values, even to insult proprieties and expose absurdities.” **P**

*A version of this article is also being published in the OAH’s The American Historian.*

*James Grossman is executive director of the AHA; he tweets @JimGrossmanAHA. Beth English is executive director of the Organization of American Historians; she tweets @Beth\_A\_English.*



## The Ralph Gomory Prize

The 2021 Ralph Gomory Prize of the Business History Conference was awarded to Suzanne Marchand for her book, *Porcelain: A History from the Heart of Europe* (Princeton University Press) at the Business History Conference held virtually on March 13th, 2021.

The Ralph Gomory Prize for Business History (made possible by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation) recognizes historical work on the effect business enterprises have on the economic conditions of a country in which they operate. A \$5,000 prize is awarded annually. Eligible books are written in English and published two years (2020 or 2021 copyright) prior to the award. The 2022 Prize will be presented at the annual meeting of the Business History Conference to be held in Mexico City, April 9th, 2022.

Four copies of a book must accompany a nomination and be submitted to the Prize Coordinator, Carol Ressler Lockman, Business History Conference, PO Box 3630, 298 Buck Road, Wilmington, DE 19807-0630 USA. Email: [clockman@hagley.org](mailto:clockman@hagley.org).

**The deadline for submission is November 30, 2021.**

Information is available at <http://www.thebhc.org/gomory>



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## ADVOCACY BRIEFS

*Health, Safety, and Scholars at Risk*

**The AHA's advocacy through the end of summer focused on health and safety, with letters about COVID-19 vaccination rates, accessibility and safety precautions in planned reopenings, and aid for at-risk Afghan scholars. The battle against so-called "divisive concepts" legislation continued with letters to Ohio and Texas legislators about bills that would impact history education in the states.**

### **AHA Issues Letter Regarding COVID-19 Vaccination Rates in Louisiana**

On July 26, the AHA issued a letter to Louisiana governor John Bel Edwards and other leaders in the state, expressing "alarm that vaccination rates in the state of Louisiana remain well below the national average." "We know that city and state officials are eager to see business travel resume and travel industry jobs and revenue rebound," the AHA wrote, "and we trust that you will mount a vigorous public health effort to increase vaccination rates and prevent a renewed surge of COVID cases, which would necessitate the reimposition of restrictions on conferences and business travel." The AHA wants to ensure that its annual meeting, to be held in New Orleans in January 2022, is "as safe as possible for all to attend."

### **AHA Issues Letter Objecting to Social Studies Curriculum Legislation in Ohio**

On July 29, the AHA issued a letter to Ohio governor Mike DeWine and the members of the state legislature, registering "strong objection to Ohio HB 322 and HB 327, acts relating to the social studies curriculum in public schools." These bills, wrote the AHA, are "a tangle of contradictory mandates" about how history can be taught and "part of a misguided, nationally coordinated attempt to put the government in classrooms at every level from kindergarten through high school—and in the case of HB 327, through higher education—to intimidate teachers, and to indoctrinate students rather than helping them learn the inquiry-based skills that will prepare them for their future civic and professional lives."

### **AHA Sends Letter to NARA Regarding Planned Reopening**

On August 2, the AHA sent a letter seeking clarity on the National Archives and Records Administration's (NARA) planned reopening following pandemic closures and to offer the AHA's "help in communicating with the community of history researchers." The AHA recognized "the difficulties of operating facilities around the country during a pandemic" and encouraged NARA to maximize equitable access to its collections while continuing to make the health

and safety of NARA staff its highest priority.

On August 5, the AHA issued an apology to colleagues who work in archival institutions for the misguided communication around this letter and the lack of clarity about the AHA's ongoing conversation with NARA. "When it comes to making decisions about the operations of libraries and archives," the AHA affirmed, it "defers to the professional expertise of librarians and archivists."

### **AHA Signs On to Letter Urging Aid for Afghanistan's Scholars, Students, Practitioners, Civil Society Leaders, and Activists**

On August 17, the AHA signed on to a letter from the Scholars at Risk Network to US secretary of state Antony J. Blinken, requesting "immediate action" from the US Department of State "to save Afghanistan's scholars, students, practitioners, civil society leaders and activists, especially women and ethnic and religious minorities." "The eroding situation in Afghanistan poses a threat not only to the lives of our colleagues still in Afghanistan, but to the future of that country, and to the future security and honor of the United States," the letter stated. "If we move quickly, we can go a long way towards mitigating the worst of the threats and demonstrate continuing commitment to the future of Afghanistan and its people."

### AHA Sends Letter Opposing Proposed Legislation on History Education in Texas

On August 25, the AHA wrote to Texas governor Greg Abbott and the members of the state legislature to oppose SB 3 and HB 28, introduced during the Texas legislature's special session. "This proposed legislation threatens the integrity of history education in Texas," the

AHA wrote. The AHA "urges the Texas legislature to reject these bills, both of which seek to indoctrinate students rather than help them learn the inquiry-based skills that will prepare them for their future civic and professional lives." The letter cited a previous AHA letter to Governor Abbott and the Texas Senate in May, an AHA statement in July, and a joint statement in June addressing similar legislative

efforts that "risk infringing on the right of faculty to teach and of students to learn." **P**

*Rebecca L. West is the operations and communications assistant at the AHA.*

## Teaching/Fellowship Opportunity for a Distinguished Historian of the United States, Occidental College History Department

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Applicants should submit a letter of interest, curriculum vitae, research proposal for the Huntington, course proposals for Occidental courses, evaluations of undergraduate teaching, and three letters of recommendation by email to Katherine Izumi at [kizumi@oxy.edu](mailto:kizumi@oxy.edu), "Attention: Billington" in subject heading. **All materials are due by November 5, 2021.**

For more details, please see our webpage: <https://www.oxy.edu/billington>

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ADAM M. HOWARD AND KRISTIN L. AHLBERG

# CONSISTENTLY EVOLVING

*The Foreign Relations Series at 160*



The Harry S. Truman Building, home of the US Department of State, in Washington, DC. The Office of the Historian is adjacent on Navy Hill.

*Adam M. Howard*

**THE OFFICE OF** the Historian (OH) at the US Department of State is charged with producing the Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) series, the official documentary history of US foreign policy and diplomatic activity. One of the largest federal history offices, OH employs professionally trained historians to work on the series. Producing FRUS is a multistage process, involving researching, selecting, and annotating documents; reviewing volume manuscripts to ensure their substantive and stylistic integrity; coordinating each volume's complex, yearslong interagency declassification review process; and editing and publishing volumes in both print and digital formats. An external Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation (HAC), composed of nine scholars who either serve at large or represent various professional organizations (including the AHA), provides OH counsel and recommendations on the series.

In 2021, OH is commemorating three anniversaries: the 160th anniversary of the FRUS series, the 100th anniversary of the creation of OH to oversee its publication, and the 30th anniversary of the 1991 statute that ensured a more thorough and reliable account of US foreign relations after World War II. Despite the many challenges faced in publishing FRUS over the decades, department historians have worked to ensure that the public has access to documentation that lives up to the 1991 statute's requirement that FRUS provide a "thorough, reliable, and accurate record" of US foreign relations history.

FRUS originated in 1861, when Congress requested that the Lincoln administration provide documentation revealing its foreign policy conduct during the Civil War, which had broken out just months before. Legislative branch requests for foreign affairs documents were not new, but the collection of more than 300 documents chronicling US foreign policy during 1861 that the Lincoln administration sent to Congress in December 1861 offered a global perspective on US involvement abroad. The Civil War FRUS volumes became an exercise in public diplomacy, providing the Lincoln administration the opportunity to highlight the Union's success in persuading foreign countries not to recognize—and thereby legitimate—the Confederacy.

For its first several decades, FRUS was basically a contemporary accounting of US foreign policy compiled by unnamed clerks in the Department of State. That changed over the course of the early 20th century. In 1921, the department regularized FRUS production by creating the Division of Publications—which evolved into OH—and hiring trained historians to research and compile the series. Four years

later, Secretary of State Frank Kellogg endorsed a series of editorial principles for FRUS that guided its production until they were codified by Congress in 1991.

The 1991 Foreign Relations Authorization Act for FY 1992 and 1993 (22 U.S.C. 4351 et seq.) proved a turning point in the history of FRUS and OH. In the 1980s, the series failed to meet expectations as a tool for transparency when OH published volumes covering US relations with Iran and Guatemala during the early 1950s that did not accurately represent covert activities in both countries. In compiling these volumes, OH historians were not consistently granted access to records concerning historically significant covert actions. Even when historians could access them, the Department of State and other agencies refused to clear such documentation for publication. The 1991 statute granted OH historians "full and complete access" to foreign policy records, including information on covert activities, and empowered the HAC to access the information it needed to validate the integrity of the series. With interagency cooperation, FRUS has become the US government's only regular, institutionalized mechanism for the public acknowledgment of covert actions; since 1998, FRUS has documented 64 major covert actions.

## In 2021, the Office of the Historian is commemorating three anniversaries.

The law also established new standards for the series as a whole, including that it provide a "thorough, accurate, and reliable record" of US foreign relations 30 years after the documented events. This created a perennial challenge for OH, finding the balance between thoroughness and timeliness. A new organizational approach helped. OH historians created three rubrics for FRUS coverage: core, context, and crisis volumes. Each presidential administration would have core volumes that covered fundamental issues like foreign economic policy and national security policy. Context volumes would cover US bilateral and multilateral relationships. Finally, crisis volumes would handle subjects unique to each administration.

One of the biggest challenges OH has faced in its recent history is documenting the US role in the shifting dynamics of the post-1945 world. The United States' rise to superpower status, growing foreign affairs bureaucracy, and expanding foreign relations led OH historians to conduct research in an ever-broader array of official and personal records. Whereas Department of State records were for

decades the primary source of the material included in FRUS, records from agencies such as the Department of Defense, the Department of the Treasury, the National Security Council, and the Central Intelligence Agency became important for volumes covering the late 1940s onward. Additionally, broader social, cultural, and political changes that took place domestically and globally influenced presidential administrations in foreign policy formulation and conduct.

## OH embraces technological innovation as a way of making FRUS more accessible.

OH has worked diligently to harness technological advances to make the series more readily accessible to the public. Beginning in the 1980s, OH produced microfiche supplements composed of additional documentation for select FRUS volumes covering the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations. With the development of the internet during the 1990s, OH began to post HTML versions of the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon volumes online. For the Nixon and Ford subseries, it produced electronic-only volumes consisting of text, limited annotation, and digital scans of selected archival documents. Some e-volumes contained additional documentation that could not be included in their companion print volumes because of space limitations, allowing e-volumes to expand the amount of documentation made available to the public. However, they also presented unique declassification, editing, and publication challenges and lacked much of the rich contextual annotation of print volumes, leading to their abandonment in the Carter subseries.

Although FRUS remains available on the shelves of federal depository libraries, OH also embraces technological innovation as a way of making it more accessible. Starting in 2009, in partnership with the University of Wisconsin's Digital Collections Center, OH converted high-quality scanned images of the contents of all volumes dating back to 1861 into a Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) encoded XML format and posted it on its website. With the FRUS series' back catalog now fully digital, OH is currently in the process of converting the microfiche supplements into full-text searchable documents on its website. Digital versions of FRUS volumes now contain date-based search capabilities and exist in a variety of digital formats, thus delivering value to readers who use the series in different ways and for different purposes.

The markedly increased volume of digital documentation during the 1980s and 1990s has also presented OH historians with new challenges. Not only are the archival materials

more voluminous than ever before, but they also include critical born-digital records. For the first time, for example, OH historians have had to conduct research in email to document the policy process in the Reagan White House. Incorporating the messages into FRUS required OH to develop and refine editorial standards for this type of documentation, which will grow increasingly important for future subseries.

Perhaps the biggest challenge confronting FRUS is declassification. The mandate to produce a "thorough, accurate, and reliable" record means that OH historians research both publicly available unclassified/declassified files and classified files that are inaccessible to the public. Completed volume manuscripts always include a substantial amount of classified documentation, which OH does not itself have the authority to declassify. Instead, OH refers the documents to those agencies with "equity" in the materials for declassification review, a process that takes, on average, more than three and a half years to complete. The entire FRUS declassification process, with all its complexities, reflects decades of experience of dedicated public servants doing their best to release as much historical information as possible, without risking national security.

This combination of thorough coverage and technological innovation has made the FRUS series the gold standard of foreign relations documentary publications. The series' international prestige led OH to become a founding member of the International Conference of Editors of Diplomatic Documents in 1988, where it has played a leadership role in assisting other countries' historical documentary programs, both existing and emergent.

