

# history matters

FALL 2020 | NEWSLETTER



## ANNOUNCING THE 2021 HISTORY LECTURE SERIES:

### TECHNOLOGY AND ITS DISCONTENTS

The History Lecture Series will return in January 2021 with four presentations by UW history faculty on Technology and Its Discontents. Speakers will examine the role technologies have played in society since the medieval period and trace the connections around the world to contemporary issues of social, economic, and political justice.

The lecture series will be free this year. The lectures will be broadcast online for viewers all over the world and will be followed by a live Q&A. Tickets will be available from the UW Alumni Association in December. Learn more at [history.washington.edu/history-lecture-series](https://history.washington.edu/history-lecture-series).

**Lynn Thomas's** talk, "From Caravans of Gold to Atomic Bombs: African Mining in World History," will examine the role of technology in the mining industry in Africa, spanning from gold mining in medieval West Africa to uranium mining during the Cold War. Mining has linked Africa to the wider world and generated enormous wealth, but it has also generated enormous violence and inequalities.

**Vicente Rafael**, in "Photographic Power: Tales from the Philippines and the United States," will discuss the intertwined history of photography and trauma in colonial and civil wars. As Rafael will explain, the camera has been a tool of colonial conquest and racial injustice as much as it has been a means for their resistance.

**Bruce Hevly's** "Arming the Police and the 'Social Source of Our Distresses'" will investigate the use of handguns by American police officers beginning with Teddy Roosevelt's tenure on the New York City Police Commission in the 1890s.

**Margaret O'Mara's** talk, titled "Digital Discontents, from the Age of the Mainframe to the Era of Big Tech," will tackle the unexpectedly long history of today's worries about invasions of data privacy, untrammelled artificial intelligence, and the power of large tech platforms.



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

### DEAR FRIENDS OF HISTORY,

IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE that fall quarter has arrived. The summer always passes quickly, to be sure. But this year, the disbelief that the launch of a new academic year is nearly here stems from the strangeness of this summer—one without, in general, family traveling for reunions, for instance—and that we'll once again be teaching and learning remotely when classes resume. This is the first summer in many, many years that I didn't travel to Pennsylvania to see family and friends, let alone go to a Mariners game. Instead, I worked on research projects and explored Seattle, taking delight, for example, in seeing a great blue heron on Green Lake. However it was that you spent the summer of COVID-19, I hope this finds you, your family, and your friends in good health and good spirits.

Although we won't be returning to Smith Hall, that doesn't mean we don't have many events planned this fall. In early October, Howard and Frances Keller Endowed Professor of History Margaret O'Mara (*The Code: Silicon Valley and the Remaking of America*), Mary L. Gray (*Ghost Work: How to Stop Silicon Valley from Building a New Global Underclass*), and a panel of tech workers gathered for an evening discussing the past, present, and future of labor in the global tech economy. On October 22, the Department of History Diversity Committee sponsored an event that is not to be missed: "Why Race Matters: The 2020 Election," featuring La TaSha Levy (American ethnic studies), Arbella Bet-Shlimon (history), and Sophia Jordán Wallace (political science). You can read more about the event in this newsletter and view it now on the department YouTube channel.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR CONTINUED

On November 12 at 4 p.m., you'll want to join us on Zoom for another fascinating event, when Jacob Dlamini (Princeton) talks about his recently published book, *Safari Nation: A Social History of the Kruger National Park*. In January and February 2021, this year's History Lecture Series, Technology and Its Discontents, will feature fascinating talks by Bruce Hevly, Margaret O'Mara, Vicente Rafael, and Lynn Thomas. There will be no need to venture out into the damp, rainy, and dark weather to Kane Hall, because the presentations will occur on Zoom. And, if you missed any of the highlights in the spring and summer—the Stephanie M. H. Camp Lecture by Sharla Fett (Occidental College) in May, Jennifer Thomson of Bucknell University on the history of Earth Day, the History behind the Headlines panel on responses to COVID-19, or the forum "Can It Happen Here? Law and (Dis)order, Executive Power, and Deploying Federal Officers"—you can find them on the Department of History website ([history.washington.edu/history-lectures-videos](http://history.washington.edu/history-lectures-videos)).

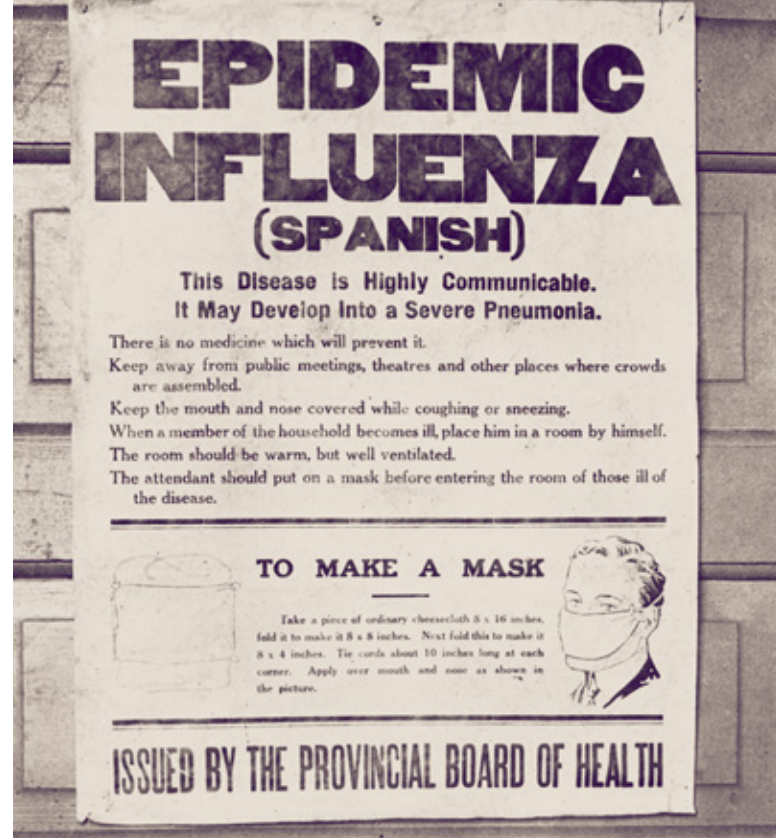
It is with great sadness that I write about the passing of two beloved history colleagues: Chuck Bergquist and William Rorabaugh. Chuck, a distinguished historian of Latin America whose research focused on Colombia, died on July 30. Jim Gregory, associate chair, wrote an eloquent obituary in memory of Chuck, which you can read in this newsletter. Bill, a renowned historian of nineteenth- and twentieth-century United States history, passed away on March 19. *Perspectives*, the newsletter of the American Historical Association, recently published a lovely obituary in Bill's memory, written by his former graduate student Michael Allen, which can be read on the AHA website.

