

# Oakland University

## HISTORY DEPARTMENT

### NEWSLETTER *Spring 2016*

#### DEPARTMENT HONOR ROLL

The Department of History has a well-established track record of success in winning the most coveted prizes awarded by Oakland University.

##### University Distinguished Professor

2007 Ronald Finucane

##### Research Excellence Award

1985 Charles Akers  
1992 Richard Tucker  
1998 Ronald Finucane  
2007 Linda Benson

##### Teaching Excellence Award

1989 Carl Osthaus  
1991 Anne Tripp  
2001 Todd Estes

##### New Investigator Research Excellence Award

1996 Geoffrey Wawro  
2008 Matthew Sutton  
2011 Craig Martin

##### President's Colloquium Award

1999 Geoffrey Wawro  
2001 Linda Benson  
2003 Sean Farrell Moran  
2006 Sara Chapman  
2009 Todd Estes

##### College of Arts and Sciences Engagement Award

2013 Dan Clark

##### Outstanding Thesis Award for Graduate Students

2008 Jennifer Laam  
2010 Ann Marie Wambeke

#### VIEW FROM THE CHAIR'S DESK

As you scroll (or thumb) through this newsletter you will find the record of another year in the life of the department replete with achievements, awards, and activities by our faculty, our students, and some honored visitors. This record of achievement highlights another successful year in the life of the department, both collectively and for individual members.

It was a year of great student success, as individual students won awards, internships, scholarships and prizes and as the collected students of Phi Alpha Theta capped an ambitious year by hosting the regional conference at Oakland on an April Saturday. And our faculty had another impressive year of teaching, service to Oakland and to the profession, and scholarship. After all, the success of our students is tied directly to the quality of the teaching they receive, and that high-caliber teaching is fueled by the research and writing of our faculty of teacher-scholars.

It was a year of setting attendance records for our History Comes Alive lecture series which attracted more people than ever before. Those lectures by department faculty were supplemented by two distinguished guest speakers, both of whom drew

strong crowds as well. All of these ventures are part of the way we engage with the broader community in mutually productive ways.

It was also a year of milestones and achievements in faculty research in various ways—publications, presentations, promotions and more. I emphasize research in this newsletter, both explicitly and implicitly, by focusing on the recent publications and current research of both current and former faculty. Other pieces show the impact of research accomplishments in the department, while many highlight activities now underway that will yield results in the future. And a number of these newsletter entries reflect the research that our students have done for their classes and the ways that such work has paid off for them. Even the interviews in this newsletter feature the research and publication of a current faculty member (Derek Hastings) as well as one of our emerita faculty members (Mary Karasch), while the faculty updates section profiles more work—past, forthcoming, and in progress.

By focusing on research, however, I certainly do not mean to slight teaching or service, the other two dimensions of the traditional professorial triad. The work of the department—which this year featured five personnel reviews and much other important committee

work—could not go on without the selfless contributions and hard work of many hands. And the results of our teaching are often the least visible but most significant results of our labors. This is borne out by the third interview in these pages with a recent graduate who has done—and is doing—some remarkable things with his History degree. He reflects on how it all got started in a classroom at OU. Once you have read this interview, I am sure you will agree that Chris Gillies embodies student success in the most genuine sense.

I trust you will learn a great deal below about our department and its exciting activities this past year. Despite grappling with the inevitable challenges, we have accomplished much and laid a great foundation for the future. Enjoy reading all the news.

By: Todd Estes

## PHI ALPHA THETA CHAPTER HOSTS REGIONAL CONFERENCE AT OAKLAND

The student members and faculty advisors from Oakland's Phi Alpha Theta chapter played host to the PAT Michigan Regional Conference at Oakland University in April which was an unqualified success. Over 70 people representing approximately a dozen universities or colleges attended as participants or observers in fifteen conference panels held in a daylong meeting at the Oakland Center. In talking to student presenters and their professors--and overhearing other conversations taking place—it became clear what an enjoyable and meaningful experience this was for those who participated. From students presenting their research for their peers, to professors and parents watching with pride, to the many students moderating panels--for all concerned, it was a tremendous

event and a great way to cap an academic year.

