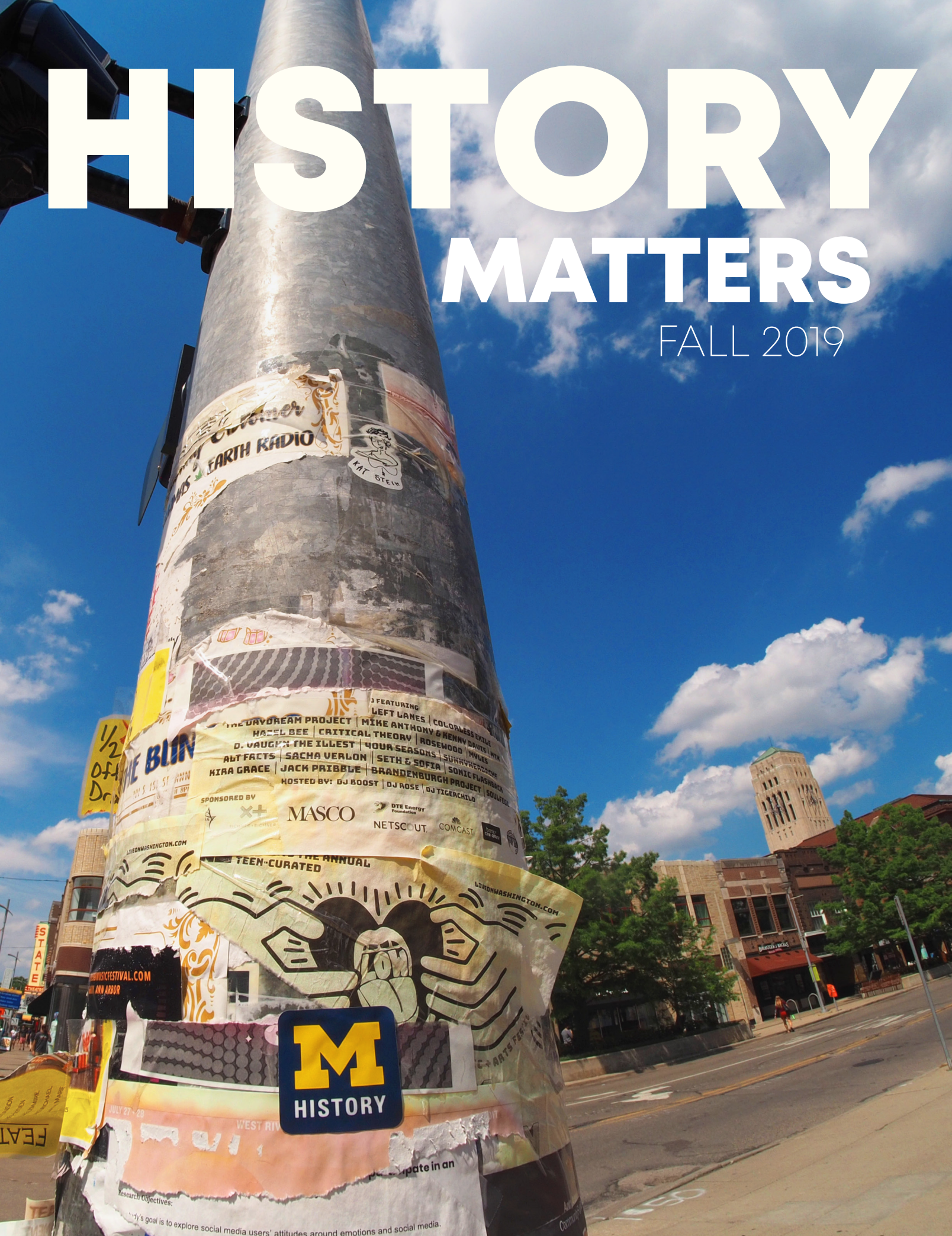


HISTORY

MATTERS

FALL 2019



M
HISTORY

FEATURING
THE DAYDREAM PROJECT | MIKE ANTHONY & NEMO DAVIS | LEFT LAMES | COLORLESS ENTIRE
HANEL BEE | CRITICAL THEORY | ROSEWOOD | MILES | D. VAUGHN | THE ILLEST | FOUR SEASONS | SUNNYVADEONE
ALT FACTS | SACHA VERLON | SETH & SOFIA | SONIC FLASHBACK
KIRA GRACE | JACK PRIBBLE | BRANDENBURGH PROJECT | SOULATEL
HOSTED BY: DJ BOOST | DJ ROSE | DJ TIGERXZLO

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THE ANNUAL
TEEN-CURATED
LINDONWASHINGTON.COM

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WEST RIV
participate in an
Research Objectives:
The study's goal is to explore social media users' attitudes around emotions and social media.



FROM THE CHAIR

JAY COOK

Greetings once again! This past year was a very good one for U-M History, and I'm delighted to be able to share our news with current students and faculty, as well as our many alumni, friends, and supporters around the world.

Let me start by introducing you to three new colleagues. The first is **Dr. Yi-Li Wu** (PhD, Yale University, 1998), an award-winning historian of China, medicine, and gender. Before joining us, Dr. Wu held positions at Albion College, the University of Westminster (London), and U-M's own Lieberthal-Rogel Center for Chinese Studies. Our second new colleague is **Dr. Alvita Akiboh** (PhD, Northwestern University, 2019), an exciting young historian of US colonial empire and material culture. Our third new hire is **Dr. Kate Wroblewski**, a recent PhD from our own department who specializes in the history of global migration. She will serve as our assistant director of undergraduate studies.