Mira Green, who earned her PhD from the department in 2015 and taught here for several years as a lecturer, has just joined the Department of History at the University of Utah as an assistant professor. While we are very sorry to see Dr. Green leave the department, we wish her the very best in her new position.

There is much to be excited about this fall. Enrollments are strong. Among our roster of great courses is a new one: World Wars I & II: Digital History, taught by Professor Laurie Marhoefer and PhD candidate Taylor Soja, and developed by them both through a Simpson Center for the Humanities Digital Humanities Summer Fellowship this year. We are also welcoming a stellar cohort of new graduate students. What inspires me about this year is the collective achievement of spring quarter, when faculty and staff in history worked tirelessly and creatively to carry on the teaching, research, and public citizenship that are the core of our mission.

I wish you, your family, and your friends health and general well-being this fall. I so look forward to seeing all of you when we are back in Smith Hall!

**Glennys Young**  
Chair, Professor of History and International Studies



A PERIOD PHOTO OF A POSTER ISSUED BY ALBERTA'S PROVINCIAL BOARD OF HEALTH ALERTING THE PUBLIC TO THE 1918 INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC. THE POSTER GIVES INFORMATION ON THE SPANISH FLU, AND INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO MAKE A MASK.



SAINT CHARLES BORROMEIO BRINGING THE ASSISTANCE OF RELIGION TO THE PLAGUE VICTIMS OF MILAN - ANICET CHARLES GABRIEL LEMONNIER (1743-1824)

# HISTORY INSTRUCTORS TEACH THE VIRUS

TEACHING A COURSE ON THE HIV/AIDS EPIDEMIC in the middle of another viral pandemic is a daunting prospect, but that is precisely the scenario that confronted Professor Laurie Marhoefer at the start of spring quarter. HSTCMP 248: The AIDS Epidemic: A Global History usually begins with the earliest AIDS patients in the 1980s before moving back in time in order to explain the context within which the epidemic emerged. This year, however, such an approach seemed impossible, and Marhoefer was not the only member of the history department who felt it necessary to rewrite her course even beyond the adjustments for emergency remote teaching.

The decision of whether or not to incorporate the pandemic into courses—to “teach the virus”—is one with which educators around the world have been grappling since March. The Social Science Research Council, an international organization to advance social science research, including history, published a crowdsourced #coronavirussyllabus of relevant scholarship and resources for instructors in April.

When it came to teaching the HIV/AIDS epidemic, there seemed to be no way around confronting the context in which students are living. In fact, Marhoefer and Taylor Soja, UW history PhD student and teaching assistant for the course, saw teaching the virus as a responsibility. “It would have been impossible to teach the history of HIV/AIDS without confronting the reason we were all meeting over Zoom instead of in Smith Hall,” Soja explained. The background to public health responses to COVID-19—“quarantines, stay-at-home [mandates], contact tracing, the search for a miracle drug”—were no longer just the context for the HIV/AIDS pandemic, she continued, “it’s the context for our pandemic too. We can’t not talk about that.”

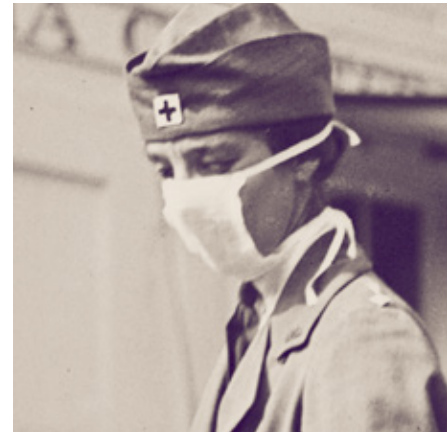
Teaching the virus was not just the purview of medical history courses. UW history PhD graduate and lecturer Roneva Keel began her Topics in American History course on migrant worker histories with a *Washington Post* article about how the suspension of visa processing for seasonal workers during the outbreak is affecting U.S. farms and fisheries. “It turned out to be a really effective way to start the class and has come up in a number of our conversations since,” Keel shared near the end of the quarter.

Environmental history has always been intertwined with the history of disease. Even in prior quarters, Professor Purnima Dhavan’s course on global environmental history had a focus on diseases, whether plant, animal, or human. “In previous years,” she reflected, “students often needed help thinking about how cholera, yellow fever, etc., had very different impacts on poor and colonized populations versus elite ones, but also how a sense of vulnerability by elite groups would force governments to think about sanitation, quarantines, and investments in public health they had been reluctant to spend money on for much of the nineteenth century.” Now, all UW students have personal experience with epidemics and can see these trends play out in front of them.

