

# PAST AND PRESENT

Newsletter of the CSB/SJU History Department

Volume 1, Issue 1, September 2019

Happy  
Autumn!



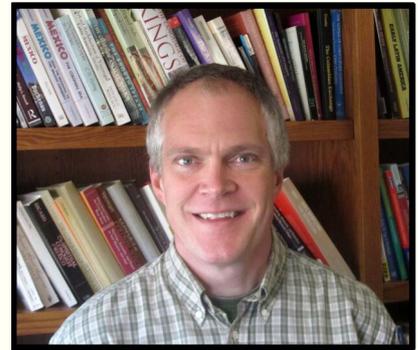
## LETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Greetings from the History Department! I hope you enjoy the first issue of *Past and Present*, our alumni/ae newsletter. The History Department is finishing up a two-year long process of program review, an in-depth evaluation of our curriculum and programming. One of its central conclusions is that we need to strengthen ties with our alums and create opportunities for current and prospective students to interact with and learn from you. To that end, the History Department is launching two initiatives.

First, an alumni/ae newsletter. We plan to publish this newsletter twice a year to let you know what's new in the History Department and to publicize your milestones to the History alum community. Please send us **news of your significant events** so that we can announce them in later editions of this newsletter.

Second, the Tegeder-Berg Society, a Society for CSB/SJU History alums and students. Named for Fr. Vincent Tegeder and Sr. Carol Berg, two former pillars in the History faculty, the Society seeks to highlight the importance of studying the past to understand the present, to provide an intellectual community for History alums, and to offer History alumni/ae the opportunity to mentor current and prospective students.

Our inaugural event will take place on Wednesday, October 9 beginning at 6:00 pm at Jax Café in Northeast Minneapolis. Professor Ken Jones will speak on "Removing a President," an examination of past attempts to unseat a US president. Please join us for Dr. Jones' timely and stimulating talk. [Sign up for this event here.](#)



I look forward to seeing you at our first Tegeder-Berg Society event and/or hearing from you soon.

-Dr. Brian Larkin

## ALUMNAE SPOTLIGHT



Sarah Weber Bakken '16

Research/Instruction Librarian

**WHY HISTORY?** Going into my freshman year, I thought I wanted to pursue nursing as a career. After my first biology class, I quickly realized I did not want to pursue a science based career. I always enjoyed literature so I decided to major in English and pursue history as a minor. While taking a course with Dr. Schroeder, he mentioned I should consider making history my major. That was really all it took to convince me, and it was the best decision I could have made. I switched my major and minor, making me a much happier student! I was able to take more classes on a subject I truly enjoyed. The research skills I have gained from my history major experience have made a world of a difference during my time as a graduate school student and in my professional career.

-Sarah Weber Bakken '16

[Share your story!](#)

Meet Dr. Brittany Merritt! She is the newest faculty member in the CSB/SJU History Department. She studies the British Empire during the first half of the twentieth century. She likes that topic because it allows her to study much of the world through the lens of the British Empire. More specifically, she enjoys examining anti-colonial and national movements that were beginning to push back against imperial power.

At the moment, Professor Merritt is working on her book about medical policy in the Carribean during imperial rule, and how medicine and health care became ways for politicians in Barbados to make demands on Britain.

Dr. Merritt loves history because you can study anything. Through historical study, you can understand people and the reason why things are the way they are. History is not only about looking at the past but is also a way to think about future possibilities. Also, studying history can be very empowering because it gives us a better understanding of people and how they operate.

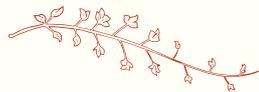
Currently, Professor Merritt is excited to teach a class about the British Empire in Africa called Guns, Gold, and Slaves. For next spring semester, Dr. Merritt is developing a new course about the British Empire and missionaries in Africa. It will count as both a Theology and a History course. She is looking forward to continuing to look at colonialism in Africa while also thinking about how the theological ideas of this period were used in an imperial context.

## FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



Dr. Brittany Merritt

-Elise Backer, History Major '22



## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Matthew Broich '20

**Matthew Broich** is a senior this year and will be graduating in the spring of 2020. He has enjoyed both Early Modern European and Early Latin American Histories. Matt has also been lucky enough to have great professors in these subjects that have undoubtedly contributed to his interest. As of right now, Matt has not had an internship in the History field, but he does work in the CSB/SJU History Department. His favorite movie would be either *Forrest Gump* or *Quigley Down Under*. Matt loves traveling to Colorado in the winter to snowboard. The combination of world-class riding, spectacular views, and all types of terrain make it a truly special place for him. His goals as an SJU senior include writing a compelling thesis for 399, continuing to grow and develop the History club, and figure out what his career path will be. If he could tell a first-year student one or two things about the history major, he would say that this major is unlike any other offered here at CSB/SJU. The faculty in the department is top-notch and are always happy to help students in any way they can. The major itself also sets you up for success. If you are a history major or take a history class, you will learn how to form cohesive arguments, write clearly, and research in a way that applies to all career paths. All of these skills that are taught are not exclusive to history because they can be used in any field. If Matt could be anyone in the world, he would be Bill Gates. Something surprising about Matt is that in his free time, he enjoys mountain biking, golfing, snowboarding, and reading a good book.