Second, I'd like to share good news on our public engagement initiatives (known collectively as **U-M History in the Public Service**). Last year, I devoted much of my column space to laying out our pilot programs. This year, I'm very pleased to report on the results—what the funding agencies like to describe as “proof of concept.” At the level of teaching and training, we launched new undergraduate **HistoryLab** courses on race and the criminal justice system and immigration law, as well as a graduate HistoryLab in partnership with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. All three received off-the-charts evaluations and are now generating wait lists for the second iterations. Three more HistoryLabs are currently in production, including one on global environmentalism for Winter 2020. In addition, we launched a very successful **PhD internship program** with the global media company ProQuest (about which you can read more on page 18). Here, too, the reviews were excellent, and we are currently working with ProQuest to double the size of the program.

Finally, I am thrilled to announce a **U-M History PhD Alumni Conference** (please see page 19), to be held here in Ann Arbor on November 21-22. This national conference will bring back to campus fourteen of our remarkable PhD alums from many different sectors: media companies and museums, journalism and digital humanities, the foreign service and national policy centers—all to engage in strategic conversation on the future of History graduate training. Looking forward, our plan is to host an undergraduate U-M History alumni conference in Fall 2021. If you are excited about these possibilities, please join us! Readers like you, who already have a strong relationship with U-M History, constitute one of our most important and valued networks. So please don't be shy about sending me news and good ideas: jwcook@umich.edu. I'm always very glad to hear from the many friends of this remarkable department!

Warmly,

Jay Cook
Department Chair
Professor of History and American Studies



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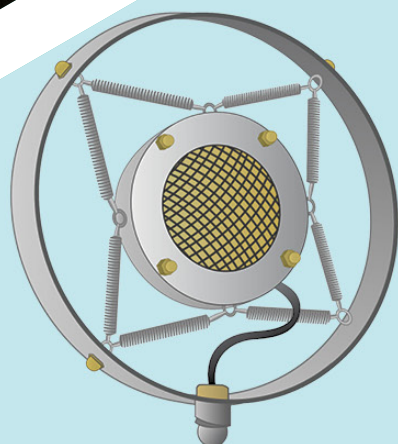
Regents of the University of Michigan: Jordan B. Acker, Michael J. Behm, Mark J. Bernstein, Paul W. Brown, Shauna Ryder Diggs, Denise Ilitch, Ron Weiser, Katherine E. White, Mark S. Schlissel, *ex officio*.

Cover photo: Gregory Parker



DEPARTMENT SNAPSHOTS

1. On May 3, 111 members of the **Class of 2019** earned bachelor's degrees in History in front of family, friends, and faculty in the Modern Languages Building. Earlier in the day, fourteen honors students presented their thesis research, and later, nine PhD students were honored for completing their doctoral studies.
2. **Leslie Pincus** and **Maris Vinovskis** (pictured) retired from the History faculty in the spring. Professor Pincus joined the university in 1995, focusing on modern Japanese intellectual, cultural, social, and environmental history. Professor Vinovskis joined the university in 1974, focusing on contemporary education policy and United States social history.
3. This fall the department will launch **Reverb Effect**, a podcast showcasing the latest research from History faculty and graduate students. Produced by U-M History graduate students, episodes will include long-form stories, interviews, and tales from the field.



REVERB EFFECT



4. **Alvita Akiboh** joins History as a Michigan Society of Fellows postdoc after earning her PhD from Northwestern University. Her dissertation examined material culture and national identity in US overseas territories. During graduate school, she taught American history for the Odyssey Project, a program offering college-level courses to Chicago residents with little or no access to higher education.
5. **Yi-Li Wu** joins the department as an associate professor of Women's Studies and History. Professor Wu was previously a member of the faculty at Albion College and her current research examines the history of wound and illness treatment in China. She's the author of *Reproducing Women: Medicine, Metaphor, and Childbirth in Late Imperial China* (University of California Press, 2010).
6. Alum **Kate Wroblewski** joins History as assistant director of undergraduate studies. She completed her dissertation, "Migration to the Self: Education, Political Economy, and Religious Authority in Polish Communities, 1880-1929," in 2018 and returns to U-M after serving as assistant professor at Missouri State University.



Photo 1, 2, and 6: Sean Carter



Piecing TOGETHER THE Past

History Honors Program allows undergrads to experience the joys and challenges of archival research

By Michael Gawlik

When

When senior Mary Basso arrived at the Bibliothèque nationale de France's Francois Mitterrand Library in June, it didn't take long for her to realize something was amiss.

"I had preregistered, I had paid for my pass, I knew the materials I wanted to see," she said. "But when I arrived, they said 'Oh. We have old stuff here—but you're looking for really, *really* old stuff.'"

It turned out that the documents Basso was looking for—sixteenth-century correspondence between French royals—were housed at the BNF's Richelieu site on the other side of Paris.

"That was when I found out the BNF is actually a system of libraries, not just a single site," says Basso. "[The archivists] felt really bad, so they gave me a weeklong pass for free, which was sweet of them."

So goes the story for any number of undergraduates venturing into the field. Exploring archives, visiting museums and historical sites, and conducting oral histories play a crucial role in the History curriculum at Michigan. But at first, these experiences can be disorienting. Stepping outside of the classroom allows students to see the past up close—to smell the newsprint of a nineteenth-century penny paper or touch kitchenware from medieval Japan—but it also requires that they learn the rules and rituals of doing independent research.

In the department's Honors Program, students have the opportunity to do just that. Over the course of three semesters, honors students experience firsthand what it's like to be professional historians. They select an area of interest, investigate existing scholarship, and design a course of research to satiate their intellectual curiosity. The program culminates in a 60- to 100-page thesis that students complete under the supervision of a faculty advisor.