In the midst of all this, Professor Adam Warren rethought his autumn 2020 course HSTCMP 247: Global Health Histories: Colonial Medicine, Public Health, and International Health in the Global South. “The course I teach on history of medicine is a course on global health and the end point has always been to understand the way in which global health politics works today and the reasons why there are huge inequities,” Warren shared. He has rewritten the first few weeks of the course for fall so that it can be about how a historical perspective can help make sense of the global health response to COVID-19 and the experience of living in a pandemic.

According to Warren, the history of health and epidemics reveals “all these latent things we don’t talk about in society—the panic, the selfishness, and the fear of the other.” He wants to equip his students to confront and understand what they see around them now and what they will continue to live with this year, summarizing, “A lot of the course is about understanding inequality, which is fundamental to what we are seeing now.”

For Soja, teaching the virus was a privilege. “Personally, I feel so lucky to be [a teaching assistant] for this class,” stated Soja. “It’s really given me, and I hope our students, a historically grounded understanding of what’s happening today.” Marhoefer herself shared: “It’s very intense to teach the history of another recent pandemic that’s still shaping our lives right now, with a new pandemic shaping our lives in historically unprecedented ways. We couldn’t not talk about it,” she said in an echo of Soja’s observations, and added, “We’ve been lucky to be able to talk a lot about it.”



DEMONSTRATION AT THE RED CROSS EMERGENCY AMBULANCE STATION IN WASHINGTON, D.C., DURING THE INFLUENZA PANDEMIC OF 1918. CROPPED DETAIL OF THE ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPH.

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE TO TEACH THE HISTORY OF HIV/AIDS WITHOUT CONFRONTING THE REASON WE WERE ALL MEETING OVER ZOOM INSTEAD OF IN SMITH HALL.

# History in Action

## THE PEOPLE’S HISTORY STUDENT GROUP WORKS TO MAP RACISM AND RESISTANCE ON CAMPUS

IN EARLY JUNE, Ami Nanavaty (MA, 2020) watched protests against police brutality unfold in Seattle. In response, she set up a meeting for UW graduate students to support local protests and responses to militarized police forces across the country that killed Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Ahmaud Arbery. The group continued to meet and quickly grew, naming itself the People’s History group.

“As we together processed the protests, reflecting on our privileges and unique capacities as graduate students, we decided to establish a longer-term organizing presence,” explains the history PhD student Oya Aktas. The group developed within Divest and Demilitarize UW, a graduate student coalition that works to eliminate police violence at the university and the institution’s investment in campus police.

At the request of members of the Black Student Union, People’s History’s first large-scale project has been to research and create a map of the university’s Seattle campus that will provide students with a historical and spatial guide to the legacies of racism and colonialism within the institution. In addition to confronting the violent histories that produced the campus, the map foregrounds the resistance and resilience of Black and Indigenous students whose organizing efforts made possible campus resources such as the Samuel E. Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center and wəṭəbʔaltxʷ (wah-sheb-altuh) Intellectual House.

The campus map project has been a collaborative effort that extends beyond the history department and would not have been possible without the contributions of Julian Barr (PhD, geography), Selen Güler (PhD, sociology), Racquel West (BA, geography and history, 2020), and many others. “For me, the People’s History map project has been an opportunity to put my local history research directly to work on behalf of students of color and underserved communities in Seattle,” explained history PhD candidate Madison Heslop. “We would love this to be a resource that students, staff, faculty, and local activists will be able to return to and expand on for years to come.”

The People’s History student group’s primary goal is to provide tangible material support and volunteer work for current abolitionist efforts in Seattle. “We recognize that there has already been a lot of valuable work in writing people’s histories at UW and around Seattle, and we want to honor and amplify this work,” shared Oya. The group strives to make historical context more accessible to students, university staff and faculty, and the broader Seattle community.

To learn how you can support Divest and Demilitarize UW, visit [divestdemilitarizeuw.carrd.co/](http://divestdemilitarizeuw.carrd.co/).

Support the UW Black Student Union by visiting [linktr.ee/uwbsu](http://linktr.ee/uwbsu).

View the map at [bit.ly/33LpzNr](http://bit.ly/33LpzNr).



OFFICIAL GROUND PLAN AD MAP

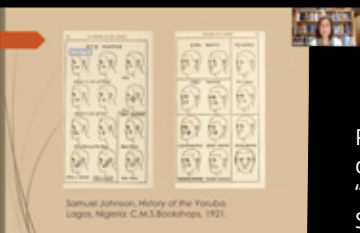
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OFFICIAL MAP OF THE ALASKA YUKON PACIFIC EXPOSITION, HOSTED ON CAMPUS IN 1909. IMAGE COURTESY OF SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

# ADAPTING TO A REMOTE UNIVERSITY: EVENT RECAP

ON MARCH 9, THE UNIVERSITY ANNOUNCED that classes and exams would be held remotely through the end of the term. The UW Department of History adapted by moving our public events online. Our virtual events were great successes and, in some cases, reached even larger audiences than they ordinarily would on campus.

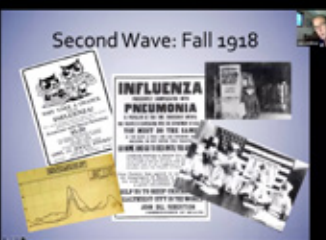
You can catch up on these events through the department YouTube channel: [tinyurl.com/UWHistVid](https://tinyurl.com/UWHistVid)



Professor **Sharla Fett** of Occidental College delivered the 2020 Stephanie M. H. Camp Lecture, "Recaptive African Women and the Body Politics of Survival in the Era of the 'Last Slave Ships.'"