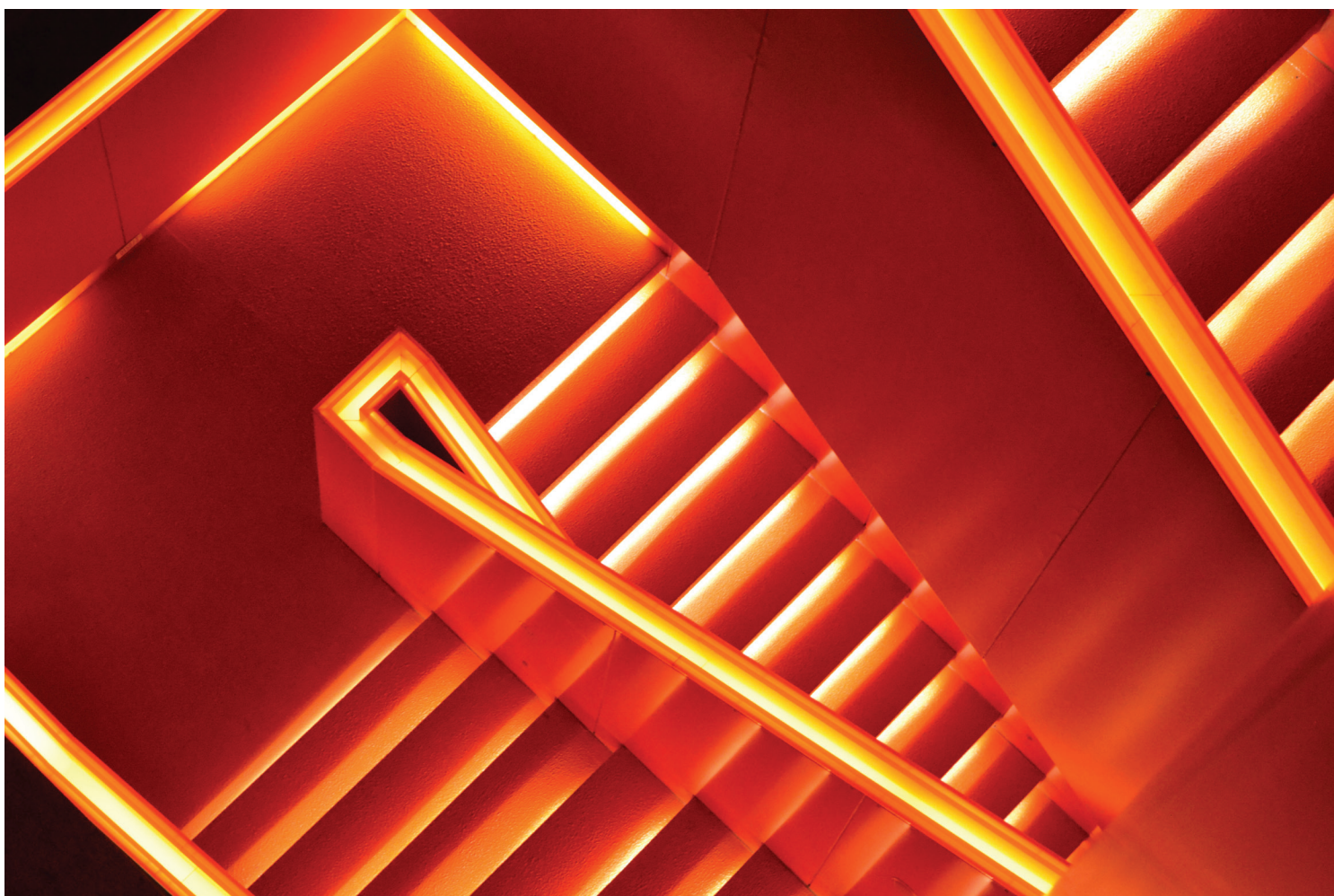
Looking back 160 years, to the publication of the first FRUS volume, and 30 years, to the statute that governs the current iteration of the series, provides a historical frame of reference for the challenges OH confronts in adapting its operations to keep pace with more modern research practices and changes in historiographical approach. It also inspires OH to think creatively about how it can build on past successes and present-day hard work to add greater historical value to future FRUS publications and to engage with a broader community of scholars, researchers, and citizens in future outreach efforts. **P**

*Adam M. Howard is the Historian of the Department of State. Kristin L. Ahlberg is the Assistant to the General Editor in the Office of the Historian. They would like to thank Joshua Botts, Mandy Chalou, Thomas Faith, Amy Garrett, William McAllister, and Melissa Jane Taylor for their assistance in preparing this article and Renée Goings and Kathleen B. Rasmussen for their comments.*

LUKE CLOSSEY AND ESTHER SOUMAN

# EVALUATING WITHOUT GRADING

*Encouraging Students to Master Skills with Specifications Grading*



The specifications grading system enables students to earn their grades by moving sequentially and passing different levels of assignments.

*Gabriel Izgil/Unsplash*

**THERE'S NOTHING QUITE** like the exhilaration of walking into a classroom full of chatty, eager students at the beginning of a semester. There's also nothing quite like that deflating feeling when, a couple of weeks into the semester, you sit down to grade their first assignments, only to realize that many of those same students could not demonstrate basic skills and concepts of historical research and writing. Where did you go wrong? How can you face these same students after they receive their grades back?

But what if failure were an expected part of the learning process, with students getting additional chances at an assignment until they got it right? Repetition is common sense in many professional fields and in video games, both of which form a large part of many students' lives outside school. What might this chance to repeat a skill until it's been mastered look like in the history classroom?

Mastering a skill is at the heart of the specifications grading system. We first came across it in Linda B. Nilson's authoritative *Specifications Grading* (Stylus, 2015). Her sales pitch was hard to resist. The subtitle made three appealing promises: *Restoring Rigor, Motivating Students, and Saving Faculty Time*. We tried a pedagogical experiment in our Introduction to Global History course at Simon Fraser University (SFU) last autumn, in which students earned their grades by "unlocking" different levels of various assignments. We introduced a specifications grading system, evaluating individual assignments on a pass-fail basis, and created multiple pathways for students to move through the assignments and earn a final grade. Our goal was to ensure that every student mastered basic skills and that the more advanced students had opportunities to develop more creative projects.

One of the instructors, Luke Clossey, had studied paramedicine and was struck by the differences between those classes and history classes. A paramedicine student who forgets to check distal circulation for a limb injury is not allowed to continue until the maneuver is repeatedly performed to satisfaction. A history student who fails to include a thesis statement might continue to fail to include a thesis, assignment after assignment, until enough Cs are collected to graduate.

In the months before the pandemic forced SFU to move its instruction online, the course's other instructor, Esther Souman, had been researching digital and other alternate methods for teaching and learning in the history classroom. She focused particularly on student learning through designing historical role-playing games and other storytelling and visual projects, incorporating content and tools that are relevant and in demand outside academia.

Together, we were looking for a course setup that made space for student interests. We wanted to find a system where learning meant doing rather than memorizing, involving the paramedicine school's insistence on skill mastery and the game master's creative and purposeful delivery of content.

Following Nilson's specifications grading model, we graded each assignment as pass-fail, with a high bar but straightforward, explicit requirements. Course grades were determined by the number and difficulty of assignments successfully completed. The literature suggests specifications grading lowers stress and promotes learning, with students focusing on reaching specific assignment goals and keeping track of their own progress.

We added a progressive twist that allowed the more enthusiastic students to quickly demonstrate competence and move on to advanced projects. We divided assignments into four sequential levels, each involving a more sophisticated skill than that of the previous level. During the semester, there were four points when a student submitted written work. First, everyone attempted a level 1 (L1) assignment. For the second assignment, students who had passed the L1 assignment could submit an L2, while the rest wrote a new L1 assignment. This pattern continued through the semester: at each point, students were allowed to attempt a more advanced assignment only if they had completed an assignment at the preceding level.

## Specifications grading lowers stress and promotes learning.

L1 started simple: "Summarize the podcast(s) and sources from a single week of your choice." Having read so many theses in previous classes that were only summaries, we were confident that most students could easily master the skill. This was a test of basic writing conventions (e.g., no sentence fragments) and following directions (e.g., no external sources or analysis). L2 added a thesis statement: "Analyze any source, and make an explicit argument that demonstrates insight." Our hope was that every student would complete this level by the end of the course. Students who wrote a successful L2 assignment demonstrated their command of the fundamentals, which unlocked the more creative levels. L3 broadly asked students to "create something," such as hyperlinked maps, timelines of family histories, and even a historical role-playing session. L4 called for synthesis, with projects ranging from personal synopses of world history to public-policy proposals. Because students working on these projects had already proved their basic abilities, we gave them free rein and

encouraged them to follow their own curiosity and priorities.

At the end of the course, successful completion of a single assignment yielded a D, two assignments a C, three a B, and four an A. We used participation to fine-tune the course grades. Pluses adorned the grades of the more active participants, and minuses qualified the grades of their less active classmates. We planned for participation to be broadly defined: annotate the readings in advance, attend a tutorial, speak up (by making either a spoken or a written contribution to the class discussion), and collect all the points for the week. If a student completed two assignments and accumulated 80 percent of the possible participation points, the student's C would become a C+.

### Tutorials transformed from required tedium to useful workshops.

To further take advantage of this system, instead of assigning each student to a tutorial, we created four weekly workshops on different topics that students could freely choose among. Often, these weekly workshops were dedicated to a specific level of assignments. This approach had the advantage of grouping students who had completed previous assignments in one workshop and those who needed more guidance in another, allowing us to tailor instruction more precisely than in traditional tutorials populated by students' schedule preferences.

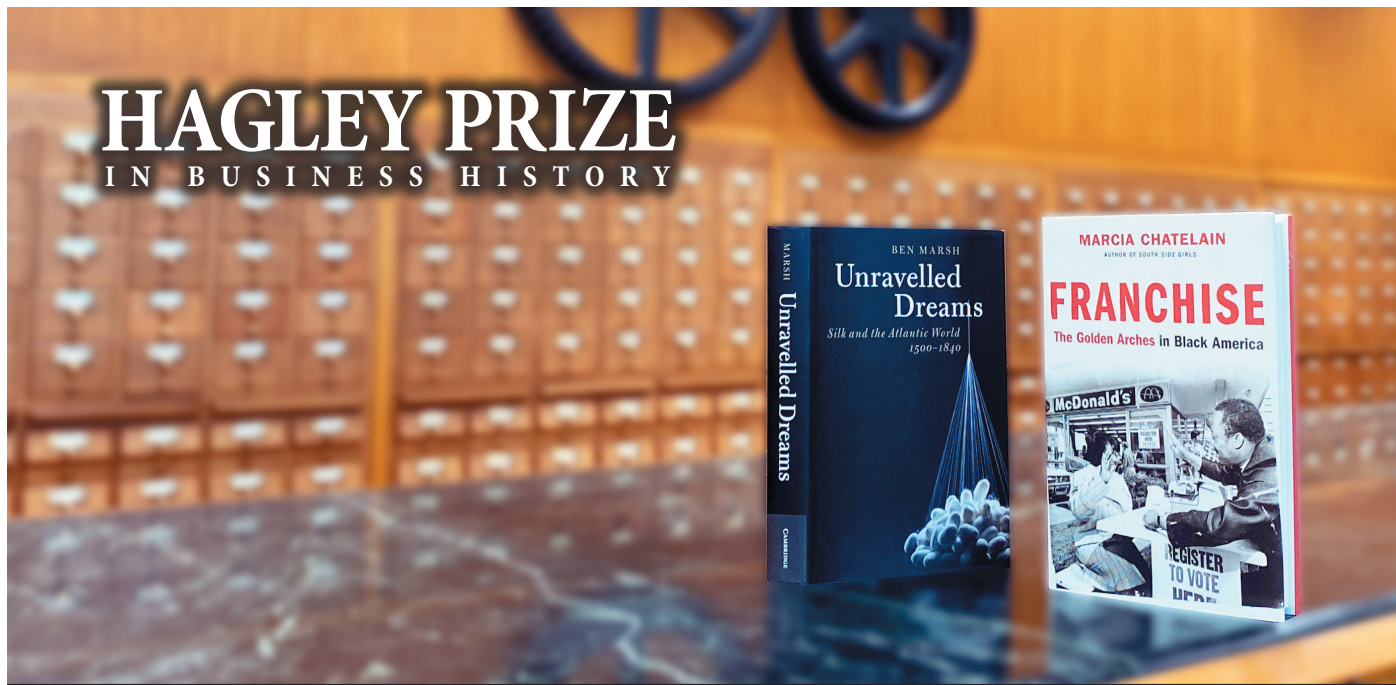
When we first introduced this system, student reactions ranged from mystified to suspicious to intrigued. Once the first assignments were returned and they had a better sense of how it would work, their anxiety dissipated. Because every assignment level allowed for student choice and every assignment was marked pass-fail, interest replaced fear as a motivator. One student noted that the assignments "increased learning hugely. [They] made me do more of my own research than ever before and dig deeper into the content, out of curiosity rather than in search of a better grade." Another "felt that I learned more and it reflected the work that I put in as a student instead of a final where the mark could be affected depending on how I was feeling for 2–3 hours." Tutorials transformed from required tedium to useful workshops. One student regretted being limited to only one tutorial a week, and another "never once felt that I didn't want to be there." At the end of the course, only 6 percent of the students said they preferred the traditional system.