"Students who conduct honors projects uniformly cite the process as one of their most valuable and rewarding intellectual



Left to right: Mary Basso at Richelieu, an archival storage locker, a microfilm reader, Isabel Olson at Stanford



experiences at U-M," said Honors Program Director Pamela Ballinger. "The program offers structure and guidance while also fostering initiative and independent thinking."

Basso's project examines the effect that Salic law—a system preventing women and their children from ascending to the throne—had on gender and power in the French Middle Ages. Her trip to Paris allowed her to examine letters written by royal women like Catherine de' Medici and Diane de Poitiers.

In these letters, Basso noticed that women used distinct strategies to work around Salic law and exert influence. Catherine—who effectively ruled France while her son, King Charles IX, was a child—argued that her role as a mother obligated her to protect Charles's domain. Diane, who was never queen herself but instead mistress of King Henry II, wielded power by exploiting the idea of women as sexual objects.

"They're taking the role they've been given and manipulating it to create a new role for themselves," said Basso.

Navigating the intellectual layers of these letters—their context, rhetoric, and place in existing historiography—is complicated

enough. But, as Basso noted, something as trivial as penmanship also presented a challenge to doing research.

"I didn't realize that French kings have terrible handwriting," she said. "That was a really big obstacle. I'd be moving along, reading a letter written in beautiful script, and then I'd reach one that was illegible."

Working in a foreign language presented additional problems. Basso, who is also majoring in French, noted that the language had yet to be standardized in the period she's studying; many words were spelled differently in the sixteenth century than they are today. And, as she noted, "some people are just bad spellers."

"Working in my second language has been incredibly challenging," she said. "You have to use context clues and make guesses based on what you know."

But even for students working closer to home, challenges abound. Isabel Olson, one of Basso's classmates, used a department research grant to travel to Stanford University, where she investigated archival documents concerning the controversial 1971 Stanford Prison

Experiment. But she approached her visit with a touch of anxiety about what she would—or wouldn't—find.

"There was no way to know exactly what was in the archives until I was there," said Olson. "I felt pressure to make the most of my limited time and feared the possibility of traveling to Stanford only to be disappointed with what I found."

Moreover, time in the archive can be lonesome. Though the thesis allows students to pursue unique and highly individualized interests, it also demands they spend hours sifting through material on their own—an experience 2019 honors graduate Meghan Clark described as "somewhat isolating."

"Always remember to seek out networks of support and create a work schedule that allows you to be human and whole throughout the process," said Clark, who won the John A. Williams History Award for best American history thesis for her project, "Detoxifying the System: DDT, Citizen Action, and the Efficacy of Multi-Approach Activism."

Despite these challenges, students continue to pursue independent research. On average,

more than twenty History undergraduates complete theses every year, making it one of the largest honors programs in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. Why do students continue to flock to such a demanding exercise in self-discipline and grit?

Clark offered an answer: The Honors Program offers students the rare opportunity to crystallize their undergraduate work and explore their lingering questions and curiosities.

"The thesis tied together my interests in modern environmentalism, citizen action in social movements, and the origins of environmental law, which I studied throughout my undergraduate years," she said. "On top of that, I wanted to learn more about the intersections of various social movements in the 1960s, and this subject allowed me to rethink my preconceptions about the decade."

There's also something pretty cool about seeing your name on a piece of writing the length of a short book, she said.

"You'll be amazed by the sense of accomplishment when you share that shiny, bound copy with your family and friends." ■



A THEATRICAL TWIST

Isabel Olson, a double major in History and Theater, received permission from the department to take an unconventional approach to her thesis. In addition to an academic research paper, she will also write a stage play based on her historical research of the Stanford Prison Experiment. Conducted in 1971 by Professor Philip Zimbardo, the study randomly divided students into prisoners and guards. It was shut down after only a week when the simulated guards displayed inhumane behavior against the simulated prisoners.

"I believe that knowing how to properly research and frame a story is essential to being a playwright and historian," Olson said. Writing a play will give her the opportunity to explore conflicting perspectives of the experiment and will make the story she's telling accessible to broader audiences. "My research will reach people who might not otherwise sit down to read an academic paper," she said.

GROUNDED

IN HISTORY

HISTORY PROFESSORS AND GRADUATE

STUDENTS UNPACK THE RELATIONSHIP

BETWEEN SCHOLARSHIP AND ACTIVISM

BY CHLOE THOMPSON

AFTER FINISHING HER UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE AT YALE, HISTORY GRADUATE STUDENT ESHE SHERLEY TOOK A BREAK FROM SCHOOL TO BECOME A UNION ORGANIZER WITH THE SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION.

Now she's writing a dissertation on the National Domestic Workers Union, focusing on its work in Atlanta in the 1960s. But her work as an activist grounds her graduate studies.

"My very first question: Where is the list?" said Sherley. "Every organizer has the list of people who could potentially be in the union. If I hadn't done that work before, that would not have been my question."

A list like that could lead Sherley down a hundred different historical paths, many of which might be hidden from another vantage point. Sherley has yet to get ahold of the list. But her grassroots organizing experience is shaping her approach to research.

If activists seek to improve the world, while scholars seek to understand it, what happens when the two converge? Scholars with activist experience may ask different questions. Sometimes, what they learn inspires them to venture out of the ivory tower and into the trenches.

Professor Heather Ann Thompson, who "absolutely" identifies herself as an activist, is the author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Blood in the Water: The Attica Prison Riot of 1971*.