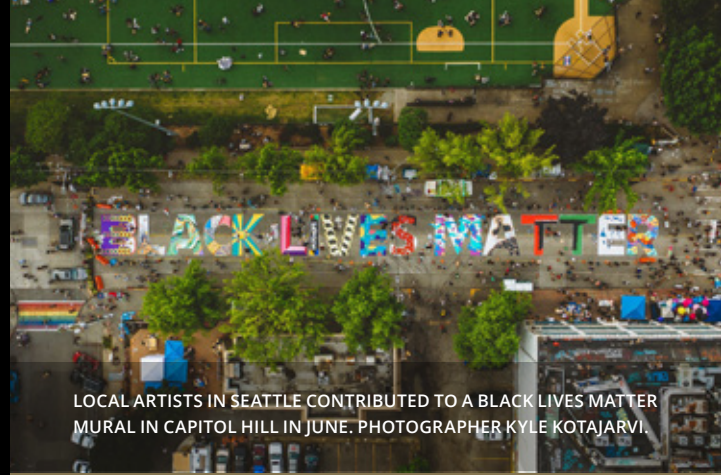
Professor **Margaret O'Mara** hosted a talk titled "History behind the Headlines: COVID-19," in which UW history faculty shared their expertise on crises in the past that can inform our responses to the present and future. **James Gregory** spoke on the Great Depression and Great Recession. **Laurie Marhoefer** covered the AIDS crisis. Adam Warren discussed the long history of pandemics and global health. **Glennys Young** reflected on lessons Americans might learn from stories of crisis and recovery in Russia and Europe.



In June, Professor **Nancy Bristow** of the University of Puget Sound spoke about lessons learned from the 1918 flu pandemic that could apply to the COVID-19 crisis in her talk "Pandemic Then (and Now): COVID-19 through the Lens of the 1918 Influenza Crisis."



The Department of History chair **Glennys Young** hosted a panel of UW faculty in August to discuss the legal, historical, and political context surrounding our pivotal moment in history. "Can It Happen Here? Law and (Dis)Order, Executive Power, and Deploying Federal Officers" focused on the deployment of federal officers to the George Floyd and Black Lives Matter protests in cities around the U.S. and aimed to shed light on the boundaries of executive power. Panelists included history professors **Laurie Marhoefer** and **Margaret O'Mara** as well as **Christopher Parker** (political science) and **Lisa Manheim** (law).



LOCAL ARTISTS IN SEATTLE CONTRIBUTED TO A BLACK LIVES MATTER MURAL IN CAPITOL HILL IN JUNE. PHOTOGRAPHER KYLE KOTAJARVI.

## WHY RACE MATTERS: THE 2020 ELECTION

Conceptions of race and their relevance to electoral politics were much discussed in 2016. However, many analysts argued that other factors, such as economic populism or cultural values, should be given greater weight. Now, four years later, amid highly publicized acts of police violence and a nationwide protest movement for racial justice, it is more clear than ever that we have yet to reckon with the history and present-day dynamics of race in American politics and society in a way that is open and persistent.

As one step toward that goal, the Department of History Diversity Committee's Why Race Matters series continued this fall with a virtual panel on the 2020 U.S. election. The panel was an interdisciplinary conversation that brought together distinguished scholars from various departments such as history, political science, and American ethnic studies to discuss the presidential election and campaigns. Featured panelists included Arbella Bet-Shlimon (history), La TaSha Levy (American ethnic studies), and Sophia Jordán Wallace (political science).

"Why Race Matters: The 2020 Election" took place on October 22 via Zoom. The Diversity Committee's panel preceding the 2016 U.S. election drew hundreds of audience members, and the committee hoped that the online forum would make the event available to an even larger segment of the public.

Watch the conversation on the UW History YouTube channel: [tinyurl.com/UWHistVids](https://tinyurl.com/UWHistVids)

# History Undergraduates Make Their Mark

## RACQUEL WEST: DEAN'S MEDALIST AND MEMBER OF THE HUSKY 100

CONGRATULATIONS TO RACQUEL WEST, who was named the UW College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Medalist in the Social Sciences and a member of the Husky 100. The Husky 100 program honors the accomplishments of 100 outstanding undergraduate and graduate students from the University of Washington's Bothell, Seattle, and Tacoma campuses.



West's history honors thesis, "A 'Nurse Log': How the Suquamish Museum Fosters Hybrid Landscapes," brought her history and geography majors together to examine the relationship between the Suquamish Museum and the Suquamish reservation at Port Madison, Washington. "Every week I took a trip to the Suquamish archives and spent a lot of time in the museum and just being present

on the reservation. My research has given me real experience with museum spaces and how they relate to Indigenous knowledge and sovereignty, which I now use in my job at the Burke [Museum]," she shared.

In the future, West hopes to earn a PhD in museum studies to continue her work on shaping museum spaces to reflect nonwhite perspectives.

These awards add to Racquel's many accolades. West was the editor in chief of *Plenum: The Undergraduate Geography Journal* and a two-time recipient of the Chester William Fritz Scholarship for the 2018-19 and 2019-20 academic years. The scholarship is designed to provide financial assistance to highly deserving students in the humanities.

## RYAN MEALIFFE: DENISON-KERNAGHAN AND SLEIZER AWARDS WINNER

CONGRATULATIONS TO RYAN MEALIFFE, this year's winner of the Denison-Kernaghan Endowed Scholarship and the Sleizer Endowed Scholarship. Mealiffe is a double major in history and anthropology.

"I had very little doubt that I wanted to study history. I'm allergic to dairy, and I deliberate between ice cream flavors more than I ever did between majors. I have a passion for the subject—I enjoy it immensely," shared Mealiffe. "I appreciate history's wide scope," he explained. "Through history, I can choose to study science, philosophy, sociology, economics, and political science at once."