As instructors, we could organize our time better and offer more targeted support to students. The usual hours of grading reduced dramatically to a simple binary decision for each paper: Did it pass? We dedicated newly available time to working individually with students keen to meet particular requirements. The most palpable success came on the extremes of the spectrum: the strongest students, liberated from grade anxiety, did some amazing work, while many of the students who had needed guidance at the beginning of the semester, through work precisely targeted at the lacking specifications, were able to demonstrably gain new skills—which was encouraging to students and instructors alike.

In September, we had no idea how student grades would fare under the new system. Would everyone get As? Would no one? The most common pathway, taken by one-third of the students, was to pass two assignments, fail one, and then successfully complete a new version of that failed assignment, earning a B—that is, success marked by a setback that was revisited and overcome. The rest of the students were evenly distributed among the possible grades. Some never managed to successfully complete the L1 summary. Some never missed a beat, completed each assignment on the first try, and earned their As. In total, two-thirds of the students mastered thesis statements by the end of the semester, our central goal for the course.

Overall, both instructors and most students were enthusiastic about the specifications grading system. Students could concentrate on skill mastery and add creative projects when they were ready. At the same time, instructors had the flexibility and, more importantly, the time to tailor tutorials and office hours toward students' specific needs. With minor modifications and tweaks related to assignment submission options and strictness of assignment requirements, we plan to use this system again. Specifications grading allowed the students to focus on learning and the instructors to focus on teaching. **P**

*Luke Closley is associate professor of history at Simon Fraser University. Esther Souman is a history PhD candidate at Simon Fraser University. For an example assignment sheet, grading rubric, and diagram showing final grade distribution, please visit the AHA's Classroom Materials webpage.*



Hagley Museum and Library and the Business History Conference are pleased to announce the 2021 co-winners of the Hagley Prize: Marcia Chatelain, *Franchise: The Golden Arches in Black America* (W.W. Norton) and Ben Marsh, *Unravelled Dreams: Silk and the Atlantic World, 1500-1840* (Cambridge University Press). Hagley Museum and Library and the Business History Conference jointly offer the Hagley Prize awarded to the best book in Business History (broadly defined) and consists of a medallion and \$2,500. The prize was awarded at the Business History Conference annual meeting held virtually on March 13th, 2021.



The prize committee encourages the submission of books from all methodological perspectives. It is particularly interested in innovation studies that have the potential to expand the boundaries of the discipline. Scholars, publishers, and other interested parties may submit nominations. Eligible books can have either an American or an international focus. They must be written in English and be published during the two years (2020 or 2021 copyright) prior to the award.



Four copies of a book must accompany a nomination and be submitted to the prize coordinator, Carol Ressler Lockman, Hagley Museum and Library, PO Box 3630, 298 Buck Road, Wilmington DE 19807-0630, **The deadline for nominations is November 30, 2021.** The 2022 Hagley Prize will be presented at the annual meeting of the Business History Conference to be held in Mexico City, April 9th, 2022.



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COURTNEY LUCKHARDT

## CONFRONTING RACE AND MEDIEVAL FANTASIES

*Teaching the Middle Ages in the Modern South*

In the early-morning hours of May 2, 2017, the base of the gilded statue of Joan of Arc in the French Quarter of New Orleans was tagged with the phrase “Tear it down.” This tag appeared in the midst of the removal of the city’s Confederate monuments. The week before, the first of four monuments was taken down amid a heavy police presence. Later in May, a statue of Robert E. Lee was removed from atop a 60-foot column. But how did the statue of a medieval female warrior saint get caught up in the controversy over Confederate monuments?

Among New Orleanians, the 15th-century saint Joan of Arc is known mostly for the Krewe de Jeanne d’Arc. This Mardi Gras walking parade kicks off Carnival season each year on January 6 and stops at the statue to pay homage to its namesake. In an interview with the *Times-Picayune*, the krewe’s founder, Amy Kirk Duvoisin, also expressed confusion about why Joan was targeted: “Surely, people realize she’s not related to American history.”

The vandalism of the statue of a medieval saint in the midst of local controversy over monuments and memorialization may have been a simple case of mistaken identity. However, the unknown tagger wasn’t wrong to associate a monument of a medieval figure with monuments of Confederates. Joan of Arc herself was appropriated by the women’s order of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s as an example that white women should emulate. Ideas about the glory of the Middle Ages have been used by white supremacists in the United States and Europe to reduce the real and complex history of that period to one focused on the supposed “white” origins of civilization.

History as a discipline, not just medieval history, has a race problem; history degrees earned at all levels are dominated by white people. Some of my students come to courses on the Middle Ages seeking stories of white heritage or exceptionalism, a narrative they might have learned from conceptions of the period here in the South and in popular culture more

broadly. However, scholars and teachers of the period today are attuned to the role that race and racism plays in minimizing the reality of the global nature of the Middle Ages. Students encountering medieval views of the nature of just war, the treatment of women and minorities, or the development of good government see that they were rather different from modern views of these topics—and, sometimes, not different enough.

Our understanding of the past, our historical consciousness, is always shaped by how it was taught to us. As a medieval historian teaching in Mississippi and living in New Orleans, I am confronted every day with both the complexities of the region I live in and the period I study. Teaching the Middle Ages in the modern southern United States allows me to facilitate conversations with both students and the wider public that ask them to reexamine their ideas about the past in light of cutting-edge scholarship to shake off antiquated ideas that reflect neither historical realities nor who we are now in the 21st century.

I am confronted every day with  
both the complexities of the region  
I live in and the period I study.

In my experience, today’s southern students are up to the task. When given the choice between bromides about Whiggish progress or fantasy narratives of racial origins and the surprising and uncomfortable medieval primary sources, my students have mostly chosen the messy process of grappling with both lived experiences of the people of the past and literary representations of the Middle Ages.

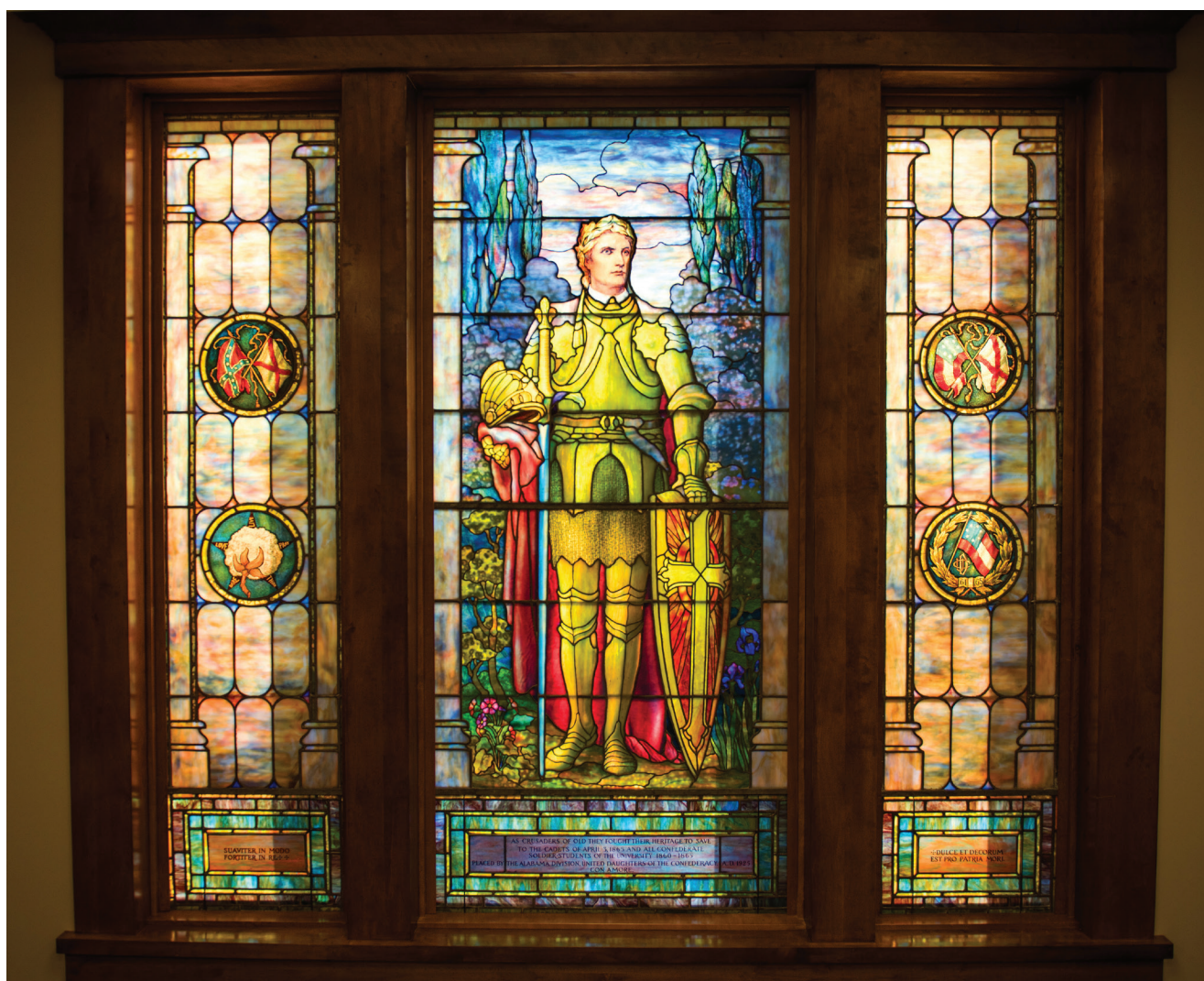
Faux-medieval culture is everywhere. Medieval historians call this practice *medievalism* because it doesn’t actually refer to a real time or place in history. It’s about fantasies, most of them set in an imaginary past that bears little resemblance to the real one. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the Romantic movement was Middle Ages obsessed, creating

the equivalent of medieval fanfic poetry and art. This inspiration was particularly popular in Germany and England, evident in Richard Wagner's 1857 *Ring* cycle opera (in which the Viking horned helmets were invented) and how Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his fellow Pre-Raphaelite artists mined Arthurian literature for inspiration.

It sounds innocent—plenty of people today enjoy a so-bad-it's-good medieval fantasy film. However, the nationalist and colonialist impulses of the 18th and 19th centuries were partly expressed by seeking their “racial origins” in the Middle Ages. Eugenicists used these false ideas about the Middle Ages as a template for new national identities founded on the oppression and extermination of minority groups in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Looking back to an imaginary time of long-lost racial purity, white nationalists in the United States and Europe, be they Far Right politicians or soccer hooligans, want to claim that their countries “belong” somehow to white people. But as recent research in medieval archaeology has shown, people of many ethnicities lived across Europe in the premodern period. To see the dangers of this white supremacist ideology, one need look no further than the attack on the US Capitol on January 6, 2021. Even today, white ethnic nationalism echoes with these medievalist fantasies.

Such medievalism appears in unique ways in the US South. Many plantation tours still talk about the chivalric masculine ideals of white southern slaveholders. The patriarchal southern elites imagined parallels between themselves and



A stained-glass window in the University of Alabama's W. S. Hoole Special Collections Library encapsulates the kind of medievalism prevalent in the American South.

*Zachary Riggins, University of Alabama*

the feudal lords of the Middle Ages, though feudalism as a model for medieval political culture has been successfully dismantled by scholars.

One of the founding myths of the Ku Klux Klan from Thomas Dixon's *The Clansman* (1905) depicts the white-hooded costumes of these racial terrorists as akin to the "Knights of the Middle Ages [riding] on their Holy Crusades." It is no accident that the post-Reconstruction racial terror campaigns in the South and the veneration of the Lost Cause used popular ideas and images from the literary medievalism of the period. Even contemporaries noticed the connection between these ideologies. In *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), Mark Twain observed with his usual irony that Sir Walter Scott and his medieval-themed novels, such as *Ivanhoe* (1819), "had so large a hand in making Southern character, as it existed before the war, that he is in great measure responsible for the war."

The study of the medieval period asks students to grapple with beliefs that today would be considered racist or classist.

A stained-glass window, commissioned from Tiffany Studios by the United Daughters of the Confederacy in 1925, is still installed in the University of Alabama's W. S. Hoole Special Collections Library. It depicts a white southerner as a medieval knight, surrounded by roundels with the official flag of the Confederate States of America, the Confederate battle flag, the flag of Alabama (adopted in 1895 and meant to echo the Confederate battle flag), and a white cotton boll. The inscription reads, "As crusaders of old they fought their heritage to save." This view of the Middle Ages is pure white supremacist fantasy, a legacy not of the real people of medieval societies but of our own modern world.