"Not only does knowledge of the past help us to understand, and more effectively to weigh in on important issues in the present, but interestingly the reverse is also true," she said. Thompson referenced the Plain View Project, a nonprofit that has collected public Facebook posts from current and former police officers which reveal a culture of widespread and overt racism.

"That present day activist effort and the insights it has given us tells me that when I am writing about the police in the 1970s, I should definitely be looking at correspondence between police officers and their union reps, and among police officers themselves back then too," said Thompson.



ALUMNI IN ACTION

AUSTIN MCCOY DONATES ACTIVIST PAPERS
TO THE BENTLEY HISTORICAL LIBRARY

By the time Austin McCoy finished his PhD in 2016, he had won the History Department's Fondiler Award for best dissertation and a university-wide ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Award. He was also a leading voice in campus social justice activism.

In 2013, following Trayvon Martin's death a year earlier, McCoy helped organize the United Coalition for Racial Justice to help support #BBUM (Being Black at the University of Michigan), which used social media to highlight the experiences of Black students on campus. He participated in Ann Arbor to Ferguson, which mobilized local activists after police killed Michael Brown, Jr., in Ferguson, Missouri, and Aura Rosser in Ann Arbor. He gained national attention as an activist in the era of Black Lives Matter, penning pieces on contemporary issues in publications from the *Michigan Daily* to *Black Perspectives* to the *Washington Post*.

McCoy is now an assistant professor of history at Auburn University, and his current research analyzes movements against the criminal state and campaigns for participatory democracy after 1967. In 2018 he donated his archive—written and digital files—to the Bentley Historical Library. These oral histories, emails, letters, and photos help preserve the latest chapter in the rich history of student activism at U-M.

Photo: Whitney Miller

Nora Krinitsky's dissertation focused on policing in twentieth-century Chicago. One of her key conclusions? "Reform is essential to the maintenance of the carceral state." She's now a prison abolitionist.

"The questions I asked and the things I discovered in my research really informed my views as an activist," said Krinitsky, who earned her PhD in 2017 and is now a lecturer in the Residential College and interim director of the Prison Creative Arts Project.

Today, Krinitsky—along with Thompson, Sherley, Professor Matthew Lassiter, and four other History graduate students—works on the Carceral State Project, a U-M initiative that will document the experiences of people affected by the criminal justice system throughout the twentieth century. The idea is to explore the impact of mass incarceration, policing, and immigrant detention in Michigan. The organization's next big initiative will document the experiences of incarcerated people since the rise of mass imprisonment in the 1960s.

It's not just Americanists who can integrate modern concerns into their work. Professor Juan Cole specializes in the history of Islam and the modern Middle East. "The advent of social media has allowed those who wish to do so make a prison break from the ivory tower," said Cole.

After 9/11, Cole found that what was presented to the public about the outcomes of an Iraq War was "almost completely at variance with what I knew about Iraq as a scholar."

In 2002 he started *Informed Comment*, a blog focusing on war, climate change, and globalization. It took off, and he was invited to speak on television programs and at Washington think tanks. *Informed Comment* has expanded to include the work of other scholars, and Cole has embraced Twitter, sharing his insights with 50,000 followers.

But what if you study medieval Europe? It would be natural to assume that only modern historians would benefit from engaging in activist issues. But there are always groups who seek to either use or misuse the past to further a specific agenda in the present.

"White supremacists have long been interested in the Middle Ages as a repository of 'white' culture," said Professor Katherine French, who studies medieval England. Modern white supremacists borrow heavily from medieval iconography. They tout false conceptions that medieval Western Europe was the most successful culture in the world, an entirely white society where women were subservient to men.

White supremacists at the August 2017 Charlottesville rally carried shields painted with Knights Templar crosses, as well as Norse runes and symbols from the Holy Roman Empire. In his writings, the 2019 Christchurch, New Zealand, shooter repeatedly referenced the Crusades.

"As a medieval historian, you should not only explain the Middle Ages, its complexity and its chronology, but also how its history can be weaponized," said Taylor Sims, a History graduate student. "Historians need to be actively doing that work with the public, because expertise does matter. But it doesn't if you're not able to communicate to an audience of nonexperts."

At its core, being a historian is about asking the right questions and unearthing the answers from a wide range of competing sources. Activism is also about asking questions: questions about power, social structures, and what help people need. But there is another common trait: activists and historians must understand and connect with real people, with real concerns and hopes and perceptions of the world.

"Activism can be a way for historians to be more grounded in the past, to get to know the actors of the past," said Sherley. "We think of activists' work as being oriented toward the future, but I think when that work is done best, it's also grounded in the past, when you feel really accountable to the people that came before you." ■

HISTORIANS

NEED TO BE ACTIVELY DOING [THEIR] WORK WITH THE PUBLIC,

BECAUSE EXPERTISE DOES MATTER.

BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER IF

YOU'RE NOT ABLE TO COMMUNICATE THAT TO AN

AUDIENCE OF NONEXPERTS."

TAYLOR SIMS



Photo: Andy Ryan

CATCHING UP WITH

BRAD MELTZER

HISTORY ALUM AND BESTSELLING AUTHOR
DISCUSSES THE POWER OF STORYTELLING

BY GREGORY PARKER

Brad Meltzer (BA 1992) is the *New York Times* bestselling author of a dozen thrillers, more than two dozen children's books, and one work of nonfiction. He's written comic books and created two television series for the History Channel. This fall, his *Ordinary People Change the World* children's books—which tell the stories of historical figures when they were kids—will form the basis of a new PBS Kids animated series, *Xavier Riddle and the Secret Museum*. History staffer Gregory Parker caught up with Meltzer to talk about the lessons he learned as a U-M History major ... and what it's like to see an animated version of yourself.