Mealiffe planned to study abroad this summer, but COVID-19 changed his travel plans. Instead, he found a research position with the Campbell Historical Museum, a local institution in his hometown of Campbell, California. At the museum, Mealiffe researched the history of systemic racism in the area and worked to increase representation of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color in the museum's collection.

As part of this work, he prepared a report on blackface minstrelsy in twentieth-century Campbell and launched a survey on the experiences of Black and Indigenous people with housing discrimination and redlining in the city.

Mealiffe brought his fascination with medieval history home during the pandemic as well. In August, he wrote that while falconry and jousting were

prohibitively expensive, "I have found a cheap and fun outlet for exploring a piece of medieval life: board games. Games like Hnefatafl (a Viking game that translates to 'King's Table') and Nine Men's Morris have recently become some of my favorite at-home activities."

## UNDERGRADUATE NEWS

**Estey Chen** was awarded a Boren Scholarship for Indonesian language study.

**Racquel West**, double major in history and geography, was named College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Medalist in the Social Sciences and one of the Husky 100.

## DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY UNDERGRADUATE PAPER AWARDS

**Matthew Zylstra** won the Undergraduate Ravage Endowment Prize for his paper "The Political Genius of the Civil Rights Movement: How 20th-Century Civil Rights Leaders Redefined Americanism to Defeat Jim Crow."

**Paula Araque** won the Thomas M. Power Endowed Prize for Outstanding Undergraduate Research Paper for her paper "The Mobilization of Campesinos into Colombia's 21st-Century Neoliberal National Project."

## DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS

Bicknell Endowed Fund for Academic Travel:

**Historia Bonaparte**

C. R. Des Hart Memorial Prize: **Levi Orem**

Denison-Kernaghan Endowed Scholarship: **Ryan Mealiffe**

Meder-Montgomery Family Endowed Student Support Fund in History: **Elizabeth Su**

Otis Pease Scholarship: **Estey Chen**

Faye Wilson Endowed Scholarship Award: **Tomasita Battiato, Marshall Bender, Neave Carroll, Selma El-Badawi, Jazzlynn Woods, Conley Wright, and Samantha Zink**

Schwartz Scholarship: **Historia Bonaparte, Estey Chen, Jesse Du, Victoria Fleck, Noah Placzek, and Zhanhao Zhang**

Corkery Scholarship: **Levi Orem and Kristina Nguyen**

Sleizer Endowed Scholarship: **Amelia Biddle, Devin Deatrich, Micheal DeKock, Kiera Dempsey, Leha Haworth, Hayden Jenkins, Chayenne Lim, Ryan Mealiffe, Belladonna Minden, Hope Morris, Madison Oversby, Sean Palmer, Ibrahim Perry, Rachel Ray, Julia Schoemig, Elizabeth Su, Ryan Terriff, Meredith Weinstock, Melinda Whalen, Amy Xu, Linda Zhang, and Henry Zing**

Freedman Remak Family Scholarship: **Emily Thornton**

Friends of History Prize for Outstanding Student Leader: **Katherine Cavanaugh and Racquel West**

Thomas M. Power Endowed Prize for Outstanding Graduating Senior: **Paula Araque**

## GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

**Jessica Bachman** and **Katia Chaterji** received a collaborative Mellon Fellowship for Reaching New Publics in the Humanities from the Simpson Center for the Humanities.

**Jorge Bayona** was awarded the Thomas M. Power Endowed Prize for Outstanding Teaching Assistant. He also won the University of Washington–University of Ljubljana Scholars Exchange, a UW Ladino Language Study Scholarship, and the Beca Andina para jóvenes investigadores (Andean Fellowship for Junior Scholars) from the Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos. The latter is Peru's most competitive open fellowship.

**Alvin Bui** received the Thomas M. Power Endowed Prize for Outstanding Graduate Research Paper for his paper "Brotherly Fellowship and Sister Cities: The Role and Impact of the Hoa on Diplomatic Interactions between the Republics of Vietnam and China, 1955-1975."

The Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies awarded **Andrew Hedden** a Labor Research Grant for his dissertation research into conflicts between business and labor in Seattle history.

**Madison Heslop** has been designated the John and Mary Ann Mangels Endowed Fellow in Public History for Spring 2021 and published "Linking Violence across the Pacific: The B-29 Superfortress in Seattle and Tokyo's Urban Landscapes" in *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*. She also published guest posts "Rogues of Vancouver" and "Unnatural Death: The Vancouver Waterfront in 1913" with the Metropole (the official blog of the Urban History Association) and the Otter (the Network in Canadian History of the Environment blog), respectively.

**Adrian Kane-Galbraith** was awarded the UW Graduate School's Presidential Dissertation Fellowship.

**Roneva Keel** was named College of Arts and Sciences Graduate Medalist in the Social Sciences and earned a PhD for her dissertation, "Mobilizing Empire: Race, Sugar, and U.S. Colonialism across the Pacific, 1898-1934."

**Hongxuan Lin** earned a PhD for his dissertation, "Ummah Yet Proletariat: Islam and Marxism in the Netherlands East Indies and Indonesia, 1915-59," which also received the UW Graduate School's 2020 Distinguished Dissertation Award in Humanities and Fine Arts. The National University of Singapore (NUS) additionally awarded Hongxuan a one-year visiting postdoctoral fellowship at the London School of Economics and Political Science Saw Swee Hock Southeast Asia Centre.

**Brendan McElmeel** received the American Councils Academic Fellowship in Russia to return to Russia for research in spring 2021. In May, the UW Alumni Association Book Club invited Brendan to speak about his research and life in quarantine in Moscow.

**Frances O'Shaughnessey** won the Graduate Ravage Endowment Prize for their paper "Critical Fabulation: A Study of the Speculative and Subjunctive Method."

The Simpson Center for the Humanities awarded **Taylor Soja** a Society of Scholars fellowship.

