

PAST AND PRESENT

Newsletter of the CSB/SJU History Department

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Greetings from the History Department!

It's been a long winter, but it's finally beginning to warm up on campus!

This semester, we hosted two online Tegeder-Berg Society events. In February, a virtual Career and Networking mixer brought together prospective students, current students, and alumni. And in March, nearly 200 people registered for "Fascism: Past and Present." This event featured a collaborative presentation by Professor Greg Schroeder, Haley Joos (CSB '24), and Grace Nulty (CSB '23). Haley and Grace took Greg's newly developed course on the history of fascism this past fall. If you missed the event, look for a recording of it on the [Tegeder-Berg](#) website.

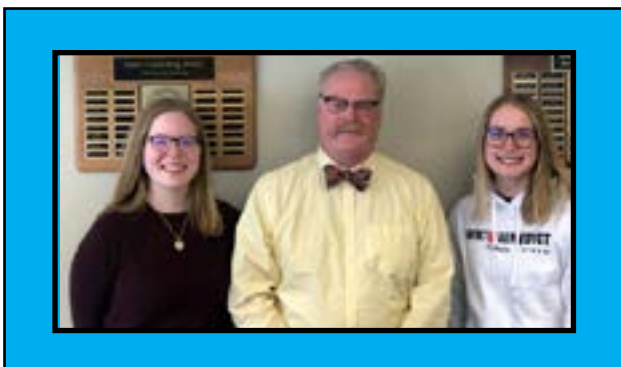


At the end of the semester, Professor Ken Jones will retire. Ken has been on campus since 1976 and has taught countless students. He is retiring at the top of his game: a recent winner of the CSB/SJU teaching and service awards. Ken helped shape not only the History Department but also CSB/SJU by mentoring a generation of faculty. He is a generous and gifted teacher who always has time to chat and brainstorm with students and colleagues. We will miss his presence and wish him well as he begins this new phase in life. Please join us to celebrate Ken and his many contributions to our campus community on Thursday, April 28, from 3:30 to 6:00 PM in Quad 160 (SJU).

Keep studying history,
Jonathan Merritt Nash

Summary of "Fascism: Past and Present" Presentation

On March 31, 2022, History Professor Gregory Schroeder and CSB students Haley Joos '24 and Grace Nulty '23, presented "Fascism: Past and Present," based upon their class of the same title in fall 2021. Schroeder offered an overview of historical fascism, using the work of scholars Stanley Payne, Roger Griffin, and Robert Paxton to gain an understanding of definitions and developments within fascist movements 1914-1945. Paxton's analysis of the five stages of fascism – creation of movements, rooting of movements in the political system, taking power, exercising power, and choices for the long duration (entropy or radicalization?) – was fundamental to the course and to the presentation. Joos, a History major, and Nulty, a History minor, drew



on the ideas of Paxton and other scholars to discuss digital fascism as a new variant of fascism in our contemporary world. They discussed the proliferation of neo-fascist ideas on social media as well as the phenomenon of "lone wolf" violence in conjunction with digital platforms. The three presenters engaged audience members in a Q&A session that could have continued long beyond the end of the session. See the [Tegeder-Berg Society](#) webpage for the recording and a reading list.

Student Spotlights

Claire Boettcher '23, is a junior History and Political Science major from Duluth. Her interest in history began early and has only grown at CSB/SJU, where she decided to pursue a History major after thoroughly enjoying her first history class on campus, Old Regime to EU. She was “enraptured by the knowledge presented and the different narratives that were explored,” and the class’ focus on career opportunities for History graduates. Her favorite history class to date was Modern Russia, which she took during the block schedule in December of 2020, when the students were given the option to attend remotely or stay on campus. “[I] was one of five people that remained in person for the duration of the course, and it was an absolute blast. Russia and Eastern Europe was already my favorite historical topic, but this class taught me more than I ever thought possible. The subject matter was incredible, the people were fantastic, and Professor Schroeder somehow put up with all my shenanigans.”