Special thanks are due to the student chapter members from Oakland who helped plan and organize the event and who often did double duty, presenting papers and then also moderating other panels while acting as friendly hosts for our guests. Special thanks are due the PAT faculty advisors--**Dan Clark, Liz Shesko, and James Naus**--who did a fantastic job organizing, planning, overseeing, and coordinating a hundred matters large and small to make sure the conference came off well. History department faculty members were especially generous with their time and expertise by serving as commentators and panel judges. James Naus, Dan Clark, Craig Martin, Jeff Powell, Derek Hastings, Bruce Zellers, George Milne, Karen Miller, and Todd Estes all helped in this capacity. The PAT student moderators executed their roles with professionalism and skill. Lastly, guest keynote speaker Jacob Remes, a professor at Empire State College, delivered a thoughtful, engaging, and well-received luncheon talk on the often serendipitous ways that research questions, topics, and insights emerge for historians.

A total of 20 students from Oakland's chapter presented papers at the meeting, including Bryan Furgal, Ashley Montgomery, Brittany Barron, Mark Chasney, Kathryn Austin, Rowa Altattan, Justin Schnurer, Christopher Blaker, Steven Schatzberg, Michael Leskoviansky, Mara Armstrong, Kenny Plont, Rose Walsh, Katie Chaka, Matthew Ciaravino, Roger Biernat, Nick DiPucchio, Floriana Berishaj, Amrita Prakash, and Sarah Black. Oakland students did extremely well in bringing home honors for their papers as well, winning three of the seven "Best Paper" awards given out by the faculty judges who were drawn from all participating institutions. **Ashley Montgomery, Kathryn Austin, and Sarah Black** took home prizes for their papers and several other OU students were finalists for

honors as well. The department is proud of all our students who worked hard to write and revise their papers, practiced diligently to improve their presentation, and benefitted from the experience of sharing their research with peers in a scholarly setting. They, and our dedicated PAT advisors who helped them every step of the way, deserve our praise.

The Department was pleased to contribute support to this program and is especially grateful to Dean Kevin Corcoran for his generous financial support as well as his presence to provide welcoming remarks. This was a hugely successful day and our entire department can take pride, not only in the success of our students but the overall success of the regional conference. OU has set a high bar for other chapters to try to emulate in future meetings.

## PHI ALPHA THETA CHAPTER HAS ACTIVE AND SUCCESSFUL YEAR

Hosting the regional conference was only the high point of what was a very busy and productive 2015-16 academic year for our PAT chapter. Chapter members and advisors participated in weekly meetings and took part in a range of other activities during the year. Here are a few clear highlights:

Phil Alpha Theta students hosted their annual "Careers in History" panel in late October in the Oakland Center for history students and any interested participants. Panelists this year, all chosen to represent the range of careers open to History majors, included Tobi Voigt of the Detroit Historical Society; Joshua Miller, attorney at law; Tara Fugate, secondary school teacher; Chris Gillies, MBA student following a military tour of duty in Afghanistan; and Dominique Daniel of Kresge Library. All of the panelists except Daniel were Oakland undergraduates

so they were able to speak authoritatively about the challenges and opportunities available to OU students. There was an excellent turnout, a great discussion, and lots of follow-up conversation afterwards between panelists and the audience as attendees sought out panelists individually for one-on-one conversations. Dean Kevin Corcoran and Associate Dean Robby Stewart both attended and the guests themselves made it clear how much they appreciated being asked to participate and how much they enjoyed the event itself. This panel is an annual success and one of the best means the department has of communicating to students the range of career options open to history majors.

PAT's longtime faculty advisor Dan Clark was elected to the Phi Alpha Theta National Council and attended the biennial PAT National Conference in Florida in January. Council members review applications for new PAT chapters, determine national Best Chapter Awards, participate in budget and bylaw sessions, and are called upon to weigh in on issues that arise throughout the year.

The chapter hosted a special panel discussion for students interested in graduate school. James Naus, Liz Shesko, Don Matthews, Derek Hastings, and Yan Li offered sobering truths about how competitive it is to get into top graduate programs and how difficult the job market is. The excellent session, the first of its kind held by our chapter, was very well attended.

The Holiday Party at Rochester Mills saw a great turnout of students and faculty for informal conversation. Students managed to defeat the faculty yet again in Quiz Bowl at the annual Induction Dinner, once again held at Lino's. James Naus offered a thoughtful talk about his journey to become a historian.

Continuing a tradition, Phi Alpha Theta students gathered at the Red

Ox before every History Comes Alive presentation for dinner and conversation.