Were you the first person in your family to go to college?

I was. Michigan was not just a dream for me, it was really a dream for my whole family. No one in my immediate family had gone to a four-year college. I always thought you went to high school and then you got a job. That was what I thought life was. When my family moved down to Florida from Brooklyn, they gave a fake address so I could go to the wealthy public school. It was because of that I heard of a thing called college.

I applied to one school: Michigan. It was so expensive to send just that one application. In our house, it was like, if you get rejected, then we'll send another application. And if you get rejected from that, we'll send another. But that was just how it was.

How did you decide to major in History?

I came to school thinking I was going to do Political Science, but the reality was that the History Department just had the best classes.

The first class I took was United States, 1865 to the Present. I also remember taking the Vietnam War, which was offered by Tom Collier back then, and those two classes really affected me. Years later, when I had to write a senior paper, I wanted to write about superheroes as propaganda in World War II. I went to Tom Collier and he said that sounded really interesting. The History Department gave me that intellectual space to really explore.

When you told your parents you were going to be a History major, what did they say? Did they ask, "What are you going to do with that?"

I think my parents were like, "What's a major?" I'm kidding, but again, it was a miracle I was here. Parents that tell their kids not to be a History major, or any other major they think you can't make money with, they're making a mistake. One thing that I've learned since earning a History degree is that the most successful people throughout history are doing what they love. I look back on my



The trio from *Xavier Riddle and the Secret Museum* venture into the past to meet young Albert Einstein (photo: PBS Kids)

Ingest. Listen. Speak.

The stuff that fuels U-M History

By Helmut Puff

Soot! This is what many people exclaimed when first encountering coffee. Once exotic, coffee became a luxury item and then the modern mass drink par excellence. To be sure, the medicinal qualities ascribed to the bean and debated to this day helped coffee's rise to popularity.

Initially, however, the black brew figured mostly as a bad habit. "I have to have coffee," sings Liesgen, whose father wants his daughter and her "coffee-sisters" to withdraw from their habit, in a cantata composed by Johann Sebastian Bach. At the time, the Benedictine order prohibited its monks from enjoying the drink because they customarily used their coffee gatherings to complain about superiors. Many rulers embraced a similar anti-caffeine agenda.

Of the three drinks whose consumption transformed the global economy—coffee, tea, chocolate—"soot" was not the first to become popular. Yet today, many of us cannot imagine living without it. We often swear by a particular roast, a method to prepare the drink, or a routine place to ingest it. You can have coffee by yourself; you also can have it in public, especially in coffee houses where you consume news together with your libation. Our thirst for the brew says much about us, as historian Erika Rappaport has recently argued regarding tea. Like tea, coffee revolves around citizenry and shared customs, capitalism and colonialism, as well as other things.

Yes, coffee is a stimulant. Yet it also serves as a social lubricant. Come to the Eisenberg Suite in 1521 Haven Hall on University of Michigan's central campus for proof. People swing by regularly to get the drink from a state-of-the-art coffee maker. Ever since the institute's beautiful suite opened its doors, our soot has been a key attraction. Depending on when you arrive, you may have to line up for a dose. A filled cup is what you came for. Information, news, conversations, and history are what you acquire in addition. One discusses academic events. A graduate student mentions a book I make a note to read. An instructor describes a recent teaching success that inspires you. We walk away stimulated, ready to come back.

Informal communities count among coffee's most lasting effects. Such gatherings may seem ephemeral when, in fact, they build our collective intellectual life. Ingest, listen, speak—not necessarily in this order. You will be surprised what happens. ■

Helmut Puff is Elizabeth L. Eisenstein Collegiate Professor of History and Germanic Languages and Literatures and director of the Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies.

History degree, and that was it: I loved it. I just knew it was the most interesting thing on that whole campus to me.

Did the skills you gained as a History major help when you started writing fiction?

History isn't just a bunch of dates and facts you memorize. I always saw it as a narrative. I loved it because those final exams had that big essay at the end when you sat with your bluebook and you opened it up and they said, "Analyze this. Here's what happened, why did this happen?" And there's no one right answer, there's space in that bluebook for every different answer.

You write for readers of many different backgrounds, from kids to adults and everyone in between. Can you talk about your writing process a bit?

For my first book, *The Tenth Justice*, I went to the Supreme Court of the United States, I got them to show me around. I asked them to show me how security worked and where the secret passages were. I went to the White House and saw the secret tunnels. The book was all fiction, I could make up whatever I wanted, but I built it all on reality. I built it all on what my degree gave me, which was this ability to research, and analyze, and find facts.

We started doing the George Washington book, *The First Conspiracy*, and I was combing through footnotes. In 1776 there was a secret plot to kill Washington, and when he found out about it he gathered up those responsible, built a gallows, and hanged one of the co-conspirators in front of 20,000 people. It was the largest public execution at that point in North American history. George Washington brought the hammer down. I thought, this is the most incredible story I've ever seen, I've got to tell it.

With our kids' books, I was tired of my kids looking at reality

show stars and overpaid athletes. I could show them so many better heroes to look up to. So I started writing books on George Washington, Dr. King, and Rosa Parks for kids.

These might be different genres, but they're doing the exact same thing: telling a good story. That's the only goal. Some are going to be told in a thriller, some are going to be told as nonfiction, some are going to be told in a children's book.

What about people who think history is boring?

I have a very modest background. We grew up working really hard, never thinking I was going to get to a place called Michigan. I think because of that I tell a story everyone can understand. If you think history is boring, then you have the wrong person telling you the story.