The study of history asks students to step outside their own worldviews to another time and culture. While many fields of history have white supremacists trying to tell stories that are racist, it is particularly visible in medieval history. The problem isn't fantasizing about the Middle Ages; the problem is when people think the fantasy is real. The study of the medieval period asks students to grapple with beliefs that today would be considered racist or classist, even barbaric. It is the job of medieval historians, who both research and teach on this subject, to make the Middle Ages accessible and relevant but also to contradict false and simplistic narratives about the past.

Just as antebellum elite white southerners imagined themselves as knights, not as peasants, when modern students imagine themselves in the past, it is usually as the elite, rarely the oppressed. In my experience, one antidote to this tendency can be the use of the historical role-playing game *Reacting to the Past*. In my courses, we have played several games, including *Vikings Raid Iona!*, created by Mary Valante and Vicky McAlister. In this simulation, students do not just role-play elite warrior culture but also explore other medieval identities, including enslaved people, women, and religious minorities. Instead of confirming their previously held ideas about the glory of a medieval fantasy world, games like these can push students out of their comfort zones in productive ways that engage their analytical skills and their historical empathy.

Like the Middle Ages, the early 21st century has been indelibly marked by crises, including global pandemics, popular revolts and uprisings, and climate change. Most recently, Hurricane Ida wreaked destruction on the city of New Orleans, site of the 2022 AHA annual meeting. The presenters in three linked sessions at the annual meeting, "Medieval Perspectives on Modern Crises," confront the way modern crises of all kinds have made the Middle Ages seem shockingly relevant for students and teachers today. **P**

*Courtney Luckhardt is associate professor at the University of Southern Mississippi. She tweets @CLuckhardt.*

## Hotel and Rate Information

		SINGLE	DOUBLE	TRIPLE	QUADRUPLE
1	<b>New Orleans Marriott</b> (hdqtrs.) 555 Canal St.	\$179	\$199	\$219	\$239
2	<b>Sheraton New Orleans</b> (co-hdqtrs.) 500 Canal St.	\$179	\$199	\$219	\$239
3	<b>JW Marriott New Orleans</b> 614 Canal St.	\$184	\$204	\$224	\$244
4	<b>Hotel Monteleone</b> 214 Royal St.	\$169	\$169	\$199	\$209

Rates are subject to hotel occupancy tax and will be honored three days before and three days after the official meeting dates of January 6–9 based on availability. Information on booking a room at the discounted rate is available at [historians.org/hotels](http://historians.org/hotels).



### Dates and Deadlines

<b>NOVEMBER 2</b>	Program mailed to members.
<b>DECEMBER 10</b>	Last day to make hotel reservations through the housing service. Subsequent reservations taken on a space-available basis at the convention rate.
<b>DECEMBER 15</b>	Last day for preregistration pricing.
<b>DECEMBER 15</b>	Deadline to submit registration refund requests.
<b>JANUARY 6, 2022</b>	Annual meeting opens at 11:00 a.m. at the New Orleans Marriott and Sheraton New Orleans. Exhibit Hall opens Friday, January 7, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the New Orleans Marriott.

### Meeting Registration

Take advantage of reduced rates by preregistering for the conference. Make sure your membership is up to date so you can enjoy member pricing at each level. Register online at [historians.org/myaha](https://historians.org/myaha).

	MEMBER		NONMEMBER	
	PREREGISTRATION	AFTER DEC. 15	PREREGISTRATION	AFTER DEC. 15
Attendee	\$183	\$220	\$298	\$358
Speaker	\$183	\$220	\$183	\$220
Student	\$84	\$101	\$128	\$155
Un-/Underemployed	\$45	\$56	\$140	\$168
Retired	\$87	\$106	\$149	\$180
K-12 Teacher	\$65	\$78	\$125	\$150
Bring your Graduate/ Undergraduate/K-12 student discount	<b>For members only.</b> Add students to your registration for only \$15 each (\$30 onsite). Bring as many high school, undergraduate, and graduate students as you want for only \$15 each!			

Advance registration must be completed by midnight EST on December 15, 2021. Thereafter, onsite rates will apply. Everyone attending the meeting is expected to register. Admission to the Exhibit Hall requires a registration badge. **Special note for speakers:** All US-based historians presenting on AHA sessions must be AHA members, and all participants must register.

### ASL Interpretation at the 2022 Annual Meeting

The AHA offers complimentary sign interpreting service upon request to our attendees. Please notify the AHA of the sessions you plan to attend and register for the meeting by November 1, 2021. This service is also available upon request for the presidential address and business meeting. Requests should be submitted to [annualmeeting@historians.org](mailto:annualmeeting@historians.org) by November 1, 2021.

## EXTREME SPACES AND NEW FRONTIERS

*Meet the AHA's 2021–22 Fellows*

The AHA welcomes the 2021–22 recipients of the J. Franklin Jameson Fellowship in American History, the Fellowship in Aerospace History, and the Fellowship in the History of Space Technology. These three annual fellowships support full-time research by early career scholars. From the American West to outer space to the high-tech revolution, this year's fellows seek to expand our understanding of history on some notable frontiers.

Sponsored jointly by the AHA and the John W. Kluge Center at the Library of Congress, the J. Franklin Jameson Fellowship in American History is awarded each year to an early career scholar to support significant scholarly research in the collections of the Library of Congress, including up to three months of full-time residence at the Kluge Center. The 2021–22 Jameson Fellowship recipient is **Jeannette Estruth**, an assistant professor of history at Bard College.

In “The New Utopia: A Political History of Silicon Valley,” Estruth seeks to explore key issues of economy, labor, and capitalism through the lens of the high-technology industry and the political movements that surrounded it in the late 20th century. Grassroots activist groups in Silicon Valley during this time—including movements for peace, Black Power, Chicana liberation, women's and gay liberation, the environment, and labor—espoused collectivist ideals that were adapted by the burgeoning technological sector into highly individualized utopian thinking. Using previously unstudied archival collections and oral histories, Estruth shows how those driving the technological advances in Silicon Valley appropriated the ideas of these movements to “insist that political problems could only be resolved through the growth of technology, market-based solutions, corporate altruism, and a limited state.”

The relationship between these social justice movements and the growing tech industry, Estruth argues, shaped the politics of the technology-based new economy around ideals of “global connectivity, economic individualism, labor flexibility,

and corporate citizenship.” Her project looks at American economic restructuring during the rise of Silicon Valley in a way that departs from previous explanations by “reckon[ing] with the fast rise of the high-technology industry in the slow fall of the postwar social compact.” She is looking forward to utilizing the resources in the Library of Congress to complete the final chapter of her project, which will include research into expanded federal policies and investments in high technology between the 1970s and the 2010s.

The Fellowships in Aerospace History and the History of Space Technology support advanced research in aerospace history and are funded by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Their review committees include representatives from the AHA, the Society for the History of Technology, and the History of Science Society. For 2021–22, **Alyssa Kreikemeier** has been awarded the Fellowship in Aerospace History, and **Benjamin Goossen** has been awarded the Fellowship in the History of Space Technology.

This year's fellows seek to expand  
our understanding of history on  
some notable frontiers.

Kreikemeier is a PhD candidate in American studies at Boston University, where she focuses on environmental history, Native American and Indigenous studies, and the North American West. She combines these topics with political and aerospace history in her dissertation, “Aerial Enclosures: From Commons to Conflict in the American West.” As the US military looked to expand its claim to airspace in the 1970s and 1980s, conflicts arose between federal authorities using the airspace and the communities inhabiting the land beneath it, particularly Indigenous communities on tribal reservations. Around the same time, developments in atmospheric and environmental research produced better understandings of



Jeannette Estruth



Alyssa Kreikemeier



Benjamin Goossen

the negative impacts of both visible air pollution and noise pollution. In light of these findings, new federal and state regulations concerning air and airspace soon followed.

### Earth-oriented thinking allowed states to use the exploration of “extreme spaces” to extend their military influence in a way that was viewed as nonpolitical.

Examining conflicting uses of airspace among tribal, state, and federal authorities, Kreikemeier argues that regulation and legislation of the air by the US government in the late 20th century turned airspace into a natural resource, providing Native American tribes “an unexpected opportunity to strengthen their sovereignty.” She plans to spend her time in Washington, DC, examining Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) records on airspaces, as well as Bureau of Indian Affairs holdings. She will continue her research at Edwards Air Force Base, at FAA and EPA regional offices in the areas on which her work is focused, and by consulting the holdings of affected tribal nations.

A recent postdoctoral Max Weber Fellow at the European University Institute, Goossen plans to use his time as a fellow to complete his manuscript, “The Mismeasure of Earth: Cold War Consensus, Postcolonial Science, and the Denaturing of Geopolitics,” and to begin research for “a new project about the rise of European space research in the context of decolonization, European political integration, and the cultural forgetting of empire.” A historian of

modern global and environmental history specializing in Earth science and international relations, Goossen earned his PhD from Harvard University in 2021.

Goossen’s project is the first comprehensive history of the 1957–58 International Geophysical Year (IGY). In the years following World War II, the emergence of widespread Earth-oriented thinking allowed powerful states to use the exploration of “extreme spaces”—the upper atmosphere, deep ocean, and outer space—to extend their military influence in a way that was viewed as nonpolitical. The result, Goossen argues, was an obscured view of environmental science’s contribution to global governance, which would “entrench global inequality and hamper decision-making for large-scale ecological management.” He seeks to use the IGY as a way to explain a contemporary paradox: today’s environmental scientists know more than ever about Earth’s complex life-sustaining systems, yet the acceleration of ecological collapse continues. He plans to use NASA as a “home base” as he finishes “The Mismeasure of Earth” and begins research for his next project.

Congratulations to these scholars! We are excited to see the work they do with these fellowships. Applications for the AHA’s 2022–23 fellowships will open in October 2021. **P**

*Rebecca L. West is the operations and communications assistant at the AHA.*

# NOMINATIONS INVITED FOR AHA OFFICES, TERMS BEGINNING JANUARY 2023

Under the AHA Constitution and Bylaws (Article VIII, Section 1; Article IX; and Bylaws 11 and 12), the executive director invites all members of the Association to submit, on or before January 9, 2022, recommendations for the following offices:

## **President-elect**

**Vice President, Professional Division** (member of the Council, chair of the Division)

**Councilor, Professional Division**, one position (Council—governance of the organization; Division—responsible for overseeing matters concerning working conditions and practices of historians, primarily by articulating ethical standards and best practices in the historical discipline)

**Councilor, Research Division**, one position (Council—governance of the organization; Division—responsible for promoting historical scholarship, encouraging the collection and preservation of historical documents and artifacts, ensuring equal access to information, and fostering the dissemination of information about historical records and research)

**Councilor, Teaching Division**, one position (Council—governance of the organization; Division—responsible for the Council's work relating to history education, including efforts to promote and improve teaching and learning of history at all levels of education)

**Committee on Committees**, one position (nominations for large number of Association committees, including book awards and prizes; member begins serving immediately after election)

**Nominating Committee**, three positions (nominations for all elective posts)

Members of the Council and elective committees *as of January 9, 2022*, are listed below. Positions being replaced in the June 1–July 15, 2022, elections are in **bold**.

Unless otherwise indicated, terms expire in January of the listed year.