Phi Alpha Theta students were also heavily involved in the visit by University of London historian Jonathan Phillips and his family, arranging a luncheon presentation, going out for meals, and benefiting from Professor Phillips's in-class visits.

## 2015-2016 PHI ALPHA THETA INDUCTEES

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Mara Armstrong, Kathryn Austin, Robert Belcourt, Mikayla Benton, Floriana Berishaj, Matthew Ciaravino, Bryan Furgal, Rachael Kroll, Michael Leskoviansky, Anastacia Maurer, Dean Michel, Ashley Montgomery, Chad Samson.

## HISTORY COMES ALIVE SERIES SETS RECORDS

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The 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the department's acclaimed "History Comes Alive" lecture series in 2015-16 proved to be a record-breaking success. The six lectures in the series, beginning in September and concluding in March, broke the department's all-time attendance record. A total of 723 people attended this year's talks. That number exceeded our previous record (set in 2013-14) by more than a hundred. This means that an average of 121 people attended each lecture, and all the talks exceeded 90 attendees with three of the sessions topping the century mark. We also broke the single lecture attendance record in November with Erin Dwyer's presentation on the Lincoln assassination drawing a remarkable audience of 234 people.

Our patrons—many of whom have been attending the series for years, even as we continue to draw newcomers at each lecture—routinely tell us how much they appreciate this series and the opportunity it affords them to spend

one evening a month listening to and discussing a history lecture. The department is fortunate to be able to engage with the local history-minded public in this way and we are delighted that they turn to Oakland to connect with us for these lectures. It is clear our efforts at community outreach—which we enjoy a great deal—are greatly appreciated in return. This is a meaningful series and it is always nice to hear from our audience how much the lectures and the experience mean to them.

The department is deeply appreciative of our generous sponsors who make these lectures possible: the Knudsen Family Foundation, the office of the Senior Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Provost, and the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and our founding sponsors, the late John Carter and the late Annette Carter who helped launch this program in 2004. CAS Dean Kevin Corcoran attends nearly every lecture as does CAS Associate Dean Robby Stewart. Judy Christie, the administrator of the Knudsen Family Foundation and a frequent attendee of the series commented, "It's a pleasure to support a program that informs so many people of differing ages. I'm happy to be able to support [the department's] efforts!"

A special word of thanks goes to department secretary Johanna McReynolds for all of her behind the scenes work on publicity, signage, reservations, refreshments, and arrangements with assistance from Janet Chandler. Plans for the 2016-17 "History Comes Alive" series are being finalized now and another exciting year of talks is in the works.

Here were the lectures presented in 2015-16:

**Sara Chapman Williams**, "Early Detroit for Parisians: Cadillac's 1701 "Description of Detroit", Tuesday, September 15, 2015

**Weldon Matthews**, "The Kennedy Administration and the Kurds of Iraq", Tuesday, October 6, 2015

**Erin Dwyer**, "The Deaths of Abraham Lincoln and John Wilkes Booth: Rumor, Conspiracy, and Collective Memory", Tuesday, November 17, 2015

**Derek Hastings**, "Rituals, Rallies, and the Creation of Sacred Space in Nazi Germany", Tuesday, January 12, 2016

**Jeff Powell**, "Laborers, Unions, and the Public Welfare: The Taftville Strike of 1875 and Gilded Age America", Tuesday, February 9, 2016

**Elizabeth Shesko**, "In the Green Hell: Bolivia's Choco War, 1932-1935", Tuesday, March 8, 2016

## NOTED CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST DIANE NASH LECTURES AT OAKLAND

The department was pleased to host noted Civil Rights activist and speaker Diane Nash to kick off the university's African-American Celebration Month in February. She gave two public lectures for students, alumni, and members of the community on "The 1960s Civil Rights Movement: Past, Present, and Future." Nash showed very clearly why she carries so much moral power as her understated but deeply meaningful talks made a lasting impression on the audience. In a pair of fascinating lectures, she shared her experiences of the 1960s and used those examples to challenge particularly the students attending to apply their energies to attacking injustice today.