Your *I Am Walt Disney* and *I Am Marie Curie* books debut on September 10. Later this fall, you're launching *Xavier Riddle and the Secret Museum*, an animated series for PBS Kids.

We're launching a PBS Kids cartoon show based on our Ordinary People Change the World books. It features Xavier, his sister Yadina, and their best friend—the most-handsome character of all time—Brad. They have a secret museum where they can go back in time. Every episode they meet child-aged historical figures. When you show them that Rosa Parks can teach you about bullies, and that Jane Goodall can teach you about the power of doing what you love, or that Harry Houdini can teach you about the power of mindfulness—now you have something that kids can apply in their real lives. The best stories don't tell you about someone else. The best stories in your life tell you about yourself.

It has to be surreal seeing your animated doppelgänger.

Even in my wildest dreams—so many of which happened at Michigan—I never imagined that I would be a cartoon character. ■



Photo: "Cup & Coffee," DLG Images (CC BY 2.0)



OPENING THE HISTORIAN'S TOOLKIT AT PROQUEST

U-M HISTORY LAUNCHES
IN-TERM INTERNSHIP
PROGRAM FOR PHD
STUDENTS
BY GREGORY PARKER

In January, when most graduate students were settling into their teaching assignments, Meg Showalter and David Spreen were settling into their internships with ProQuest.

Headquartered in Ann Arbor, ProQuest is a leading content provider for academic, government, school, and public libraries around the world. As the inaugural students of History's Career Diversity Internship Program, Showalter and Spreen had access to six billion digital pages of newspapers, books, journals, and more.

U-M History is one of the first departments in the nation to incorporate funded, in-term internships for PhD students as alternatives to traditional teaching assignments. Interns receive compensation at the current instructional rate, plus tuition and benefits like health care. They're each expected to work at the company twenty hours per week.

With this program, graduate students don't have to take a financial hit to gain experience outside the classroom. Nor do they have to arrange these often-elusive internships on their own. It's built into the structure of the graduate program.

"The idea is to provide students with practical experience beyond teaching, to show them how their historical research skills might be applied in contexts beyond the academy, to help them navigate another institutional setting as a professional," said Professor Rita Chin, also the associate dean for academic programs and initiatives at Rackham Graduate School. Chin was instrumental in establishing the ProQuest partnership.



ProQuest's Rafael Sidi with Meg Showalter, David Spreen, and Rita Chin

"It was a chance to figure out how the stuff we do translates to the outside world," said Spreen.

Showalter and Spreen were brought on board to work on projects that were not necessarily related to their areas of historical expertise. Instead, they were asked to contribute the skills they've learned as historians.

"If you get a PhD in history, you're good at research, you're good at writing, you're self-motivated, you're a critical thinker," said Showalter. "I was interested to see how these skills translate to a sphere that's not academia."

ProQuest doesn't just provide access to source content through its databases. It offers curated collections focused on topics and themes. Showalter worked on a collection designed to historicize current events related to US immigration policy. The idea was to link primary source content with major events and trends, and to provide additional background on concepts like family unification and chain migration.

"It was exciting to think, 'What matters? What's important?'" said Showalter. "[We had] to think about voices, sources that are often marginalized, to think about laws or events or things that normally wouldn't be put on a standard timeline of immigration."

One of Spreen's projects was assisting with a mixed-media database of primary and secondary sources designed to amplify voices that are often unheard in the historical record.

"Locating sources to bring to the fore underrepresented voices and perspectives on themes such as environmental history, human rights, revolution, and protest allowed me to bring the historian's toolkit to ProQuest," said Spreen. "On the other hand, I learned a lot from the challenge implicit in writing about those sources for a general audience."

At the end of the term Showalter and Spreen shared their experiences in a company-wide meeting. ProQuest leadership was impressed, and the company is committed to continuing and expanding the partnership with U-M History.

"It's a great thing to put on my résumé as I try to prove to people that I can do things other than write a dissertation," said Showalter. "It proved to me that I could do something outside the academy." ■

COMING NOVEMBER 21-22 U-M PHD ALUMNI CONFERENCE

U-M History in the Public Service: A Vision for the Humanities PhD in the 21st Century

This fall U-M History will continue its public engagement and career diversity work with a national conference that will help chart a new path for humanities PhDs.

Over the past three years, U-M History has partnered with ProQuest for embedded, semester-long PhD student internships; developed innovative course designs like HistoryLabs; and created a mentoring database of U-M History PhD alumni stretching back to the 1970s.

This national conference is a debut for these programs, but also an opportunity to talk with PhD alumni and colleagues about how to expand, improve, and implement our goals.

Featuring PhD alumni who currently operate in non-academic contexts—media companies and museums, journalism and publishing, government jobs and policy centers, foundations and non-profits—and those who work on public-facing projects in academic settings, the conference will explore the array of career possibilities for humanities doctorates.

We invite faculty, graduate students, PhD alumni, and administrators to join us on campus in November. Visit lsa.umich.edu/history for additional information.

CONFERENCE PANELISTS

Pictured left to right below in alphabetical order:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Jacqueline Antonovich | Trayce Matthews |
| Adrian Burgos, Jr. | Clapperton Mavhunga |
| Tamar Carroll | Amanda B. Moniz |
| N.D.B. Connolly | Minayo Nasiali |
| Jamie Hart | Rebekah Pite |
| Emil Kerenji | Parna Sengupta |
| Jon Kingsdale | Susan L. Ziadeh |
| Earl Lewis | |





Death, Expected

By Chloe Thompson

Ellen Muehlberger's latest book examines how thinking about death changes the way we live



Professor Ellen Muehlberger's most recent book, *Moment of Reckoning: Imagined Death and Its Consequences in Late Ancient Christianity*, traces how Christians in late antiquity thought about death and the impact those ideas had on their conceptions of culture, violence, and the future. Professor Muehlberger sat down with History staffer Chloe Thompson to talk about *Moment of Reckoning* and how the futures we imagine for others affect how we treat them in the present.