**Matthew VanDuyn** earned a PhD with honors for his dissertation, "Building Socialist Shanghai: Workers' New Villages and the Socialist Right to the City."

## A YEAR IN THE PUBLIC EYE: CATCHING UP WITH MARGARET O'MARA

HISTORIANS HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY in public life. We offer expertise and context for understanding ongoing events and phenomena. This can be especially important work when it comes to people and businesses who wield extraordinary social and economic power, such as the Silicon Valley juggernauts Apple, Facebook, and PayPal. The UW history professor Margaret O'Mara published *The Code: Silicon Valley and the Remaking of America* in May 2019. She has spent the months since then sharing her expertise with the public in a range of venues, from the *New York Times* to podcasts. We spoke with O'Mara recently to find out more about her whirlwind year.



**UW History: By my count, I think you've published ten articles for the *NYT*, *WaPo*, and other major papers since your book came out last year, all on top of your teaching. Was this work you pursued intentionally?**

**Margaret O'Mara:** It has been a whirlwind, and my family can tell you that I've been pretty frenetic at times! Yes, it was intentional in that engaging with public audiences and debates has been something I consciously have pursued since deciding to go to graduate school back in the 1990s, after several years working in national politics and policymaking in Washington, D.C. In recent years, thanks to the proliferation of high-quality online outlets interested in work by historians, I began to publish more op-eds and other short-form pieces of public writing. Those ultimately caught the eye of an editor at the *New York Times*, where I began to publish regularly and now have become more formally connected as a contributing opinion writer. The platform brings with it great opportunity and great responsibility. One thing I try to do with each column, and in the social media conversation around it afterward, is not only distill important scholarly insights for a broad audience, but also lift up the important work of my fellow historians, from senior scholars to graduate students.

**UW History: It's unusual to see academic historians on news programs, but you appeared on a couple of different networks and guested on at least one podcast. Was this an expectation from your publisher, Penguin Press, or a choice of your own? What do you see as the role of historians in public life?**

**O'Mara:** Well, it helps tremendously to have a big publishing name and its terrific publicity staff working to pitch and amplify your work and your media presence. But it also built on a good deal of work I'd already done in the media, especially here in Seattle, which was invaluable prep for speaking on a bigger national stage. Generally, my policy for years has been to offer a comment when a reporter calls, including making a pointed effort to speak to smaller outlets and freelancers, not just the big names. I think it is tremendously important for historians to be in public in this way. Obviously, we still need to do our day jobs, and the teaching we do is itself a very important kind of public engagement. But I fear that, in our admirable reluctance to deliver hot takes and sound bites, we can surrender the spotlight to others who might not approach historical analysis in such an informed and careful way. I think we have a tremendous amount to offer and should step up when and where we can.

**UW History: Is this last year one you would like to repeat, and do you have any advice for people interested in following in your footsteps?**

**O'Mara:** Putting aside the last six months—which I do not expect anyone would like to repeat, other than for the opportunity for a complete do-over of America's pandemic response—the year since the book's publication has indeed been extraordinary, both intensely exhausting and immensely rewarding. I accomplished what I set out to do in writing *The Code*: to change the conversation, including and especially among tech people and tech users, about the origins and evolution of the tech industry, and especially to put politics and the state back into that story.

MY ADVICE TO OTHERS INTERESTED IN DOING THIS IS TO PLAY A LONG GAME. BE DELIBERATE AND STRATEGIC ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH, WHO YOU WANT TO REACH, AND THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEM.

Cherish your time, and value your labor. Much of this work is unpaid or barely paid; to be clear, I am able to do so much of this because I have a steady paycheck from the UW. Be careful about what you say yes to, but be open to a wide range of outlets and audiences. I am able to write for the *Times* now because I spent years writing for the public in local and specialist outlets, and because I worked with great editors along the way who helped me hone my style and better understand the strange art of writing op-eds. The same goes for public speaking and media appearances, which are very different from giving a course lecture or delivering a scholarly talk. Learn by watching how others do it, but also have confidence in your own voice and your expertise.

Meanwhile, keep reading, keep learning, and stay engaged in the scholarly conversation. This is not an either-or proposition: my research and my teaching, and all I learn from my colleagues and students every day, are the foundation on which I build my work for the general public. I could not do it without being part of this extraordinary community.





# Faculty News

**George Behlmer** was awarded the Stansky Book Prize for his book *Risky Shores: Savagery and Colonialism in the Western Pacific* (Stanford University Press, 2018). The Stansky Book Prize is granted annually to the best historical study of a British subject published in the United States or Canada.

**Patricia Ebrely** received the Association for Asian Studies Award for Distinguished Contributions to Asian Studies. This is the highest honor the association bestows.

**Susan Glenn** was appointed Samuel and Althea Stroum Chair in Jewish Studies.

**Laurie Marhoefer** and graduate student **Taylor Soja** received a Digital Humanities Summer Fellowship from the Simpson Center for the Humanities for their collaborative pedagogy project "Digital World Wars: Teaching Undergraduates DH Skills in a Large Lecture Format."

**Margaret O'Mara's** book *The Code: Silicon Valley and the Remaking of America* (Penguin Press, 2019) was shortlisted for the Columbia Journalism School's Lukas Prize, which honors the very best in American nonfiction writing.

The Latino Center for Health recognized **Ileana Rodriguez-Silva** for her scholarly achievements in the 2019-20 academic year.