Last summer, Claire worked as a project contributor for the Panorama Project, “an international project focused on exploring and bridging partisanship in American politics,” where she contributed to the research and publication of “a piece of literature analyzing the acceptance or rejection of extremist groups in American parties, congress people, and media.” This summer she is a part of the Washington D.C.

Summer Internship Program, and hopes to work somewhere in the realm of international relations, a field she hopes to go into after graduation. “I want to pursue a career in international relations and global politics, specifically with Europe. I hope to work for the state department or a multilateral organization like the United Nations and put the skills and knowledge I learned in my history classes to good use.” She discussed how her history degree would help her in the application process: “having a history background definitely gives me a leg up in the application process because I can contextualize events and evaluate patterns.”

One of her favorite History-related memories so far was the reenactment game in Beth Wengler’s French Revolution class. “I have never yelled as loudly or gotten as invested in something as I did in that class. It sometimes got so out of hand that my friend who had a class in the next room over would text me to ask if everything was ok. I never thought I would verbally decimate a classmate over the price of bread 250 years ago. It was an out of body experience, and probably the most fun I have ever had in a class.” Claire’s advice to potential history majors: “DO IT!! It is so much fun and there are so many different things you can do with a history major once you learn how to market it. Trust me, you won’t regret it.”

Avery Bentrott '22, a History and Accounting major, is one of the many seniors graduating this year. An interest in his high school history classes prompted Avery to fit a history class into his schedule first-year, and the rest, as they say, is history. So far, his favorite history classes have included the Capstone, and East Asian Christianity. “The Capstone was awesome because I got to work closely with the friends I had gotten to know over my four years here and research a topic I was interested in. For East Asian Christianity, it would be solely because I cracked a joke about the leader of the Taiping Rebellion making China great again and Dr. Perelman hard pivoted into a discussion centered on that for the rest of class.” After graduation, Avery intends to become an auditor, and spoke on the importance of his History degree during the job search process. “Throughout all of my interviews for accounting positions, no one asked about my accounting degree. Everyone asked about my history degree and got excited about the writing, research, and critical thinking skills that brought to the table.” One of his favorite books, that he recommends to all, is “The Black Count: Glory, Revolution, Betrayal, and the Real Count of Monte Cristo” by Tom Reiss. Fun Fact: During his sophomore year, Dr. Jonathan Nash encouraged Avery to become the Treasurer for the Black Student Association, which made him the first board member who was not a person of color. This year he served on the President’s Advisory Council, a group established this year to “address sexual misconduct and foster respect for human dignity and our Catholic Benedictine values.”



Avery’s advice for students considering a major in History? “Just do it.”

~student spotlights submitted by Cassandra Gronning

Faculty Spotlight

Meet **Dr. Beth Wengler**, one of our wonderful History professors who is about to complete her 22nd year teaching at CSB/SJU.



Like many current students, Dr. Wengler's path to a degree in history was not a foregone conclusion. As an undecided undergraduate, Dr. Wengler took an elective course on women in US history, an emerging field at the time. Her fascination with the often-unheard stories and voices of women and ordinary people who have significantly shaped history led her to the major and ultimately a PhD. Today, she brings her interests to the classroom in her favorite subjects: the French Revolution and gender history. "The French Revolution saw ten years of tremendous, monumental change that engaged every person in that society. In all my courses, I am interested in helping students uncover how ordinary people acted as agents of change," she said. Dr. Wengler's classes are known for interactive role-playing games in which students adopt historical personas and recreate historical events. "What happened in the past wasn't inevitable. There are all sorts of contingencies that influence outcomes, including who shows up and how one shows up on a given day. I especially love it when my students, acting within the boundaries of what would have been historically plausible, change the past and learn to appreciate the role of human agency."