Can you tell me a little about the book?

Moment of Reckoning focuses on a thing that seems hard to trace, which is how people between about 300 and about 700 CE anticipated what their deaths would be like.

The main argument is that once a particular way of thinking about death is made popular, it ends up changing how people think about a lot of different things. Once people thought of death as a terrifying judgment, they were more willing to force other people to convert to Christianity. Even though this is specifically a book about late antiquity and early Christianity, it has an argument about the unintended consequences of ideas that we introduce into culture.

So the ways people thought about death changed the way they thought about other people, which then changed what was acceptable to do to other people.

If you think about the interventions we make on other people's lives, every day, in our culture, we justify a lot of things based on the future that we imagine for that person. A pretty prevalent example from when I was writing the book in fall 2017 is the beginning of the #MeToo movement.

Up until that point, there had been a lot of discussions about if a young man is accused of sexual assault—especially if he's a white young man and he's rich—the conversation turns into, "Well, what about his future?" And we're entirely willing to think about a rich white man accused of sexual assault differently than a poor Hispanic or Black man accused of the same crime. Our legal system does not imagine the same future for those people. One has a future ahead of him to protect, the other needs to be punished for a crime.

The case of the Stanford swimmer has always been in my mind. In fact, the judge in that case talked about that kid's future as being important. It was maddening, because we don't do that with most people who enter the legal system. It got me thinking: The future that we attribute to people we interact with every day, whether we're involved in that future or not, informs our estimations about how we should treat each other.

I thought, wouldn't it be interesting to see what people anticipated for the future of others, and whether that changed how they were willing to treat people? The answer was it really did. Once late-antiquity Christians had a sense that your actual death was going to be a moment when you'd find out whether you'd been good or bad—and be very frightened if you were bad, it was far easier to think about making even a violent intervention in someone's proximate life, because "I'm saving you from this other thing."

In the book, you note that the popularization of martyrdom becomes more widespread and more common at the same time Christians gain access to imperial power. Do you think that's a cause of or a reaction to this change, or both?

It could be both. It could also be just the fact that when Christianity is legitimized after that point, there's actually a lot more evidence that gets preserved. But earlier sources really tend to focus on death as release, the moment you get to be relieved of the misery of this world. It's a moment that should feel like a liberation, rather than a trial. The sources I looked at from the later period, however, started talking about it more intensively as a trial. They

also started talking to audiences in ways that would induce the audience members to imagine themselves on trial when they died.

This is a thing we do to people now, too. To try to persuade someone who's not acting as we think they should be, we present them with an imagined future scenario in which they will wish they had done what we wanted. Once you see that people do this—I confront you with your future self that's going to want you to do what I say you should be doing—you notice it everywhere.

Did you go into the book thinking you wanted to talk about that argument?

Absolutely not. I had no idea where it was going to end up when I started. I knew I wanted to do a book about death in the time period I study. Pretty quickly, it became clear to me that there were a lot of scholars writing about that who had expertise that I just didn't have, like people with training in material culture studying funerary objects, or art historians working on grave portraits and textiles. So, I thought: All of this is interesting, but what room is left for me to think about?

I started noticing that the depictions of death were so dark. And far more frightening than you would have imagined, especially in sermons, which we usually think of as uplifting and consoling. I started coming across sermons that were terrifying and quite disturbing to read. I started thinking, if these texts as they've been preserved were actually preached at people, what would the effect of that be? That started me down the road of thinking about the effect of thinking about one's future, and how it was meant to change people's behavior. ■

ALUMNI UPDATES

Michael Barera (BA 2012) is the new university and labor archivist at the University of Texas at Arlington. He was an archivist at Texas A&M University-Commerce from 2015 to 2019.

Anne Berg (PhD 2011) is assistant professor of history at the University of Pennsylvania.

Jesse Berrett (BA 1988) published *Pigskin Nation: How the NFL Remade American Politics* (University of Illinois Press, 2018).

Iris Brown Berger (BA 1963), professor emerita at the University at Albany, State University of New York, received the Distinguished Africanist Award from the African Studies Association in 2017.

Barbara Carney-Coston (BA 1973) received a State History Award from the Historical Society of Michigan in the category of "Books: Children & Youth" in September 2018 for her novel *To the Copper Country: Mihaela's Journey* (Wayne State University Press, 2017). The book, set in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, is based on her family history.

Michael Eisman (BA 1958, MA 1959) reports that he retired in 2016 after forty-seven years in the History Department at Temple University, where he focused on ancient history. He taught for three years at the US Naval Academy (1963-66) before entering the University of Pennsylvania for a PhD in Classical Archaeology (1971).

Lewis Erenberg (PhD 1974), professor emeritus at Loyola University Chicago, published *The Rumble in the Jungle: Muhammad Ali and George Foreman on the Global Stage* (University of Chicago Press, 2019).

Sara Fitzgerald (BA 1973) is under contract with University of Michigan Press for a book about the 1970 sex discrimination complaint filed against the university with the US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The book is scheduled for publication in 2020, the fiftieth anniversary of the complaint and the 150th anniversary of the admission of women to U-M.

Steven Geelhoed (BA 2012) is now a compliance coordinator for the Athletics Compliance Office at Texas A&M University.