A key part of the power and authority of Nash's talk stems from her extensive and courageous personal involvement in so many path breaking aspects of the Civil

Rights movement. A native of Chicago, Nash became a passionate advocate for civil rights while she was a student at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. She was a leader of the sit-in movement to integrate lunch counters in Nashville and became active with the Freedom Riders who worked to desegregate bus travel. Nash was also a founding member of SNCC (the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) and was very active in the voting rights movement as well. A close ally of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., she worked to help his Southern Christian Leadership Conference develop strategies for integrating the Birmingham, Alabama business district and was one of only four women given special recognition at the March on Washington in August 1963. Nash has also won numerous awards and honors during her lifetime of involvement to causes and commitment to social justice.

Both lectures were well attended and generated extensive, engaged questions and audience discussion afterwards. A combined total of 117 people attended the two presentations. A handful was present for both--including a pair of attendees who drove up from Youngstown, Ohio just for this event.

A special thanks to Professor De Witt Dykes, whose hard work and inside connections allowed us to bring Diane Nash to campus and who made arrangements for the events. We also acknowledge the very generous support of the Office of the Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, the African-American Celebration Committee, and our co-sponsoring departments: Communication and Journalism, Modern Languages and Literatures, Philosophy, Political Science, and Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work, and Criminal Justice.

## DEPARTMENT HOSTS PROMINENT

## MEDIEVALIST FOR GUEST LECTURE

The department had the honor this April of playing host to Jonathan Phillips, Professor of Crusading History and Head of Department at Royal Holloway College, University of London for a formal lecture and a series of other events. The lecture discussed the memory of Sultan Saladin and the long, continuing impact of the crusading movement on modern political culture. An enthusiastic and attentive audience of 124 people heard his fine public lecture on "Saladin: Life and Legend--The Memory of the Crusades in the Near East." Professor Phillips's talk was exceptionally well-pitched for our audience: serious and informative yet witty and accessible. The question and answer session had remarkable energy and engagement and many of our patrons complimented the great talk afterwards.

In addition to his successful public lecture, Professor Phillips was very generous with his time and expertise and gave our students a terrific opportunity to learn, discuss, and ask questions of an internationally acclaimed scholar. The department benefitted from having Phillips around for several days during which time he participated in classes, guest taught some lectures, met with students, had lunch with Phi Alpha Theta students, and visited with faculty.

Phillips has authored numerous books on the Crusades including *Holy Warriors: A Modern History of the Crusades*, *The Second Crusade: Extending the Frontiers of Christendom*, and also *The Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople*. Professor Phillips, in addition to his extensive publication record, also frequently appears on television documentaries and news programs such as The History Channel and the BBC.

Many thanks go to Oakland's own Medieval specialist, Professor James Naus, for inviting Phillips to campus and then for planning and coordinating the events during his stay. The department is grateful to Dean Kevin Corcoran of the College of Arts and Sciences for his strong financial support of this program which made it possible to fund this event. We also want to thank the Office of the Provost for support and, as always, we appreciate the efforts of Janet Chandler and Johanna McReynolds for all the behind the scenes work that went into making this visit so successful.

## TWO HISTORIANS EARN PROMOTIONS IN RANK

Two members of the History department faculty have earned promotions as a result of personnel reviews conducted this past year. Craig Martin and Todd Estes have been promoted from Associate Professor to the rank of Professor.

Promotion reviews are originated in the department and go from there to college-wide and university-wide promotion review committees for review and approval, then on to the Provost and the Board of Trustees. Reviews are based on strong records in research, teaching, and service with the scholarship component weighing most heavily. Martin (History of Science and Technology and Renaissance Europe) since tenure has published a second monograph, a raft of book chapters and peer-reviewed journal articles, and has won major research fellowships including the Rome Prize and a Folger Shakespeare Library grant. Estes (Early U.S. history) has published a monograph, an edited volume, two book chapters and eight peer-reviewed journal articles since earning tenure.

These successful promotion reviews help to replenish the department's ranks. Martin and Estes become the unit's first Full Professors since

Linda Benson retired in 2012, filling a void at that level. With lots of scholarly work contracted, underway and/or forthcoming from our historians, the department will look to add to the lists of both Professors and Associate Professors in the next several years, continuing to reshape the department's faculty roster.

## JANET CHANDLER MARKS 20 YEARS OF SERVICE AT OU

Janet Chandler, the History department's Administrative Secretary since 1998, was among 25 people honored at an Employee Recognition Program in February to salute those with 20 years of service to the institution. OU President George Hynd and Provost James Lentini were on hand to speak and to congratulate the employees on reaching this milestone in their years of service. The program and reception, held in the Oakland Center, recognized those employees who have served Oakland for ten or twenty years and featured members of the Board of Trustees as well as the President's Cabinet.