## Presidents

**2023 Jacqueline Jones**, Univ. of Texas at Austin (US labor/African American/southern/women)

2024 James H. Sweet, Univ. of Wisconsin–Madison (Africa, African diaspora, Brazil)

2025 Edward W. Muir Jr., Northwestern Univ. (medieval and early modern Europe, religion, urban, legal and criminal)

## Professional Division

**2023 Rita C-K Chin, vice president**, Univ. of Michigan (post-1945 Europe, immigration and displacement, race/ethnicity/gender)

**2023 Reginald K. Ellis, councilor**, Florida A&M Univ. (US since 1865, African American history)

2024 Simon Finger, councilor, Coll. of New Jersey (American colonial to early republic, medicine, maritime, labor)

2025 Laura Hostetler, councilor, Univ. of Illinois at Chicago (Qing empire, Sino-European relations, early modern world, cartography, humanities education)

## Research Division

**2023 Sara Georgini, councilor**, Massachusetts Historical Society (early American history, religion and culture, public history)

2024 Ben Vinson III, vice president, Case Western Reserve Univ. (African diaspora, colonial Mexico)

2024 Pernille Røge, councilor, Univ. of Pittsburgh (18th-century France and French empire, political economy)

2025 Sandra Greene, councilor, Cornell Univ. (slavery, biography, Ghana)

## Teaching Division

**2023 Shannon T. Bontrager, councilor**, Georgia Highlands Coll., Cartersville (commemorations and public memory, death and burial of military dead)

2024 Katharina Matro, councilor, Walter Johnson High School (modern central and eastern Europe)

2025 Kathleen Hilliard, vice president, Iowa State Univ. (informal economies, slavery and emancipation, US South)

2025 Karen Marrero, councilor, Wayne State Univ. (early North America and Indigenous, transnational and borderlands)

## At Large

2024 Sherri Sheu, Univ. of Colorado Boulder (modern US, environmental)

## Committee on Committees

**7/2022 Raúl A. Ramos**, Univ. of Houston (19th-century US-Mexico border, transnational identity construction)

7/2023 Leo J. Garofalo, Connecticut Coll. (colonial Andean cities and markets, Afro-Iberians and African diaspora)

7/2024 Julie Hardwick, Univ. of Texas at Austin (early modern Europe, social/legal/gender)

7/2024 Franziska Seraphim, Boston Coll. (modern Japan, global and comparative, historical memory, social politics)

## Nominating Committee

**2023 Fahad Ahmad Bishara**, Univ. of Virginia (Indian Ocean economic and legal, Islamic law and capitalism)

**2023 Carla G. Pestana**, Univ. of California, Los Angeles (early America, Atlantic world)

**2023 John Thabiti Willis**, Carleton Coll. (religious encounters, African and diaspora religions)

2024 Amy M. Froide, Univ. of Maryland, Baltimore County (female investors and single women, Britain 1500–1800)

2024 Beatrice Gurwitz, National Humanities Alliance (Latin American/Jewish history, higher education policy, public humanities)

2024 Sharlene Sinegal-DeCuir, Xavier Univ. of Louisiana (African American, New Orleans)

2025 Lisa Leff, US Holocaust Memorial Museum and American Univ. (Jews of modern France)

2025 Melissa N. Stuckey, Elizabeth City State Univ. (African American migration to Oklahoma, African American history, Black freedom struggles)

2025 Philip Thai, Northeastern Univ. (modern China, legal, economic, diplomatic)

Suggestions should be submitted by email to [committees@historians.org](mailto:committees@historians.org). Please specify the academic or other position and the field of the individual, and include a brief statement of their qualifications for the position. Refer to the *Statement on Diversity in AHA Nominations and Appointments* ([historians.org/ahadiversity](https://historians.org/ahadiversity)), which was drafted in the hope that it will encourage members to suggest more individuals from diverse backgrounds for both appointments and nominations. All suggestions received will be forwarded to the Nominating Committee for consideration at its meeting in February 2022.



University of Texas at Arlington News Service Photograph Collection/Wikimedia Commons/CC BY 4.0

### Schedule for Nominations and Elections of AHA Officers

January 9, 2022	Deadline to make suggestions to executive director.
February 2022	Nominating Committee meets to determine slate.
March–April 2022	Slate published in <i>Perspectives on History</i> and <i>Perspectives Daily</i> .
June 1, 2022	Link to ballot emailed to AHA members.
July 15, 2022	Final deadline to record votes.
August–September 2022	Results announced in <i>Perspectives on History</i> and <i>Perspectives Daily</i> . Committee on Committees elected member begins term of office immediately.
January 7, 2023	Results announced at business meeting during 136th annual meeting in Philadelphia.
January 8, 2023	Individuals begin terms of office. <b>P</b>

*Liz Townsend is manager, data administration and integrity, at the AHA.*

### The AHA offers grants to help graduate students and early-career historians attend the annual meeting.

**CHILD CARE GRANTS:** Up to \$250 to assist AHA members who have child-care costs during the meeting

**JERRY BENTLEY WORLD HISTORY TRAVEL GRANTS:** Between \$200 and \$400 to support graduate students who include world history among their major or minor fields

**AHA COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING TRAVEL GRANTS:** Between \$200 and \$400 to support graduate students in any major or minor field

**DOROTHY ROSENBERG PHI BETA KAPPA TRAVEL GRANTS:** Up to \$400 to support graduate students in any major or minor field

The deadline for all grant applications is November 1. Visit [historians.org/grants#annual-meeting](https://historians.org/grants#annual-meeting) to learn more.





## Katherine B. Aaslestad

1961–2021

Historian of Modern Germany

On April 24, 2021, we lost Katherine B. Aaslestad, pioneer in the social and political history of the Napoleonic era, to ovarian cancer. She was a professor of history at West Virginia University and an essential member of the Central European History Society, the German Studies Association, and the Consortium on the Revolutionary Era.

Katherine was born in Pennsylvania, but she considered Louisiana her childhood home. That was where that she learned to appreciate the personal and global consequences of warfare from her paternal grandfather, a Norwegian sea captain who served in the US merchant marine during the Second World War. His life and travels intrigued her and propelled her toward a history major at Mary Washington College (now the University of Mary Washington), where she also began to study modern dance. Only three years later, she was accepted at the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance in New York City; she earned a teaching certificate there and then returned to Mary Washington to complete her BA in 1985. While a graduate student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, she continued to work as a professional dancer, partly to subsidize her studies.

At Illinois, Katherine studied with both modernists and early modernists. Although she must have been one of the few women interested in the history of warfare, her teachers recognized her promise and today still remember her and her young family fondly. One of the last pieces Katherine wrote was a *Perspectives* In Memoriam for Paul Schroeder; although grievously ill, she was determined to pay tribute to her beloved mentor.

Completed in 1997 and based on research in Germany, Denmark, and France, Katherine's dissertation focused on the lived experience of the Napoleonic wars in the crucial port city of Hamburg. Two additional summers of research and much more reading transformed her dissertation into her book, *Place and Politics: Local Identity, Civic Culture, and*

*German Nationalism in North Germany during the Revolutionary Era* (Brill, 2005), a richly textured study of this "free" imperial city and its male and female inhabitants' response to the wars. Together with Karen Hagemann, Katherine helped to pioneer the integration of gender studies into Napoleonic history. Throughout her career, as the co-editor of several journal issues and books, as a board member of the Consortium on the Revolutionary Era, and as co-director of the German Studies Association's War and Violence Network, she promoted new approaches to military history. Able to read Danish and Norwegian, she was also instrumental in connecting Scandinavian, European, and American historians of the period.

At the time of her cancer diagnosis in the spring of 2019, Katherine was engaged in what would have been a career-crowning achievement, a book project titled *After the Wars: German Central Europe after Napoleonic Conquest, 1815–1840*. Pathbreaking in conception, this book would have treated the long-term memory and consequences of the wars for individual families and localities, as well as for the German Confederation as a whole. After years of collecting materials, including caricatures and popular memorabilia, Katherine was readying herself to write. It is one of the many tragedies surrounding her death that her National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship for 2020–21 came too late for her to complete what would have been a field-changing book about an era so often passed over in the rush to get to the revolutions of 1848.

In 2017, West Virginia University named Katherine a Benedum Distinguished Scholar, but her legacy there was chiefly in the many students to whom she devoted herself wholeheartedly. Those who knew her remember that every conversation with Katherine turned quickly to teaching and mentoring; she advocated ceaselessly for her students, many of whom came from rural and poor backgrounds. We will also remember her for her passionate environmentalism; her dedication to her husband, John Lambertson, and children, Morgan, Alaine, and Rafe; and her joyous, room-brightening smile.

Suzanne Marchand  
*Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge*

*Photo: Suzanne Marchand*



## Charles Capper

1944–2021

Historian of  
American Thought;  
AHA Member

Charles Capper died on July 1, 2021, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the first day of his retirement as professor of history at Boston University. Recently, Capper and his wife of 52 years, Carole, had moved there to be near their daughter, Emily, a faculty member at the University of Minnesota. Boston had been Capper's academic home for 20 years. Previously, he taught at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from 1986 to 2001.

Capper was one of his generation's most accomplished intellectual historians. His most celebrated achievement was a study of American transcendentalist and journalist Margaret Fuller. The first volume of *Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life, The Private Years* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1992), won the Bancroft Prize. The second, *The Public Years* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2007), completed Capper's mastery not only of Fuller's life but of the entire domain in which she lived. The same year, Capper co-edited *Margaret Fuller: Transatlantic Crossings in a Revolutionary Age* with Cristina Giorcelli (Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 2007). In a 2013 overview of recent writings about Fuller, the *New Yorker's* Judith Thurman observed that Capper's work "has never been surpassed as a social history of the period." At the time of his death, Capper was working on *The Transcendental Moment: Liberal Romantic Intellect and America's Democratic Awakening*, a sweeping reinterpretation of the American 19th century in global perspective.

Capper's extensive work as an editor strengthened his standing in the field of intellectual history. Capper was a founding editor of *Modern Intellectual History* and served in that capacity from 2004 to 2018. Capper was not afraid to tell senior scholars how much work a submission required before he could publish it, and younger scholars consistently praised his patience and rigor. With Conrad Edick Wright, Capper co-edited *Transient and Permanent: The Transcendentalist Movement and Its Contexts* (Massachusetts Historical Society, 1999). He also co-edited, with David A. Hollinger, seven editions of *The American Intellectual Tradition: A Sourcebook* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1989–2017).

Capper's career got underway relatively late in life. Although he began graduate study at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1966, immediately after completing his BA at Johns Hopkins University, he finished his doctorate in 1984 at the age of 40. In the December 1984 issue of *Perspectives on History*, Capper described his personal journey during those 18 years, culminating in a humility that became an enduring feature of his personality.

A major matrix of Capper's maturation was his engagement with political activism and his gradual disengagement from it. Capper was on the national council of Students for a Democratic Society as an undergraduate and was among the chief organizers of the 1965 antiwar march in Washington, DC. Soon after his arrival in Berkeley, he became a leader in the local Trotskyist movement and presided over a tense mass meeting on Black Power in the campus's Greek Theatre. Capper was a fearless political combatant, displaying skills he had learned as a California high school debate champion. In a widely attended, contentious public debate about the relation of academia to the Vietnam War, he faced off against the formidable Charles Sellers, one of his history professors. Known to many as simply "that Trot who debated Sellers," Capper was a recognized campus figure.

Although he later withdrew from radical politics, he remained until his death a capacious repository of radical history. Friends could ask him how this or that Marxist intellectual had felt about the Kronstadt Rebellion of 1921 or the Finnish-Soviet War of 1939–40, and he would reply instantly. He knew the political ancestry of his fellow historians and could be heard to say of someone, "Her parents were Cannonites," referring to the members of a Trotskyist sect. His deep awareness of sectarianism in the history of the Left made him highly suspicious of sectarianism in academia.

Only in his final months did Capper slow down, when Parkinson's disease weakened him before leading to a fall that caused his death. Charles Capper's intensity of spirit, quick wit, humane engagement, and analytic acumen made him the voice in the room to which everyone always listened.

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David A. Hollinger  
*University of California, Berkeley*

*Photo courtesy Boston University History Department*



## William P. Kaldis

1923–2021

**Historian of Greece  
and the Balkans;  
AHA 50-Year Member**

William P. Kaldis, professor emeritus of history at Ohio University, died on May 26, 2021, in Columbus, Ohio. Bill was preceded in death by his wife of 63 years, Cynthia. He leaves behind a sister, Helen; his three children, Peter (Julie), Nicholas (Shu-Min), and Maria Arend (Todd); and six adored grandchildren, Nicholas, Kristina (Adam), Alexander, Katherine, Alexandra, and Arden.

Bill was born June 15, 1923, in Lowell, Massachusetts, one of nine children. His parents, Panagiotis and Panagiota Kaldis, immigrants from the Peloponnesian villages of Kinigios and Marathoussa, respectively, worked in the Lowell textile mills. Bill was educated in the Lowell public schools and enlisted in the military in 1943, serving from August 1943 through January 1946. He was a member of the 19th Infantry Regiment (24th Infantry Division), in which he held the position of antitank gun specialist; he completed his service at the rank of technical sergeant. He saw combat in New Guinea and the Philippines (Leyte, Mindoro, Luzon, and Mindanao) and was part of the occupational forces on Shikoku, Japan. He was awarded the Purple Heart, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with bronze service arrowhead, and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon with two bronze service stars.

On the GI Bill, Bill was the first in his family to attend college. He earned his BA from Ohio State University and his MA and PhD from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He then began a long career as a history professor, holding positions at the University of Wisconsin–Racine/Kenosha and Eau Claire, University of Cincinnati, University of Kentucky, and Ohio University, from which he retired in 1997 after three decades of service.

During his long career at Ohio University, Bill taught courses in Western civilization, Balkan and Byzantine history, and early Christianity and introduced a course on the ancient Greek Olympics. He was twice elected University Professor of the Year by the student body. For many years, he led a

popular study-abroad program to Greece for students and local residents. Bill also served as adviser to the Phi Alpha Theta academic honor society in history and the Barbell Club. He was a member of the American Historical Association and the Modern Greek Studies Association.

Bill was awarded three Fulbright Scholarships in the 1950s and 1960s. During one of these trips in 1960, he assisted William K. Pritchett (Univ. of California, Berkeley) with field research into, among other sites, the pass at Thermopylae, which led to Pritchett's substantiation of Herodotus's account, precipitating a lively debate among archaeologists and historians. On his final Fulbright, to the University of Athens, he was accompanied by his wife, Cynthia, and their three young children. The children attended Greek elementary school, learning the language and customs, and were introduced to scores of archaeological sites by their parents. Bill's Fulbright research led to the publication of his book, *John Capodistrias and the Modern Greek State* (State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1963). He published dozens of review articles on books in the fields of Greek, Balkan, and Byzantine history. In 2015, he donated his personal library to Ohio State University, where it is cataloged as the William Peter Kaldis Modern Greek Collection. This collection includes books he obtained during the 1950s in Greece and many rare volumes, some of which cannot be found anywhere else in the United States.