Why study history? "You really cannot go wrong with a degree in history. I'm especially impressed when I hear our alums explain how they use what they learned in their history major in their jobs in finance, medicine, and a variety of other fields one doesn't usually associate with a B.A. in History!" Dr. Wengler emphasized the student-centered learning that remains at the heart of the History Department, the excellent faculty dedicated to mentoring undergraduate students, and the importance of understanding the present through an examination of the past. "The world we live in didn't come out of nowhere. Everything emerges out of what occurred before. If you don't understand the root causes of why things are the way they are, it will be very hard to create lasting change."

Dr. Wengler is the Director of the Honors Scholars Program on campus, which is currently implementing a new curriculum. She, along with her codirector, Dr. Emily Esch, received a National Endowment for the Humanities Humanities Connection grant in 2019-2020 to support the program's restructuring. "The most important part of my job is educating students for today's world. I enjoy thinking of new ways to engage students in their learning and developing a new Honors curriculum was a means of doing that."

Outside of the office (and when there is not a global pandemic) Dr. Wengler loves to travel, especially to France where she pursues her research interests in religious reform and gender in the sixteenth century. She has directed the CSB/SJU study abroad program in France numerous times. She spends much of her summer training for various triathlons, and enjoying the occasional (OK, daily) ice-cream indulgence. A fun fact about Dr. Wengler: the best birthday present she's ever received was a mint chocolate chip

~submitted by Cassandra Gronning

Senior History majors and their capstone topics:

Avery Bentrrott, "How Do You Like the Journal's War?": Fake News, Politicians, and Examining the Origins of the Spanish-American War

Elise Backer, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Ancient Greece

Jack Beutz, Gothic Kings

Anders Busse, Nazi Propaganda through Film: A Deep Dive into the Ideology of the Third Reich with the Films *Triumph of the Will* and *Jew Süss*

Tamia Francois, Harlem Nights: An analysis of Caribbean writers during the Harlem Renaissance

Cassandra Gronning, The Cultural Impacts of Television in Rural Alaska

Grace Hillemeier, The Power of the *Post*: Investigative Journalism's Impact on the Watergate Scandal, June to November 1972

Cesar Luis, The Mexican Revolution: Forgotten Promise or Deceitful Lies?

Kayla O'Leary, No Happy Endings: Anna May Wong's American Film Roles during the 1930s and '40s

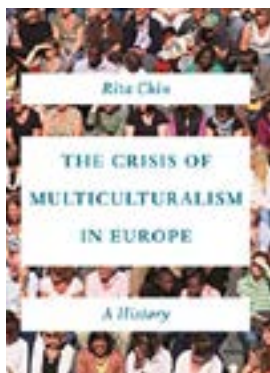
David Palmquist, Resisting the Reds: The UPA's Conflict with the Soviet Union

Ashley Raymond, "Hateful A-bomb": Japanese Hibakusha and Atomic Blame

William Villalvazo, Roman Brutality: Examining the Persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire

Nevin Vincent, Women Mystics and the Inquisition in New Spain

Vito Zambetti, Italian Fascism: Roots and Revolution



The Crisis of Multiculturalism in Europe, Rita Chin (2017)

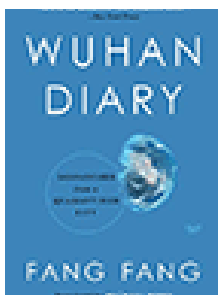
Chin offers a clear example of why history matters and why we need to understand the past if we are to navigate the present. She begins with a history of the terms “multicultural” and “multiculturalism,” explaining their origin in the United States and transplantation in different European societies. Readers learn right away that the context in which the term is used makes a difference. Chin reminds us of the longer history of diversity within Europe, even as she stresses the post-WWII migrations to Europe resulting from labor recruitment, decolonization, and refugee movements. Focusing on Great Britain, West Germany, France, and to a lesser extent the Netherlands, Chin demonstrates the varied responses and non-responses to people viewed as “non-Europeans.” She explains well-known events such as the Rushdie Affair (The Satanic Verses) and lesser-known efforts such as the Office of Multicultural Affairs in Frankfurt am Main. In her effort to explain why European leaders proclaimed the “failure of multiculturalism” in 2010, Chin argues that racial explanations for difference were replaced by cultural explanations. Her epilogue addresses the future of democracy in light of its ability to navigate complex, multicultural societies.