-Elise Backer, History Major '22

## FACULTY READING RECOMMENDATIONS



*Xuxub Must Die: the Lost Histories of a Murder on the Yucatan*, by Paul Sullivan. Why did Mayas from the Yucatan town of Santa Cruz kill Robert Stephens, a US citizen and sugar plantation administrator, in 1875? Sullivan weaves a captivating narrative that slowly reveals the contextual layers that explain this crime: a modernizing Mexican state, avaricious local landholders, US economic imperialism, and a fractured Mayan community. One of my favorite books for class. A compelling read that deeply situates a shocking event into its broader contexts.

Recommended by Dr. Brian Larkin.

*China in Ten Words*, by Yu Hua. I found this work when I was trying to update my China course, and it's a brilliant look at Chinese history in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Yu Hua, a gifted novelist, captures the life of the everyman growing up in a changing nation with his typical narrative grace and humor. If you are curious about the "Chinese miracle," skip the hyperbole and immerse yourself in one of Yu's choice words.



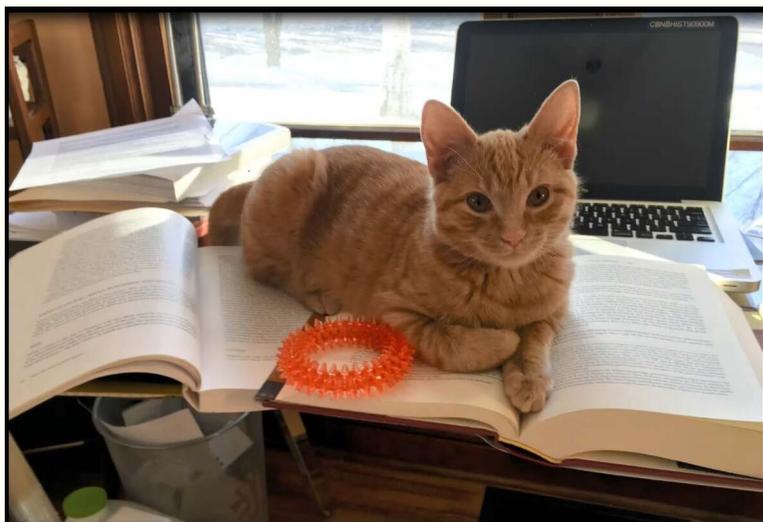
Recommended by Dr. Elisheva Perelman.



*Abina and the Important Men*, by Trevor Getz and Liz Clarke. It's a graphic history, which is a really fun way to read history! But I also like it because it reconstructs the story of a West African woman in the nineteenth century, which is very rare. Bonus—you get to see how historians debate the interpretation of primary sources, as the author includes critiques of his initial arguments at the end of the book and even reconsiders his stance on Abina's story.

Recommended by Dr. Brittany Merritt.

## MEET CLIO THE HISTORY CAT!



Clio was found in a wood pile by Dr. Wengler when she was only a kitten. Dr. Perelman took Clio in and nursed her back to health where she now has a forever happy home. The History Cat started her tenure at CSB/SJU's History Department soon after her birth in September 2018. Surrounded by the power of scholarship and the love of learning that permeated the department's students, faculty, and staff, she quickly grew up to embody much of the field, in her own way. She loves literature (mostly lying on it if someone who should be paying attention to her is trying to read and analyze it), and she just eats up the written word (no, really, she likes to eat paper). Fond of all military strategy, she takes great delight in putting her knowledge of tactics to the test in pouncing on toys, humans, insects, her brother, fluff, invisible objects, and sundry. She is quite social and loves to interact with any and all historians, unless you happen to be a canine. When not at work, Clio the History Cat considers herself a gourmand and enjoys testing all sorts of objects to discover if they might be food. Please come say hi if you happen to be in Clio the History Cat's presence (unless you are a dog).

-Dr. Elisheva Perelman, History Department

## EVENTS

Wednesday, October 9, 6:00 pm  
**Tegeder-Berg Society Inaugural**  
Jax Cafe, Northeast Minneapolis

Wednesday, November 6, 1:00 pm  
Enjoy History? Discover Careers!  
History Alumni/ae Career Panel  
Gorecki 120, CSB

Thursday, November 21, 2:30 pm  
**Senior Thesis Presentations**  
PDR, Gorecki, CSB

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