In his middle years, Bill took up the sport of distance running and went on to complete 14 marathons, including the Boston Marathon and many Athens (Ohio) Marathons. A proud participant and supporter of the Athens Marathon, he arranged each year to have laurel wreathes flown in from Greece to crown the winners. He was a passionate fan of the Red Sox, Celtics, and Patriots and an ardent OSU Buckeyes fan. Bill was a lifelong member of the Greek Orthodox Church and served for decades as cantor (φάλτης) at services held in Athens, Ohio.

Bill Kaldis was interred with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery on August 27, 2021, together with his wife, Cynthia. The ceremony was attended by his children and their families.

Nicholas A. Kaldis

*Binghamton University, State University of New York*

*Photo courtesy Kaldis family*



## Buchanan Sharp

1942–2020

Historian of England

Buchanan Sharp, historian of Tudor-Stuart England, died of COVID-19 on December 20, 2020. Born in Scotland, he immigrated to the United States with his parents in 1955 at the age of 13 and earned both his BA and his PhD at the University of California, Berkeley. He taught at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC), for 40 years, from 1970 until his retirement in 2010.

Buck, as we called him, was admired and loved by those of us who knew him well. To acquaintances, he was a blunt, plainspoken Scot whose integrity, fairness, good judgment, and clarity of mind became legendary at UCSC. A dedicated citizen of the university community, he was so widely respected that over the years he was repeatedly asked to assume key administrative responsibilities in times of crisis or confusion. (Such times were frequent on this campus.) He chaired the Committee on Academic Personnel for three years and served as acting dean of the humanities during difficult times. He served two terms as chair of the history department, and he chaired the History Graduate Committee for seven years, during which he oversaw the reinvention of history graduate studies at UCSC.

Although Buck liked to describe himself as a “parish pump” historian, his range as a teacher was broad. For several decades, he taught the survey course on early modern Europe, and he regularly taught courses on medieval English history, Dutch history, and historiography, in addition to his “bread-and-butter” lecture courses on English history. He also co-taught a course on early California history and literature that included field trips to mining towns in the Sierras. A colleague described his lectures as striking not only for his command of the subject—he lectured entirely without notes—but also for the originality of his interpretations. He had fresh, often provocative things to say about the enclosure movement, the origins of the English Civil War, the continuing role of the establishment in British political and cultural life, and much else.

Buck was devoted to the exploration of popular unrest in late medieval and early modern England. His first book, *In Contempt of All Authority: Rural Artisans and Riot in the West of England, 1586–1660* (Univ. of California Press, 1980), was based on massive archival research. Focusing on a series of forest riots in the 1620s and ’30s, Buck sought to determine the social and economic conditions that produced what came to be known as the Western Rising. He challenged the assumption that people leading riots were directed by the gentry, arguing instead that their actions represented the efforts of independent agents working for themselves and their own community.

In his final work, *Famine and Scarcity in Late Medieval and Early Modern England: The Regulation of Grain Marketing, 1256–1631* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2016), Buck linked the study of popular responses to food shortages to a detailed analysis of the role played by the Crown and by large cities in the management of grain supplies and the regulation of the grain trade. Here, the focus was on the very long term—on a period of almost 400 years, going back to the mid-13th century. The work was praised by reviewers both for its “impressive chronological sweep” and “well-nigh exhaustive research” and as “an indispensable source for historians working on every aspect of medieval and early modern market regulation.” With this work, Buck entered the debate opened in 1971 with the publication of E. P. Thompson’s article “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century,” offering not only an alternative account of the origins of the moral economy but also a 400-year archival trail, asking provocative questions and providing significant new interpretations.

A scholar-teacher whose research permeated all aspects of his teaching, as well as his interactions with colleagues, Buchanan Sharp is survived by his wife, Meg Lilienthal; his children, Duncan Sharp and Heather Cortez, and their spouses; and three grandchildren.

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Marilyn J. Westerkamp  
*University of California, Santa Cruz*

Jonathan F. Beecher  
*University of California, Santa Cruz (emeritus)*

*Photo courtesy Sharp family*



## Mechal Sobel

1933–2021

Historian of Early America; AHA Honorary Foreign Member

Mechal Sobel, historian of early American life and culture and African American history, died on March 24, 2021, at her home in Haifa, Israel. She was professor emerita of history at the University of Haifa, where she taught from 1968 to 2006.

Born in 1933 in Brooklyn, New York, Sobel received her BA from Brooklyn College. After studying for her master's at Columbia University, she completed her PhD at Boston University in 1968. In the same year, she immigrated to Israel with her family and taught in the University of Haifa history department, which remained her academic home for nearly 40 years. From 1980 until her retirement, Sobel directed the graduate program in American studies, and from 2001 to 2006, she served as director of the Center for the Study of the United States. She was also elected president of the Israel Association of American Studies (1981–83). Sobel had a long-standing association with the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and was both a member of its council (2001–3) and an editorial board member of the *William and Mary Quarterly* (2002–4).

Sobel's exceptional interdisciplinary research and her insightful and sensitive explorations of American identities most merit historians' lasting attention. In all her works, she strove to establish how "an interpenetration of values that facilitated cultural familiarity and transfers" fostered "a new cultural mix" in America. In her first book, *Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1979), she examined the religious history of enslaved people, demonstrating that Black and white religious convictions and practices in the South emerged as mutual connections. She continued this project in her second book, *The World They Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth-Century Virginia* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1987), where she demonstrated how similar processes operated in multiple genres to shape a material world—of time, space, and motion—that corresponded to African aesthetic tastes. She also co-edited (with Ronald Hoffman and Fredrika J. Teute) *Through a Glass*

*Darkly: Reflections on Personal Identity in Early America* (Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1997).

These themes were brought together in her most imaginative and innovative work, *Teach Me Dreams: The Search for Self in the Revolutionary Era* (Princeton Univ. Press, 2000). Sobel collected and analyzed hundreds of dream stories recorded by Blacks and whites, men and women, in order to recreate how Americans in this period moved from a collective "we-self" to a well-defined "I-self," which was constructed in tension with an imagined "other."

Mechal was a gifted artist and exhibited her sculptures in several shows. It is perhaps unsurprising that she turned her scholarly attention to African American artist Bill Traylor (c. 1853–1949). In *Painting a Hidden Life: The Art of Bill Traylor* (Louisiana Univ. Press, 2009), Sobel drew on insights from her earlier studies on race and religiosity in the South to examine the images, symbols, and emblems in Traylor's work. Over the last several years, she was deeply engaged in a study of the role of race in Winslow Homer's art, though, sadly, she was unable to complete this work.

In recognition of her pathbreaking scholarly research and significant contributions to the study of American history both in the United States and abroad, she was made an Honorary Foreign Member of the American Historical Association in 2011. In 2019, she was awarded the prestigious EMET Prize for Art, Science and Culture, which is conferred in Israel annually for excellence in academic and professional achievements that have extensive influence and significantly contribute to society.

Mechal is survived by her husband Zvi Sobel, daughter Mindy Ivry, sons Daniel and Noam, and more than 25 grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Her contributions to historical scholarship and teaching, as well as her kind and generous mentorship and friendship, will be remembered and deeply missed by all who knew her.

Sharon Halevi  
University of Haifa

*Photo courtesy Sobel family*



## Athan G. Theoharis

1936–2021

Historian of the FBI

Athan G. Theoharis, professor emeritus of history at Marquette University, died on July 3, 2021, at the age of 84. My father and I had very different ideas about the history that needed studying. An institutionalist, he devoted his life to researching, understanding, uncovering, and exposing the secret files and abuses of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). He never quite understood why I study the history of African American social movements. The massive, devious, far-worse-than-we-could-have-imagined powers of the state were what needed our attention.

After earning a doctorate in history from the University of Chicago, he began his career as a Cold War historian, studying the virulent anti-Communism that defined the US presidency and intelligence agencies for much of the 20th century. His 1971 *Nation* article, “Misleading the Presidents: Thirty Years of Wiretapping,” drew the attention of the Church Committee, who sent him to the presidential libraries to explore the relationship between the FBI and the presidents.

That work and his steadfast efforts over the next 35 years helped expose the systematic abuses of power the FBI had engaged in over the 20th century. One of his biggest contributions was in decoding the FBI’s separate filing procedures and uncovering the office files kept by FBI director J. Edgar Hoover and other senior FBI officials. Part of what my dad did was figure out their different filing and naming systems, request them, sue for them, and ultimately unlock many of them, persistently chipping away at the FBI’s desires for secrecy. He published this work in, among others, *The Boss: J. Edgar Hoover and the Great American Inquisition* (Temple Univ. Press, 1988).

After 9/11, he challenged the idea that the FBI and the intelligence agencies had missed the coming attacks because they were hamstrung by regulations. No, my father insisted in *The Quest for Absolute Security: The Failed Relations among US Intelligence Agencies* (Ivan R. Dee, 2007), that was patently false. The FBI’s political obsessions had long made it fall down on the

job of crime fighting, but just like with anti-Communism, he warned, the FBI used 9/11 to vastly expand their own powers. Civil liberties in peril, the country was again making many of the mistakes it had during the Cold War, as he wrote in *Abuse of Power: How Cold War Surveillance and Secrecy Policy Shaped the Response to 9/11* (Temple Univ. Press, 2011).

Despite our different historical approaches, he was one of my greatest cheerleaders, insisting we write a book together, *These Yet to Be United States: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties in America since 1945* (Wadsworth, 2003). Three lessons I learned from him:

First, the desire to personalize abuses of power is dangerous, if politically comfortable. My father began his career studying the ways the presidents, the intelligence agencies, and others in political power propelled a relentless anti-Communism that damaged scores of people’s lives and impacted US domestic priorities for decades. Calling it McCarthyism made it seem like the work of one bad man and his supporters—and didn’t capture the widespread political movement it was. Even though my father devoted his life to exposing the abuses of J. Edgar Hoover, he was quick to remind that Hoover was not a lone ranger. Many of the worst things he’d done were done with the knowledge and, at times, at the behest of the presidents. The wall-to-wall surveillance of Dr. King, for instance, was signed off on by then-attorney general Robert Kennedy.

Second, it’s not enough to do the research; you need to mentor others to go farther than you could. My dad advised scores of others on how to do FBI research, and he wrote a pamphlet on how to use the Freedom of Information Act. He was willing to talk to anyone—scholars, activists, high school students, people whose politics he abhorred—because all people needed to understand their rights and the history of FBI abuses. He donated all the FBI files he secured to Marquette so others could access them.

Finally, you cannot wait to publish the book until you know absolutely everything. The world needs it now. Fundamentally, he understood our responsibility is not to produce a perfect manuscript but to document the history the public needs to understand where we’ve been and where we need to go from here.

May his memory be a lesson.

Jeanne Theoharis  
Brooklyn College, City University of New York

Photo: Ella Theoharis



## Irwin Unger

1927–2021

Historian of the  
United States

Irwin Unger passed away on May 21, 2021, at age 94. Unger spent 40 years as a history professor at New York University. He authored or co-authored eight monographs and six textbooks on American history, and his scholarly interests ranged from the Civil War and Reconstruction to the 1960s and modern times.

Unger's first book, *The Greenback Era: A Social and Political History of American Finance, 1865–1879* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1964), won the 1965 Pulitzer Prize for History. As the book's title reveals, Unger viewed economic history expansively. Rejecting economic determinism and dualistic interpretations of post-Civil War America, he demonstrated that "there were not two massive contending interests; there were many small ones." Moreover, there was substantial continuity before and after the war in power structures, social prestige, regional concerns, economic ideas, and moral and intellectual leadership. Because America was always "a complex, pluralistic society," he concluded, the Civil War was not "the momentous turning point we have all supposed." It was a pathbreaking interpretation.

Starting in the 1970s, Unger turned his focus to the 20th century. He wrote *The Movement: A History of the American New Left, 1959–1972* (Dodd, Mead, 1974); *The Vulnerable Years: The United States, 1896–1917* (New York Univ. Press, 1977); and *The Best of Intentions: The Triumphs and Failures of the Great Society under Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon* (Doubleday, 1996). With his wife, Debi Unger, he co-authored *Turning Point, 1968* (Scribner, 1988) and co-edited *The Times Were a Changin': The Sixties Reader* (Three Rivers Press, 1998). These books captured the Ungers' interest in critical periods of American history, especially the 1960s, which so significantly shaped their nation and themselves.

The Ungers also wrote biographies that artfully blended private and public lives with economic, political, and social contexts. These included *The Guggenheims: A Family History* (Harper, 2005); *LBJ: A Life* (Wiley, 1999); and, with Stanley

Hirshson, *George Marshall: A Biography* (Harper, 2014). Each biography plumbed the personal dramas behind perpetually provocative issues, such as social mobility, social change, leadership, and war. These books were meticulously researched but accessible, judicious but interpretive.