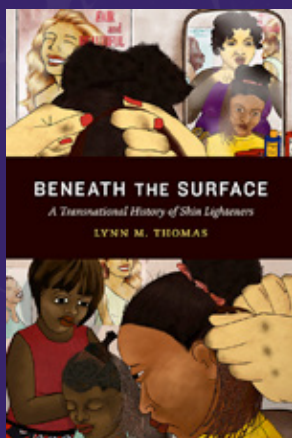
**Benjamin Schmidt** was awarded a Royalty Research Fund Fellowship for 2020-21 for his research titled "Media That Mattered: Material Encounters That Shaped the Early Modern World." He was also appointed Visiting Artist-Scholar at Boise State University for spring 2020, but the appointment was canceled due to ongoing concerns regarding COVID-19.

**Robin Stacey** received the Vernam Hull Memorial Prize from the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies (Canolfan Uwchefrydiau Cymreig a Cheltaidd Prifysgol Cymru) for her book *Law and the Imagination in Medieval Wales* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018). This prize is given "for completed work dealing with Welsh Prose before 1700."

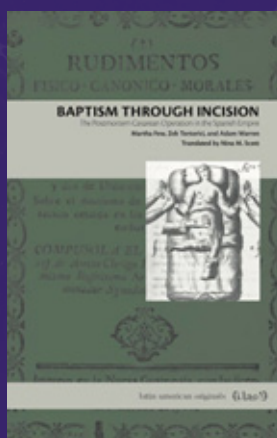
**Lynn M. Thomas** and her Jackson School of International Studies colleague **Danny Hoffman** received a Large Scale Collaboration grant from the Simpson Center for the Humanities for their project "Unthinkable Films" and have begun work on a documentary that considers the history of forests, poverty, and consumption in the Pacific Northwest, and in East and West Africa.

**Adam Warren** has been appointed to the editorial board of the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* for a term beginning in January 2021.

## FACULTY BOOKSHELF



Professor Lynn Thomas's *Beneath the Surface: A Transnational History of Skin Lighteners* (Duke University Press, 2020) investigates the history of skin lighteners in global popular culture—their use, their sale, and opposition to them from medical professionals, consumer health advocates, and antiracist thinkers and activists.



*Baptism through Incision: The Postmortem Cesarean Operation in the Spanish Empire* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020), coedited by Professor Adam Warren, examines medico-religious manuals and guides on cesarean operations composed by Spanish priests in Peru, Mexico, Alta California, Guatemala, and the Philippines beginning in the mid-eighteenth century.

## RETIREMENTS

### PATRICIA EBREY

*Professor Emerita* Patricia Ebrey is a historian of China, specializing in the cultural and gender history of the Song Dynasty. She retired this spring after teaching at the University of Washington for more than two decades.

"We are extremely fortunate that Pat Ebrey, one of the giants in the study of imperial Chinese history, chose to spend much of her career in our department. Pat is of course a well-known teacher and one of the department's most productive and illustrious researchers. For our community, however, her importance went far beyond those accomplishments. Pat has been tireless in working for the future of the field, as an organizer of conferences and more recently as the founder of the *Journal of Chinese History*. She has also been a mainstay of the intellectual life of Chinese studies on campus, presenting her own work and inviting speakers ranging from distinguished scholars to promising historians at the start of their careers. It's hard to overstate how much her thoughtfulness, generosity, and hospitality have meant to the study of Chinese history at the University of Washington, and I wish her an active and enjoyable retirement."

—**Matthew Mosca**, *Associate Professor of Chinese History*

### MARY O'NEIL

Mary O'Neil, associate *Professor Emerita* of early modern European history, has been a member of the UW faculty since 1982, when she received her PhD from Stanford University. Her courses on Rome and European witch trials have long been popular with undergraduate students.

"Everyone who knows Mary knows how passionate she is about the past. What many people don't know, however, is how much she has contributed to the variety and richness of the department's offerings over the years. Through frequent course overloads, a willingness to take on subjects that she perceived to be under-represented in the curriculum despite the extra work that entailed for herself, and her well-known generosity towards individual students, she has been one of the history department's most dedicated teachers. The department and its students will miss her terribly."

—**Robin Stacey**, *Professor of European History*

### GEORGE BEHLMER

*Professor Emeritus* George Behlmer specializes in the modern history of Britain and Ireland. He joined the UW history faculty after receiving his PhD from Stanford University in 1977.

"When George arrived he was in a way replacing a legend, Professor Giovanni Costigan. His was a tough act to follow. Yet, within three years of his arrival, George himself won the Distinguished Teaching Award. He went on to fill his own share of lecture halls—despite being known for the rigor of his grading. His preparations for class were meticulous, and students marveled at the quality of his lectures.

"George was stellar in another teaching setting as well. My recollection is that George was among the faculty members who got involved in study abroad programs early, thoroughly, and quite successfully. He led many study-abroad groups to Northern Ireland during the time of the Troubles, where UW students learned not only the history of Ireland and England but also the contemporary situation.

"Our offices have been next door for more than ten years, and I've been grateful for George's friendship and advice."

—**John Findlay**, *Professor of American History*

THIS YEAR ALSO SAW THE DEPARTURE OF MIRA GREEN, a long-time lecturer on the ancient world and 2015 graduate of the department. Our very best wishes go with her to the University of Utah, where she has accepted a position as an assistant professor.

# In Memoriam



UW HISTORY PLANTED THIS TREE BEHIND SMITH HALL ON THE OCCASION OF BILL'S RETIREMENT. ANOTHER TREE WILL BE PLANTED IN CHUCK'S HONOR LATER THIS YEAR.

## BILL RORABAUGH (1945-2020)

Professor Emeritus William Rorabaugh passed away the morning of March 19 at Northwest Hospital from complications arising from the treatment of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Rorabaugh was a popular teacher and scholar whose legacy in the department will be felt for many years to come.