Janet joined Oakland in 1995, working first in the Admissions office before coming to the History department. In her time in the department, Janet has made herself invaluable for her many contributions in serving both faculty and students on a daily basis. Visitors to the department office appreciate her good spirit and enthusiasm and all benefit from her professionalism and efficiency. The four department chairs she has worked with are particularly grateful for her expertise. Janet's extensive experience means that she has "seen it all" over the years and knows instinctively how to handle any situation or development. It is also clear that she is enormously well respected across campus by administrators, faculty, and the other administrative professionals with whom she interacts regularly. We are delighted that this program

honored Janet's service to the institution, and the department is gratified to have had the benefit of her presence these many years. Congratulations to Janet!

## INTERVIEWS

Each year in this space we select a few faculty members or alumni who are doing interesting things and seek them out for interviews to share. This year we spoke with a retired professor, a current professor, and a recent alum. Here is what they had to say.

### INTERVIEW WITH MARY KARASCH

Mary Karasch earned her Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin and taught Latin American history at Oakland from 1970 until her retirement in 2010. She has authored numerous publications including *Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro* published by Princeton University Press in 1987 which won the Albert J. Beveridge Award from the American Historical Association, given annually for the best book in English on the history of the United States, Latin America or Canada from 1492 to the present. She keeps in touch with former colleagues, students, and friends in the area and she graciously took time out from copy editing her most recent book to talk with us.

#### **Q: What do you miss most about your time at Oakland?**

I especially miss students and colleagues, as well as Janet and Johanna. I have fond memories of working with students, especially in history seminars. I also enjoyed giving lectures on Latin America to local community groups, and I miss lively discussions with interested senior citizens. Since I now live in the desert southwest in Arizona, I also miss the natural beauty of OU's campus, especially the trees and wildlife.

**Q: What kind of activities have you undertaken since leaving OU?**

I have continued to serve on the editorial board as an assistant editor of the journal, *The Americas*, which takes me to Philadelphia four times a year for editorial board meetings. We also meet at the American Historical Association each January. After the June meeting, I usually stop in Detroit to visit the department, friends, and former students.

The major focus of my activities has been the completion of the book manuscript, including research trips to London and Vienna. I have just finished the review of the edited manuscript, and page proofs will come in June. We have an expected publication date of the fall, 2016. The title is "Before Brasília: Frontier Life in Central Brazil."

In addition to the book, I have also been publishing articles, book chapters, and short biographies. When possible, I have given papers at the Brazilian Studies meeting in London, two border lands conferences in Mexico City and North Carolina, a regional Latin American history conference in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and a Brazilian slavery conference held in Franca, São Paulo last year.

**Q: What is the book about and what does it argue?**

"Before Brasília" is a comprehensive survey of the evolution of the population of Central Brazil from the 1590s to c. 1835. The central theme is slavery, both indigenous and African. Not only does the book document as much as possible about the indigenous populations who occupied the region, but it also demonstrates the role of enslaved Africans in the mining economy and that of the Portuguese elite, who attempted to govern the region. The Portuguese divided society into white, black, and the racially mixed, which was in turn reflected in local militias and churches that served as a focus of community building. The final result was the transformation of

a society from a slave society in which as many as seventy to eighty per cent of the people were defined as slaves to one in which most people were free or freed men and women of color, although autonomous Indians still lived independently and fought local settlers.

**Q: How long have you been working on this book?**

Too long! One might say the genesis of the book was a trip I made in 1969 when I visited the Karajá, who lived along the Araguaia River. Initial research began in 1977-1978, when I received a Fulbright award to do research and teach at the University of Brasília. Since then I finished *Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro* in 1987 and served as the Brazil editor for the *Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture* (1996) after which I worked sporadically on this book manuscript until I retired and could devote full attention to revisions on the manuscript.

**Q: Was it easier or harder to write the book in retirement?**

Because of the complexity of the book project, I could not have finished it while still teaching. When I made the decision to retire, I believed that I would have lots of time to just write and revise. The reality was that family obligations, including five weddings of nieces and nephews, and my sister's illnesses took more time than anticipated. I also had health issues, including cataract surgery. In effect, it was often difficult to find the time to work on the book. What I found most useful in moving the book along was to set a schedule of three or four hours per day.