Roger L. Geiger (BA 1964, MA 1966, PhD 1972), distinguished professor emeritus at Pennsylvania State University, published *American Higher Education Since World War II: A History* (Princeton University Press, 2019).

Christine Haynes (BA 1992) recently published her second book, *Our Friends the Enemies: The Occupation of France after Napoleon* (Harvard University Press, 2018).

Lynn C. Kronzek (BA 1977) serves on the national editorial board of the *Public Historian*. In January she marked her thirtieth year in private consulting practice.

Lisa A. Lindsay (PhD 1996) won the African Studies Association's 2018 Melville J. Herskovits Prize for *Atlantic Bonds: A Nineteenth-Century Odyssey from America to Africa* (University of North Carolina Press, 2016). She is professor and chair of the History Department at UNC-Chapel Hill.

John Merriman (BA 1968, MA 1969, PhD 1972) published *History on the Margins: People and Places in the Emergence of Modern France* (University of Nebraska Press, 2018) and a fourth edition of *A History of Modern Europe* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2019). In 2019 he also received the de Vane Medal for distinguished scholarship and undergraduate teaching at Yale University.

Robert Rockaway (MA 1962, PhD 1970) signed a contract for a movie based on his Tablet Magazine article "Gangsters for Zion," about Jewish mobsters who helped in the creation of the State of Israel.

A. Brad Schwartz (BA 2012) is currently a doctoral student in American history at Princeton University. His second book, *Scarface and the Untouchable: Al Capone, Eliot Ness, and the Battle for Chicago*, co-written with Max Allan Collins, was published by William Morrow in 2018.

Rose Mary Sheldon (PhD 1987) published *Kill Caesar! Assassination in the Early Roman Empire* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2018).

Kenneth Swope (PhD 2001) received the 2018 Innovation Award for Outstanding Faculty Research from the University of Southern Mississippi. His edited book, *The Ming World*, was published in August by Routledge. In 2019-20 he will be the Leo A. Shifrin Chair in Naval and Military History at the United States Naval Academy.

Alice Weinreb (PhD 2009) was the inaugural winner of the Waterloo Centre for German Studies Book Prize for *Modern Hungers: Food and Power in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Oxford, 2017). The award recognizes the best English-language book in German studies.

Lora Wildenthal (PhD 1994) is associate dean of humanities and professor of history at Rice University, where she has taught since 2003. She has published two books, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945* (Duke University Press, 2001) and *The Language of Human Rights in Germany* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012). In 2018 her dissertation co-chair Kathleen Canning became dean of humanities at Rice, so they are working together again after 24 years.

YOUNG ALUMNI MADISON HORTON, '17

PUTTING HER HISTORY DEGREE TO WORK IN THE
WORLD OF DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING

By Michael Gawlik

What have you been up to since graduating?

I loved Ann Arbor so much that I stayed for a year after graduating. I spent that time working in the Museum of Natural History developing fundraising initiatives for the move to the new Biological Science Building. Last spring I moved to Los Angeles to pursue a career as a documentary filmmaker. I got a job working with filmmaker Gabe Polsky, and spent last fall helping coordinate the release of his latest film, *In Search of Greatness*. I am currently working on another documentary that will be released soon.

Which skills from History have helped you in the filmmaking world? Can you explain?

It's impossible to answer this question in one paragraph, but two skills I developed as a History major that I now use every day are writing and researching. The experience I got working in archives, and with archival materials, has been incredibly helpful, because the film we are working on relies heavily on archival footage. It has been very useful to know how to effectively search for extremely specific clips while wading through the vast archives of the Internet, and then keep them organized for later use. The writing skills I developed as a History major not only help me in the actual process of making a film, but also in the day-to-day communication and marketing that releasing a film requires.

Why did you major in History?

My parents love to tell the story of me giving an in-depth tour of the Vasa Museum in Stockholm, Sweden, as a four-year-old. I don't remember it, but I guess history is something I have been interested in for most of my life. I actually initially planned on becoming a museum curator, but decided to pursue filmmaking instead because I also love documentaries. I have always been obsessed with figuring out how things got to be the way they are—and then explaining it to people incessantly.

You wrote a thesis—tell us more about that.

I wrote my thesis on the history of the Detroit Institute of the Arts and its relationship to the city of Detroit. It focused on three specific periods when the city saw major economic and demographic changes, and explored the museum's shifting role as a publicly funded institution. My thesis is easily the thing I am most proud of from my time at Michigan.



What was your favorite History class?

History of Modern Africa with Professor Ellen Poteet! This class opened my eyes to the beautiful and complex history of an entire continent that was either lumped together or left out of my high school textbooks. I knew about consequences of the scramble for Africa for Europeans, but this class helped me start to understand the consequences for Africans. I actually took three of the primary sources we read for this class out to LA with me, and I didn't have a lot of room in my car!

You were captain of the varsity swim team at Michigan—how did you balance that with the demands of schoolwork?

I loved swimming and I loved schoolwork, so I just had to figure it out. The scales weren't always balanced, but there was no world in which I would have willingly given either of them up. I actually think the rigor of being a college athlete helped me become a better student because I was forced to prioritize and manage my time well. When I finished swimming, I had a full twenty-four hours of time added into my week, and without the structure of practice and teammates to hold me accountable, that time seemed to just disappear!

Do you have any advice for current History students?

Write a thesis! It's no joke, but it is 100 percent worth the blood, sweat, and tears. You get to spend more than a year learning about something YOU are interested in and you will have 8 million drafts and a sleek bound book to show for it. ■

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CONTACT!

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If you're a young alumni interested in being profiled, email hist.outreach@umich.edu.



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