Words Will Break Cement: The Passion of Pussy Riot, Masha Gessen (2014)

Gessen tells the story of the feminist, art-collective, punk band Pussy Riot that emerged in the context of anti-Putin protests in 2011. The book weaves together biographies of the three main members (Nadya Tolokonnikova, Maria Alyokhina, and Yekaterina Samutsevich), analysis of their developing ideas and public actions, and a detailed narrative of their famous (infamous?) “Punk Prayer” in February 2012, including their subsequent arrest, trial, and imprisonment. Gessen provides important insights into the protest movements and the Putin regime’s evolving strategy of repression. She also demonstrates how Pussy Riot synthesized feminist critique and the tradition of Russian dissidents: the phrase “words will break cement” was Aleksander Solzhenitsyn’s, cited by Tolokonnikova during her trial. Finally, the book offers a good introduction to Gessen, a widely published and interviewed journalist.

~suggestions for Chin and Gessen submitted by Dr. Gregory Schroeder



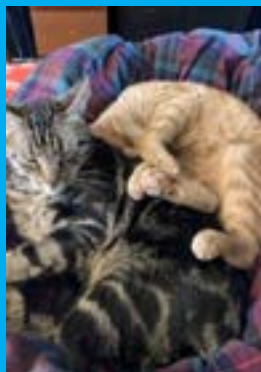
Wuhan Diary: Dispatches from a Quarantined City, Fang Fang (Michael Berry, trans., 2020)

From the start of the lockdown on January 25th, 2020, novelist and poet Fang Fang began writing existence in the epicenter of the pandemic. When her work garnered attention outside of the nation, as the experiences she recorded soon spread across the globe, she came under fire for her depictions of life under Wuhan’s strict quarantine. From the mundane to the quietly poignant, Fang cuts through all of the presumably concomitant issues that seemed to arise despite the commonality of the disease—politics, xenophobia, racism, ethics, civil liberties—to write a primary source that will be studied and appreciated long after Covid has become endemic and controlled.

~submitted by Dr. Elisheva Perelman

Clio’s Corner

Clio the History Cat continues to wreak havoc on everything and sundry, only pausing to dream of past lives when she was certainly and perhaps rightly worshipped in ancient Egypt (pictured).



(I would say that Dio helps calm her, but moments after this photo was taken, they started fighting like Spain and the Netherlands in the late 16th century.)

As a good historian, she enjoys pretending that her litter box is an archaeological site and excavating whatever hidden treasures lie buried within. Apparently, she has uncovered an ancient civilization made entirely of cat waste. I’m sure the NEH grant will be forthcoming. Stay tuned!

~submitted by Dr. Ellie Perelman

Honors Societies Inductees (Phi Beta Kappa/Delta Epsilon Sigma) ‘22

Elise Backer, Claire Boettcher, Cassandra Gronning, Grace Hillemeier, Kayla O’Leary

All College Honors with History Distinction ‘22

Kayla O’Leary

Dean’s List ‘F21

Avery Bentrott, Cassandra Gronning, Grace Hillemeier, Claire Kouri, Jackson May, Theresa Meier, Nolan Morrey, Kayla O’Leary, David Palmquist, Sam Rengo, Olivia Schleper, Mark Spangler, Jackson Von Arx, Nathaniel Wright

“Ukraine: Understanding and Responding to the Russian Invasion.”

Dr. Gregory Schroeder presented a brief history of Ukraine and History senior David Palmquist presented his research on Ukrainian resistance to the Soviets in the 1940s-50s. CSB seniors Marta Luiken (English) and Elena Harrington (Education) shared stories of their families’ first-hand experiences recently in Poland and Ukraine, respectively. Dr. Allison Spenader (Education) coordinated the event and provided information about how to help Ukrainians during the invasion.