**Q: What is the next project?**

The next research project will take me back to Portugal (Lisbon and Evora) and then to Rome (the Vatican archives). I am going to try and find the Jesuit relations for the late seventeenth and early eighteenth

centuries for Central Brazil. My goal is to locate what they wrote about the indigenous populations and enslaved Africans before 1759, when they were expelled from Brazil.

**Q: What are some of the most exciting and promising directions in Latin American history scholarship?**

What I find most exciting is the global access to scholarship on Latin America that is available using electronic sources. Our journal *The Americas* is now being published by Cambridge University Press, which gives us access to global readers. We now have an international audience that was never possible before this. In a recent study of our readership, we found that we had readers in Europe, the Middle East and Asia, as well as the United States and Latin America--and at Oakland University.

The internet also makes possible collaborative research and publication projects with scholars in Europe, Latin America, and the United States. I have participated in one in Spain on the history of women in Latin America, another in Brazil on a collection of essays on black women in Brazil, and yet a third with Mexican scholars on the history of borderlands in the Americas. For the future, I expect that more publications in Latin American history will involve such collaborations on broad historical themes as opposed to narrow studies on one country's political history. In terms of sources online, one that has been most useful to me is the Trans-Atlantic slave trade data base directed by David Eltis at Emory University. This web site on 35,000 voyages that carried enslaved Africans to the Americas has contributed greatly to African Diaspora studies on Latin America. What I also appreciate is the ability to publish both hard copy and electronic versions of books. My own book will have that feature, but Oxford University's *Dictionary of Caribbean and Afro-Latin American*

*Biography* to which I contributed three biographies will have an electronic version that can be revised when new sources or books are available.

Yet another important development is the placement of Latin American themes within an Atlantic world context, both for the colonial and national periods. New research on the Haitian Revolution and its impact on the Americas is but one example.

Finally, I especially appreciate the scholars who have mastered indigenous languages, such as Nahuatl and Quechua, enabling historians to read colonial texts in the original indigenous language. The location and translation of writings by the conquered are changing our visions of colonial Latin America.

#### **INTERVIEW WITH DEREK HASTINGS**

Recently we sat down with our German historian, Derek Hastings, to talk about his current research and scholarship. Here is our interview with him:

**Q: You are currently writing two books simultaneously. Could you tell us a little bit about each one?**

One book is on the history of nationalism in Europe from the French Revolution up through the recent Ukraine crisis. It is under contract with Bloomsbury, an academic press in London, and the manuscript is near completion. One of the main themes emphasized in the book is the interaction between nationalist sentiment, as an extremely powerful form of belonging, and rival loyalties like regional and religious attachments. I also focus on how nationalism interacted with other markers of identity, such as gender and class. Since the book covers all of Europe and goes far beyond my own field of German history, it has forced me to read a tremendous amount of

material that I wouldn't have read otherwise. Overall, it has been challenging, but fun. The other book is a biography of the early Nazi leader Ernst Röhm, who was gay and was executed on Hitler's orders in 1934. What I find especially interesting about Röhm is that, as a gay man in a homophobic political movement, he not only played an important role in helping bring Hitler to power but also helped forge the Nazi ideal of masculinity. Röhm's killing was partly justified as the removal of an immoral cancer within the Nazi leadership, but it also forced the Nazis to rethink their ideas about masculinity and identity on a fundamental level.

**Q: Did either of these grow out of your first book? And how so?**

Neither project grew directly out of my first book, which focused on the religious orientation of the early Nazi movement. But in doing the research for that book, I came across a lot of peripheral material about Ernst Röhm, so that did play some role in my decision to write about him further. Also, having focused on the relationship between Nazism and religion, I was looking for a window into the relationship between Nazism and gender, particularly conceptions of masculinity, and Röhm seemed like an ideal choice.

**Q: How do you juggle these two books? Do you work on both of them at the same time, or do you alternate and spend blocks of time on first one and then the other?**

I don't juggle particularly well, either literally or metaphorically, so what has happened in practice is that I have alternated stretches of time in which I've worked on one project or the other. I started the Röhm project earlier, but changed its structure and scope dramatically, and then the opportunity to write the nationalism book came along. Since my contract with Bloomsbury has a deadline, I've been forced to work almost exclusively on that project in recent months.