Unger's commitment to teaching resulted in several widely used textbooks. They were *Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction* (with Paul Goodman; Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970); four editions of *These United States: The Questions of Our Past* (Pearson, 1978); *Instant American History: Through the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Fawcett Columbine, 1994); five editions of *American Issues: A Primary Source Reader in United States History* (with Robert Tomes; Pearson, 2001); and *Recent America: The United States since 1945* (Pearson, 2001). Balancing political, economic, and social history and including both traditional and nontraditional voices, these texts reflected Unger's pedagogical emphasis on interrogating the past from different perspectives. Such an approach, he believed, promoted the critical thinking so essential for democracy's citizens.

Unger received a bachelor's degree from the City College of New York and a master's degree from the University of Washington in Seattle. Determined to better understand the nation, he repeatedly crossed the country by bus. Unger earned a PhD from Columbia University, where he was mentored by David Herbert Donald. He joined New York University in 1966 after teaching at California State University, Long Beach, and the University of California, Davis. At NYU, Unger was a patient, caring mentor for many graduate students, whose books he prized. He set the highest standards for scholarship but offered the most practical suggestions for research and writing. As in the classroom, he emphasized careful critical analysis; logical presentation; and clear, concise expression.

Unger is survived by three sons, Brooke (Deborah), Miles (Jody), and Paul, with his first wife, Bernate Spaet; two stepchildren, Anthony Marcus (Jo) and Elizabeth Marcus (Kurt), from his second wife, Debi Weisstein Unger; and eight grandchildren. His passing is a profound loss to his family, friends, colleagues, former students, and to the historical discipline writ large.

Joanne Reitano

*LaGuardia Community College, CUNY (emeritus)*

*Photo courtesy Debi Unger*



## Daniel J. Wilson

1949–2021

Historian of Medicine  
and Public Health;  
AHA Member

Daniel J. Wilson, a student of American intellectual history and the history of medicine, especially polio and other epidemic diseases, died on June 11, 2021.

Born in Wausau, Wisconsin, in 1949, Dan spent his youth in Monroe, Wisconsin, and earned a BA *summa cum laude* from the University of Wisconsin–Whitewater in 1972. He then entered the graduate program in history at Johns Hopkins University, from which he earned an MA in 1974 and a PhD in 1976, when he was also elected to Phi Beta Kappa. He was a student of Kenneth Lynn, under whose direction he wrote his dissertation on the philosopher Arthur O. Lovejoy, subsequently published as *Arthur O. Lovejoy and the Quest for Intelligibility* (Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1980). That book was followed by a co-edited volume, *The Cause of the South: Selections from De Bow's Review, 1846–1867* (Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1982), as well as several articles on the history of philosophy. Next came *Science, Community, and the Transformation of American Philosophy, 1860–1930* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1990), his influential study of the professionalization of philosophy in the United States.

After he received his PhD, Dan taught courses at Johns Hopkins and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. In 1978, he became an assistant professor of history at Muhlenberg College, where he spent the next 40 years, retiring in 2018 as professor emeritus. He was an esteemed, innovative, and award-winning teacher. In addition to US Intellectual History, he introduced several courses, including African American History, Women's History, Environmental History, and the History of Medicine and Public Health, all of which became significant parts of the history department's offerings. In addition to teaching, he served as chair of the department from 1993 until 2003, all while continuing his research and writing. During his career, he received two National Endowment for the Humanities grants, an American Council of Learned Societies grant, and appointment three times as Muhlenberg's Research Professor.

In the late 1980s, Dan began what became an enduring scholarly interest in the history of medicine and public health. He was particularly interested in the polio epidemics in the United States and their victims, as well as the emergence of the debilitating post-polio syndrome in many survivors, including him. Having contracted a severe case of polio as a young child, he knew firsthand the physical and emotional effects of the disease on its victims and its impact on their families. His systematic study of the epidemics and post-polio syndrome resulted in three books: *Living with Polio: The Epidemic and Its Survivors* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2005); *Polio Voices: An Oral History from the America Polio Epidemics and Worldwide Eradication Efforts*, written with Julie K. Silver (Praeger, 2007); and *Polio* in the series *Biographies of Disease* (Greenwood Press, 2009), as well as scholarly articles and conference papers.

Dan's incisive and compelling writings on the history of polio were part of his larger scholarly work on the history of disabilities, which he pursued in his usual thorough, systematic, and rigorous manner. His research into the medical, cultural, social, and economic effects of disabilities led to essential scholarly articles in the emerging field of disability studies, including two published in the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*.

His dedication to understanding and addressing disabilities went beyond the scholarly. He contributed his time, energy, and talents to support the Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Hospital in Allentown, Pennsylvania, serving three times on its board. He also served the Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living as a member of its board and as board president for two terms. He was also a member and president of the board of Post-Polio Health International.

A compassionate person of integrity, intelligence, and wit, Dan delighted in fine food and wine, especially the French varieties of each; domestic and foreign travel; various musical genres; good books; and good friends, all of which he enjoyed with Carol Shiner Wilson, his beloved wife of almost 38 years.

Paul F. Paskoff  
*Louisiana State University (emeritus)*

*Photo courtesy Carol Shiner Wilson*

# AHA CAREER CENTER

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## GEORGIA

### EMORY UNIVERSITY

Atlanta, GA

**Assistant Professor/Associate Professor/Full Professor of East Asian History.** The Department of History at Emory University is seeking applications for an open-rank tenured or tenure-track position in East Asian history. We are particularly interested in applicants who specialize in the history of Japan and/or Korea and/or who bring a global or transnational perspective to their research and teaching. Specialists in all time periods will be considered. The successful applicant will teach courses and provide mentorship at the undergraduate and graduate levels, including directing undergraduate honors projects and PhD dissertations, as well as participate in the activities of the History Department, the East Asian Studies Program, and the university as a whole. Applicants should submit a letter of application, a CV, a short (chapter- or article-length) writing sample, three letters of recommendation, and a statement reflecting upon their experience and vision regarding the teaching and mentorship of students from diverse backgrounds. Emory is using Interfolio's Faculty Search to conduct this search. Applicants to this position receive a free Dossier account and can send all application materials free of charge. Apply to <http://apply.interfolio.com/92749>. Review of materials will begin September 30, 2021. Applications received up to 30 days after review begins will be given full consideration. The appointment will begin on September 1, 2022. PhD

must be in hand by the appointment start date. Inquiries can be directed to the search committee chair, Tonio Andrade, at [eastasia.search@emory.edu](mailto:eastasia.search@emory.edu). Emory University is committed to student and faculty diversity, equity, and inclusion and is an AA/EOE. We welcome nominations of, and applications from, women, members of underrepresented groups, protected veterans, and individuals with disabilities, as well as others who would bring additional diversity to the university's research and teaching endeavors.



## ILLINOIS

### UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Chicago, IL

**Assistant Professor of History of Race.** The Department of History at the University of Chicago invites applications for an assistant professor in the history of race as it intersects with capitalism, empire, political economy, or economic life. We seek scholars whose work centers on Africa, the Americas, and their Indigenous, colonial, and diasporic histories from the beginnings of European colonization to the present. Among the goals of this search is increasing the diversity of the faculty in the Department of History, and we therefore welcome applicants from groups that are historically underrepresented in the academy. Candidates must have completed all requirements for the PhD degree prior to the start of the appointment. Applicants must apply online at the University of Chicago's Interfolio website at <http://apply.interfolio.com/92592> and include a cover letter, a CV, a research

statement, a teaching statement, a dissertation abstract, an article or chapter-length writing sample, and three letters of reference. Consideration of applications will begin on September 20, 2021. We seek a diverse pool of applicants who wish to join an academic community that places the highest value on rigorous inquiry and encourages diverse perspectives, experiences, groups of individuals, and ideas to inform and stimulate intellectual challenge, engagement, and exchange. The University's Statements on Diversity are at <https://provost.uchicago.edu/statements-diversity>. The University of Chicago is an AA/disabled/veterans/EOE and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, age, status as an individual with a disability, protected veteran status, genetic information, or other protected classes under the law. For additional information please see the University's Notice of Nondiscrimination at [https://www.uchicago.edu/about/non\\_discrimination\\_statement](https://www.uchicago.edu/about/non_discrimination_statement). Job seekers in need of a reasonable accommodation to complete the application process should call 773-702-1032 or email [equalopportunity@uchicago.edu](mailto:equalopportunity@uchicago.edu) with their request.

### Provost's Postdoctoral Fellow/Instructor of History of Race.

The Department of History at the University of Chicago invites applications for a Provost's Postdoctoral Fellowship in the history of race as it intersects with capitalism, empire, political economy, or economic life. We seek scholars whose work centers on Africa, the Americas, and their Indigenous, colonial, and diasporic histories from the beginnings of European colonization to the present. This

fellowship provides up to two years of funding for junior scholars whose accomplishments make them exceptionally competitive for faculty positions and whose background or membership in historically underrepresented groups would contribute to the diversity of our faculty. Fellows will teach one course per year. At the end of the fellowship period and following an academic review, the Fellow may be directly promoted to a tenure-track assistant professorship. Candidates must have completed all requirements for the PhD degree prior to the start of the appointment. Applicants must apply online at the University of Chicago's Interfolio website at <http://apply.interfolio.com/92599> and include a cover letter, a CV, a research statement, a teaching statement, a dissertation abstract, an article or chapter-length writing sample, and three letters of reference. Consideration of applications will begin on September 20, 2021. We seek a diverse pool of applicants who wish to join an academic community that places the highest value on rigorous inquiry and encourages diverse perspectives, experiences, groups of individuals, and ideas to inform and stimulate intellectual challenge, engagement, and exchange. The University's Statements on Diversity are at <https://provost.uchicago.edu/statements-diversity>. The University of Chicago is an AA/disabled/veterans/EOE and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, age, status as an individual with a disability, protected veteran status, genetic information, or other protected classes under the law. For additional information please see the University's Notice of

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Most job discrimination is illegal, and open hiring on the basis of merit depends on fair practice in recruitment, thereby ensuring that all professionally qualified persons may obtain appropriate opportunities. The AHA will not accept a job listing that (1) contains wording that either directly or indirectly links race, color, national origin, sex, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, ideology, political affiliation, age, or disability to a specific job offer; or (2) contains wording requiring applicants to submit special materials for the sole purpose of identifying the applicant's race, color, national origin, sex, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, ideology, political affiliation, veteran status, age, or disability.

The AHA does make an exception to these criteria in three unique cases: (1) open listings for minority vita banks that are clearly not linked with specific jobs, fields, or specializations; (2) ads that require religious identification or affiliation for consideration for the position, a preference that is allowed to religious institutions under federal law; and (3) fellowship advertisements.

The AHA retains the right to refuse or edit all discriminatory statements from copy submitted to the Association that is not consistent with these guidelines or with the principles of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The AHA accepts advertisements from academic institutions whose administrations are under censure by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), but requires that this fact be clearly stated. Refer to [www.aaup.org/our-programs/academic-freedom/censure-list](http://www.aaup.org/our-programs/academic-freedom/censure-list) for more information.

For further details on best practices in hiring and academic employment, see the AHA's Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct, [www.historians.org/standards](http://www.historians.org/standards); Guidelines for the Hiring Process, [www.historians.org/hiring](http://www.historians.org/hiring); and Policy on Advertisements, [www.historians.org/adpolicy](http://www.historians.org/adpolicy).

Nondiscrimination at [https://www.uchicago.edu/about/non\\_discrimination\\_statement](https://www.uchicago.edu/about/non_discrimination_statement). Job seekers in need of a reasonable accommodation to complete the application process should call 773-702-1032 or email [equalopportunity@uchicago.edu](mailto:equalopportunity@uchicago.edu) with their request.

## UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Urbana, IL

**Assistant Professor of Soviet and Post-Soviet History.** The Department of History at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign invites applications for a tenure-track position in Soviet and post-Soviet history. We welcome applications from scholars whose research explores any topic, region, or period within that specialization. The position will start at the rank of assistant professor (100% FTE, on a 9-month service basis, with a 2-2 course load). Priority will be given to applicants whose research and teaching interests show a deep engagement with methodological and historiographical debates as they relate to Soviet and post-Soviet history. All thematic emphases are welcome, including environmental history, colonialism and post-colonialism, transnational or global history, the global south (Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia), the African diaspora, digital history, religion, law and human rights, capitalism and socialism, nationality, race and racism, and gender and sexualities. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is a major public research university, with a top-ranked history PhD program, world-renowned library resources in the field of Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies, and the federally funded Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center. We are looking for candidates who can offer engaging, innovative undergraduate and graduate courses (alongside their original scholarship) and also provide strong professional mentorship to our MA and PhD students. Applicants should address this broader institutional context for full consideration. The Illinois College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is a world leader in research, teaching, and public engagement. Faculty in the College create knowledge, address critical societal needs through the transfer and application of knowledge, and prepare students for lives of impact in the state, nation, and globally. To meet these

objectives, the College embraces and values diversity and difference through hiring faculty candidates who can contribute through their research, teaching, and/or service to the diversity and excellence of the Illinois community. The University of Illinois is an AA/EOE that recruits and hires qualified candidates without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, national origin, disability or veteran status. For more information, visit <http://go.illinois.edu/EEO>. PhD in history or related field is required at the time of appointment. Candidates with superior qualifications who will complete all the PhD requirements within the first appointment year may be appointed at the rank of Instructor. After the PhD requirement is met, the appointment will be changed to assistant professor. The anticipated starting date is August 16, 2022. Salary commensurate with rank and qualifications. To apply, create your candidate profile through <https://jobs.illinois.edu> and upload a letter of application, a CV, statement of teaching philosophy, and contact information for three professional references by October 11, 2021. Questions about the position or application procedures may be directed to Bonnie Crawford at [bsc@illinois.edu](mailto:bsc@illinois.edu). To find out more about the resources available at the university and Urbana-Champaign community please visit these sites: <https://humanresources.illinois.edu/dual-career-program/index.html>, <https://www.hr.uillinois.edu/>, and <https://yourewelcomecu.com/cu-community/>. The University of Illinois conducts criminal background checks on all job candidates upon acceptance of a contingent offer. Convictions are not a bar to employment. As a qualifying federal contractor, the University of Illinois System uses E-Verify to verify employment eligibility. The University of Illinois System requires candidates selected for hire to disclose any documented finding of sexual misconduct or sexual harassment and to authorize inquiries to current and former employers regarding findings of sexual misconduct or sexual harassment. For more information, visit <https://www.hr.uillinois.edu/cms/One.aspx?portalId=4292&pageId=1411899>. The University of Illinois must also comply with applicable federal export control laws and regulations and, as such, reserves the right to employ restricted party screening procedures for applicants.



## JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

Baltimore, MD

**Assistant Professor of History of Physical Sciences.** The Department of the History of Science and Technology at The Johns Hopkins University invites applications for the position of tenure-track assistant professor in the history of the modern physical sciences, broadly construed with the anticipated start date of July 1, 2022. The position is open to all areas of scholarship within the history of modern physical sciences in the 18th-21st centuries. Candidates should have a strong scholarly record and teaching experience, or show promise of excellence in academic research, publications, and teaching. The position involves undergraduate and graduate teaching, as well as supervision of graduate students at MA and PhD levels. Candidate must be able to teach our core undergraduate survey course in the history of modern science (18th-21st centuries) along with a parallel graduate reading course that prepares students for qualifying exams. A PhD is required, but we will accept applications from doctoral students expected to fulfill PhD degree requirements by July 1, 2022. The Department is committed to conducting a broad and inclusive search for a candidate who, through their research, teaching, and service, will contribute to the diversity and excellence of the academic community. Applications should include a cover letter, CV, a description of scholarly and teaching activity, and three letters of reference. All application material should be submitted online via Interfolio at <http://apply.interfolio.com/91583>. Review of applications will begin on October 15, 2021, and will continue until the position is filled. The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland is an AA/EOE of women, minorities, protected veterans and individuals with disabilities and encourages applications from these and other protected group members. Consistent with the University's goals of achieving excellence in all areas, we will assess the comprehensive qualifications of each applicant.



## HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Cambridge, MA

**Professor of History and African and African American Studies.** The Departments of History and

African and African American Studies at Harvard University seek to appoint a tenure-track professor in 20th century African American history. The appointment is expected to begin on July 1, 2022. The tenure-track professor will be responsible for teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Doctorate or terminal degree in history or related discipline required by the time the appointment begins. Demonstrated strong commitment to teaching and advising is desired. Please submit the following materials through the ARIeS portal (<https://academicpositions.harvard.edu/postings/10507>). Applications must be submitted no later than September 24, 2021 (with all reference letters submitted by October 4, 2021). Include cover letter; CV; teaching/advising statement (describing teaching philosophy and practices); research statement; statement describing efforts to encourage diversity, inclusion, and belonging, including past, current, and anticipated future contributions in these areas; and names and contact information of 3-5 referees, who will be asked by a system-generated email to upload a letter of recommendation once the candidate's application has been submitted. Three letters of recommendation are required, and the application is considered complete only when at least three letters have been received. At least one letter must come from someone who has not served as the candidate's undergraduate, graduate, or postdoctoral advisor. Applicants may submit letters already on file with Interfolio by following these instructions: <https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/aries-faculty-hiring/faq/can-i-use-my-interfolio-account-submit-my-letters-recommendation>. Please send any publications and as much of the dissertation and other unpublished material as is relevant. Harvard is an EOE and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions, or any other characteristic protected by law.



## PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

Princeton, NJ

**Assistant Professor of Modern Latin America.** The Department of History at Princeton University invites applications from scholars who

specialize in the history of modern Latin America. Review of files will begin on October 15, 2021, and continue until the position is filled. Applicants should provide a cover letter, CV, and a two-page dissertation or book abstract. At least three referees should be entered into the online system, which will automatically generate requests for their letters. For candidates who do not yet have a PhD, the recommendation of the principal advisor must include precise information on the present status of the dissertation and the likelihood of completion by summer 2022. We seek faculty members who will create a climate that embraces excellence and diversity, with a strong commitment to teaching and mentoring that will

enhance the work of the department and attract and retain a diverse student body. Applicants are welcome to include a brief description of how they would contribute to this goal in their cover letter. Apply online at <https://www.princeton.edu/acad-positions/position/21941>. This position is subject to the University's background check policy.



OHIO

**MIAMI UNIVERSITY**

Oxford, OH

**Assistant Professor of African American History.** The

Department of History at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, seeks applications for a tenure-track assistant professorship in African American history, to begin in the fall of 2022. Duties include teaching undergraduate and graduate courses, including participation in survey teaching. Requirements include PhD in history by date of appointment for appointment as assistant professor; ABD in history for appointment as instructor. Promising research agenda in any area of African American history. Ability to teach surveys of American history, upper-level curriculum in African American History, and courses in area of specialty. Willingness to serve the department and university. Submit cover letter, CV, evidence of

teaching effectiveness, and writing sample. Evidence of teaching effectiveness may include teaching evaluations, sample syllabi, and/or a statement of teaching philosophy. Apply at <https://jobs.miamioh.edu/cw/en-us/job/498976/assistant-professor>.

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NATALIA MEHLMAN PETRZELA

# MUSCLE MOTION

Even the hottest romance starts out with something small: a gesture, a look . . . in aerobics, it's called the warm-up." These are the opening lines of the workout in *Muscle Motion*, a 1983 home exercise video, available on both VHS and the higher-definition laser disc, featuring the "Men of Chippendales." Historical analyses of the 1980s video fitness boom often emphasize Jane Fonda's best-selling *Workout*, but the strange, sexed-up *Muscle Motion*, which sold 80,000 VHS tapes alone, confirms the depths of that demand and reveals a deeper story that anecdotes about America's wholesome desire to "feel the burn" can obscure.

If it seems strange that a male strip club act would release a workout video, it makes perfect sense given that Chippendales men were a mainstay of 1980s material culture. You could buy Chippendales calendars, greeting cards, and logo-embroidered jeans. When "the fitness craze" and ownership of VCR and laser disc players became two defining aspects of this era's consumerism, it was clear that Chippendales could profit handsomely. After all, the mediagenic men were known for their muscled bodies, and many were recruited at gyms. Plus, the sweaty intimacy of exercise could easily slide into eroticism: Olivia Newton-John's hit song "Physical" frames fitness as foreplay, and a 1983 *Rolling Stone* cover story declared health clubs the "new singles bars."

Fittingly, *Muscle Motion* is as much the product of the fitness phenomenon as the "porn revolution," also centered in Southern California and one of the most popular home video categories. The mainstreaming of porn meant Chippendales could sell surprisingly racy content, while keeping it just clean enough to promote on daytime TV and to stock in the mall. Choreographer Nancy Gregory insists *Muscle Motion* was fundamentally a great workout, but the "gorgeous men" tucking and thrusting before strategically positioned cameras made it feel suggestive. So did her narration, which was breathy and full of double entendres about keeping the men's

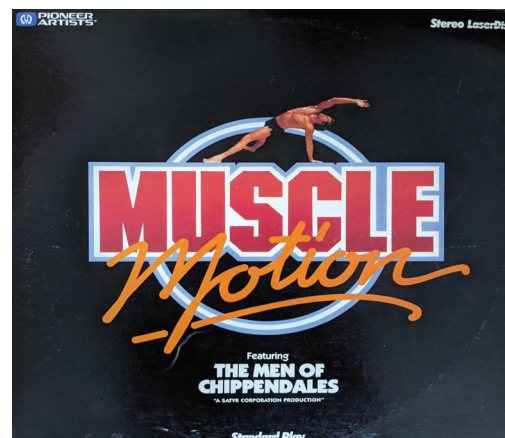
"hands busy" and "wasting" champagne splashed across their bare midriffs. After a "cool down" winkingly intended as the opposite, Gregory sighs that "had to be a good workout."

Chippendales insiders doubted women purchased the video "for the exercise," but the virtuous pretense of health gave them license to something more titillating. Doubling down on their appeal as gorgeous but accessible guys, the dancers went on tour, demonstrating the workouts in malls and aerobics studios, posing shirtless for pictures with women after class. The overlap of sex and on-screen sweat had precedent, but usually men watching women: when home fitness pioneer Debbie Drake taught exercise on television in the 1960s, men were known to tune in for her tight leotards and bullet bras rather than the instruction. By the 1980s, incarcerated men prohibited from receiving pornography could order exercise videos instead.

*Muscle Motion* wasn't entirely uncontroversial. A midwestern physical education teacher who showed the film to her high school class was fired, but she maintained the workout wasn't even "mildly erotic," especially compared to "provocative" tapes featuring women. In 2021, the eroticism of exercise—from pole dancing to bordello-lit boot camps to seminude YouTube trainers—is undeniable. But in 1983, a product that provided the sexiness of a night at Chippendales and the virtuous sweatiness of aerobics at home was understandably exciting. **P**

*Natalia Mehlman Petrzela is associate professor of history at the New School, host and co-producer of the podcast Welcome to Your Fantasy, and host of the podcast Past Present. She tweets @nataliapetrzela.*

*Photo: Ashley E. Bowen*





# AHA CAREER CONTACTS

Are you a graduate student or early-career scholar who is interested in learning about the career paths open to historians?

Are you a history PhD employed beyond the professoriate with advice and experience to share?

Jonathan Sureau, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0, [flic.kr/p/fdp8i6](https://flic.kr/p/fdp8i6)

Sign up to participate in AHA Career Contacts, a service that matches graduate students and recent PhDs with historians employed beyond the professoriate for one-time informational interviews.

For more information and to sign up, visit [www.historians.org/aha-career-contacts](http://www.historians.org/aha-career-contacts).

## Call for Proposals for the 136th Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association

The AHA's annual meeting is the largest yearly gathering of historians in the United States.

All historians are welcome and encouraged to submit proposals. The AHA also invites historically focused proposals from colleagues in related disciplines and from AHA affiliated societies. The Program Committee will consider all proposals that advance the study, teaching, and public presentation of history.

The Association seeks submissions on the histories of all places, periods, people, and topics; on the uses of diverse sources and methods, including digital history; and on theory and the uses of history itself in a wide variety of venues.

We invite proposals for sessions in a variety of formats and encourage lively interaction among presenters and with the audience.

### Session Proposals

Sessions last for 90 minutes. Most sessions will be limited to four speakers plus a chair. The Program Committee will accept proposals for complete sessions only. We encourage organizers to build panels that bring together diverse perspectives.

### Poster Proposals

The meeting will feature a poster session to allow historians to share their research through visual materials. Proposals for single, individual presentations may be submitted as posters.

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The Program Committee welcomes proposals from all historians, whatever their institutional affiliation or status, and historians working outside the United States. With the exception of foreign scholars and those from other disciplines, all persons appearing on the program must be members of the AHA, although membership is not required to submit a proposal. All participants must register for the meeting when registration opens. The Association aspires to represent the full diversity of its membership at the annual meeting.

**Electronic submission only, by midnight PST on February 15, 2022**

Before applying, please review the annual meeting guidelines  
and more information at [historians.org/proposals](https://historians.org/proposals).

**Questions about policies, modes of presentation, and the electronic submission process?**

Contact [annualmeeting@historians.org](mailto:annualmeeting@historians.org).

**Questions about the content of proposals?**

Contact Program Committee chair Akin Ogundiran, Univ. of North Carolina at Charlotte ([Ogundiran@uncc.edu](mailto:Ogundiran@uncc.edu))  
and co-chair Molly Warsh, Univ. of Pittsburgh ([warsh@pitt.edu](mailto:warsh@pitt.edu)).