Rorabaugh began his career as a historian of the Jacksonian period of U.S. history and published his first book, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (1979), three years after completing his PhD at University of California, Berkeley. After joining the University of Washington Department of History, Rorabaugh gradually transitioned to specialize in U.S. political history of the 1960s, a field in which he continued to publish until his retirement in 2019.

Within the department, Rorabaugh was known for his "prodigious encyclopedic memory for U.S. political history," his popularity with both undergraduate and Access students, and his generosity as a colleague. "What we really learned from Bill was [that] even as we work on our individual projects we all work toward the good of the department," shared Joel Walker.

A more extensive tribute for Bill Rorabaugh can be found on the department website: [history.washington.edu/news/2020/04/15/memorial-william-rorabaugh](https://history.washington.edu/news/2020/04/15/memorial-william-rorabaugh).



## CHARLES BERGQUIST (1942-2020)

We mourn the passing of Charles Bergquist, distinguished scholar of Latin American history and global labor history, and influential member of the University of Washington faculty since 1989. Charles (who preferred Chuck) Bergquist died peacefully on July 30. He was 78 years old. A world-renowned scholar and inspiring teacher, Chuck was also cofounder of the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies and served as chair and director 1994-96.

Born in Michigan in 1942, Bergquist earned his BA degree from the University of Washington, took his MA and PhD degrees from Stanford, and began his teaching career at Duke University, where he rose to the rank of full professor before returning to UW in 1989. Beginning with his first book, *Coffee and Conflict in Colombia, 1886-1910* (1978), much of his research focused on Colombia.

Chuck will long be remembered for his warm sense of humor and his generosity toward colleagues and students. His activism on behalf of working people and his dedication to fighting imperialism and injustice around the world have left indelible impressions on many communities. He fought fiercely for what he believed in, modeling the role of the scholar activist.

Read the full tribute to Chuck Bergquist on the department website: [history.washington.edu/news/2020/08/11/memorial-professor-emeritus-charles-bergquist](https://history.washington.edu/news/2020/08/11/memorial-professor-emeritus-charles-bergquist).



## ALUMNI NEWS

**Hsaio-wen Cheng** (PhD 2012) was promoted to associate professor of Asian languages and literature at the University of Pennsylvania.

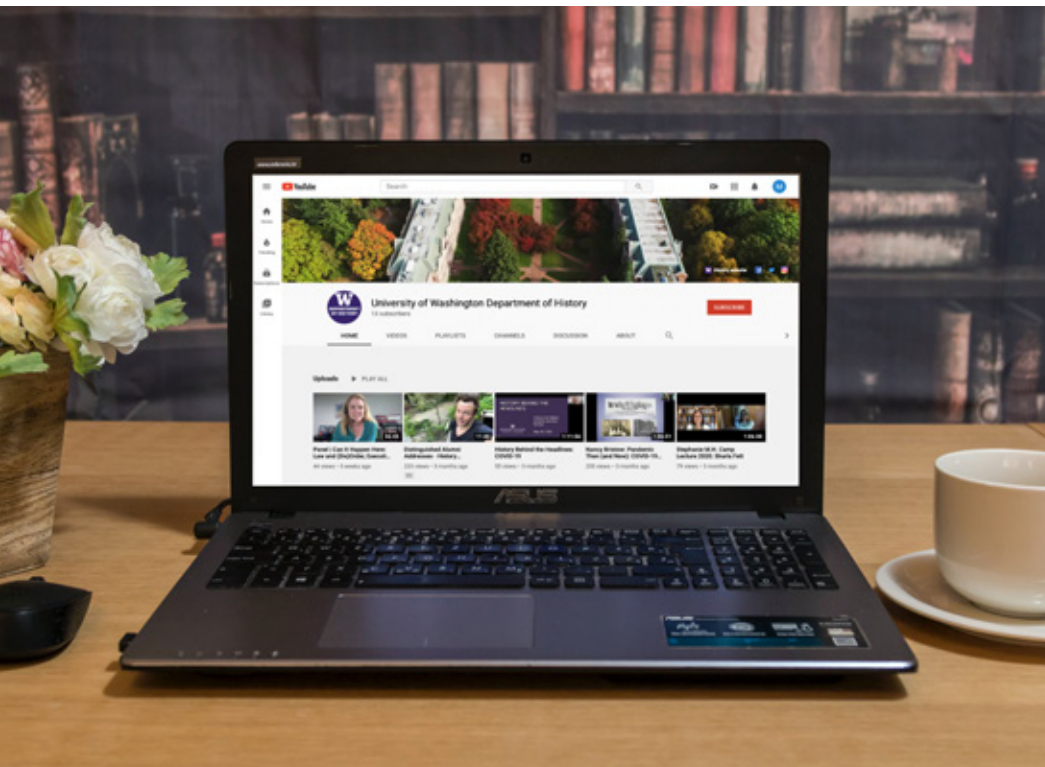
**Mira Green** (PhD 2015) accepted a position as assistant professor of history at the University of Utah.

**Stefan Kamola** (PhD 2013) published his first book, *Making Mongol History: Rashid al-Din and the Jami` al-Tawarikh*, with Edinburgh University Press. The book is based on his dissertation, completed in 2013 under Joel Walker, and is supplemented

with three additional years of research with Persian manuscripts.

**Patrick Lozar** (PhD 2019) is now an assistant professor of history at the University of Victoria in British Columbia.

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**UW HISTORY ON YOUTUBE**


Catch up with UW History's virtual events on the department's YouTube channel! Check out what you may have missed and a new upcoming panel inside on pages 5. Watch and subscribe at [tinyurl.com/UWHistVids](https://tinyurl.com/UWHistVids) or search for "University of Washington Department of History."

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Also make sure to check out our online calendar [history.uw.edu/calendar](https://history.uw.edu/calendar) for the latest information on events. There is always something going on in the Department of History and our affiliated centers!