**Q: You teach a course on European nationalism. What is the relationship between your teaching this field and your writing the book? Are they mutually reinforcing?**

The book on nationalism grew directly out of the course I've taught for several years on that topic. In initially assigning readings for the class, it was difficult to find texts that fit well with my approach as a historian. To begin with, most of the works on nationalism have been written from a largely ahistorical perspective by sociologists, anthropologists, and political scientists. And while a large number of historians have also written about nationalism, they have typically done so by focusing on limited temporal and geographic contexts (like nationalism in interwar France or the revival of ethnic nationalism in the Balkans after the Cold War). The relatively small number of broad historical surveys that exist typically approach the topic thematically rather than chronologically. So I decided to try to write a book that covers the entire period since the French Revolution in a chronological narrative that maintains equal focus on western and eastern Europe. I certainly wouldn't have done that if not for the experience of teaching the class on nationalism.

**Q: What kinds of research have you had to do for these projects? Trips to the archives?**

Yes, archival research has been absolutely central to my work on these projects. I am grateful for the research funding provided by OU, which has enabled me to spend several summers in Europe doing archival research.

**Q: Has your conception of either book changed, expanded, or been refined as your work on it? In other words, have the projects evolved now from what you originally planned? How so?**

The book on Ernst Röhm has changed dramatically. It began as an investigation of Nazi conceptions of masculinity, and Röhm was originally just the point of entry into that set of issues. But as I did more research, I found a tremendous amount of material that had not been dealt with in the only other scholarly biography of Röhm ever written (much of the new material I have assembled is on Röhm's childhood and adolescence). So I decided to write a full-fledged biography, which has taken a longer amount of time.

**Q: When and where do you do your best writing? Do you need a consistent time and place or can you be more flexible with this work?**

I've found that the best time for me to write is at night, stretching into the early morning hours. Reading and outlining can be done in shorter windows of time, but I need at least several hours in a row to have any success in the writing process. Nights seem to work best in that regard.

**Q: Even with two books in the works, do you have any ideas for books or other scholarly work once these projects are completed?**

My problem is that I'm interested in too many things and have too many ideas for future projects. The two most likely options at this point are, first, a history of Nazi domestic programs that failed spectacularly in the 1930s and, second, something on the emergence of a new kind of celebrity pop culture in Germany between 1900 and 1930, focusing mainly on visual representations of film stars and athletes.

#### **INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTOPHER GILLIES**

Christopher Gillies is a recent Oakland history graduate who made an enormous impression on the audience when he spoke last October

at Phi Alpha Theta's "Careers in History" to discuss his experience since Oakland. Since not everyone could attend the panel, we thought many more might benefit from learning more about Chris and his career path. We spent some time recently catching up with him.

**Q: What do you remember most about your time as a History major at Oakland? What led you to become a History major?**

I most enjoyed my time researching for the two seminar classes that were required for a major in History. I enjoyed these because the classes empowered me to conduct my own research in challenging topics and transform my research to the written page. I felt it challenging to write something over 20 pages, and it really forced me to focus and produce something worthwhile.

What led me to become a History major is simple. When I first started at OU I had no idea what I wanted to do and no idea what I wanted to major in. By chance, I enrolled in Dan Clark's intro to American History course, and after a few classes, realized that history was something that greatly interested me. Through classroom discussion I learned that History was not just a Wikipedia page with a scroll down record of dates and facts. Instead I learned that History was exciting, full of nuance and conflict, and dependent on the perspective of the storyteller. So yeah, after that class I was hooked.

**Q: You joined the military after Oakland. When and where did you serve and what were some of your responsibilities? What led you to pursue this?**

I joined the US Army in 2009. I spent six years as an intelligence officer, where I served in a variety of management roles including intelligence operations, training, project management, and logistics. I chose intelligence because I thought that intelligence analysis was a lot like the analysis

that historians do. I chose to be an officer in the Army because I knew it would be scary and challenging. Army officers lead soldiers, and I had never really led anything in my life. I also chose the Army because people told me it was a bad idea. I remember telling an OU classmate that I had joined the Army and he responded with "oh wow, what did you do?" As if I was forced into servitude! (I still laugh about this) In short, I've always loved doing things that people tell me are foolish. People told me that I shouldn't get a history degree because it had limited career opportunities (not true), but I did it anyways. People told me not to join the Army (especially because I had a four year degree) but I did that, and don't regret either one.

**Q: Did any of the skills and knowledge you gained as a History major help you in your military career? How so? What was most valuable?**

Bottomline, researching and writing skills helped me greatly and set me ahead of my peers in both my military career and now in my graduate education. Researching and writing lend themselves well to intelligence work. Historians and intelligence analysts really do just about the same thing, in that they both utilize multiple sources of information to create products. The major difference between these professions is that the sources and end products are different.

Further, the general writing ability has helped me immensely; whether it's an essay, intelligence report, or a simply worded email... when you get out into the workforce, you'll be surprised at how many of your peers have not acquired the ability to write either effectively or concisely.

**Q: You are now enrolled in an MBA program at Michigan State. Tell us about that--what are you studying and learning? Why did you select this program?**

I just finished my first year as a full-time MBA candidate at Michigan

State University. I decided to go back to school because my six years of military service entitled me to the G.I. Bill, which has afforded me to go to school at no cost. (Pretty great, right!) In short, I determined that if I didn't go back to school now, I'd probably never go back. I selected the MSU MBA because it is a top 50 MBA program (and climbing) and because of the working class and familial attitude of the program.

The first year was a whirlwind of general business courses from finance, accounting, economics, to management and business communication. If you plan on a career in the business world, I would recommend a few courses that develop quantitative skills like finance or accounting. Having never taken a college level math class, I found those courses difficult.

**Q: What are your career goals now? Where do you hope to be in 5-10 years and beyond?**

Having lived in ten different places in the past six years, I am glad to be back in Michigan. This summer, after a study abroad program for international business in Munich and Vienna (I'm actually in the air flying to Munich as I write this!), I'll be interning at a leading automotive supply firm doing projects in human resource management. After that, I honestly haven't given it that much thought, other than I'd like to stay in Michigan for the rest of my life and start a family.

**Q: What messages or advice do you have for current History majors? What would you tell them based on your experiences?**

The best advice I can give is to do what you want and never let anyone tell you otherwise. When I look back on the decisions I have made, I remember people telling me not to get a history degree, not to join the Army, not to join the intelligence branch, then not to leave the Army, and then that I did not have the quantitative background to get into a top ranked business school. But in

the end, I did all of these things. And I don't regret even one of them. That would be my other piece of advice: don't ever regret. I've never seen the point in it. Instead of regretting, just do what you want to do. You should be just fine.

### THREE HISTORIANS WIN SUMMER RESEARCH GRANTS

Three faculty historians have each won \$10,000 Summer Research Fellowships for 2016 from the University Research Committee. Derek Hastings, Yan Li, and James Naus all received these awards, announced in December, to aid their work next summer. Derek's proposal is entitled "Nationalism in Modern Europe: Identity and Belonging since the French Revolution." Yan has received funding for her project, "One World, One Language, One Alphabet: Soviet Influence on China's Language Education and Reform, 1949-1958." And James's successful proposal is on "Multiplicity and Transformation: Re-evaluating Crusader Motivations in the Central Middle Ages." All three deserve congratulations for this recognition of their superb work and for the tangible support that these fellowships bring.

These fellowships are by application only, are open to all members of the university faculty, and are intensely competitive since only twenty-five or so grants are awarded each summer.

These latest awards continue the department's very strong record of winning URC summer grants. This is the third year in a row that the History department has had three recipients, giving us a total of nine fellowships over the last three years. This is a great record of achievement and is testimony to the excellent research being carried out by our faculty.

## FACULTY PUBLICATIONS THIS YEAR

History faculty members are all actively engaged in research and scholarship which can take years of labor before seeing the light of publication. As the interviews with current (Derek Hastings) and retired (Mary Karasch) faculty made clear, research and publishing is an ongoing process for historians. This past year has been a very productive one on the publishing front for our faculty members. While other work is forthcoming soon, a number of faculty publications came into print this past year. (Note: this may not be a complete list).

Craig Martin published three pieces: "Lodovico Settala's Aristotelian *Problemata* Commentary and Late-Renaissance Hippocratic Medicine," in *Early Modern Medicine and Natural Philosophy*, eds. Peter Distelzweig, Benjamin Goldberg, and Evan Ragland (Dordrecht: Springer, 2016), 22-43; "Providence and Seventeenth-century Attacks on Averroes," in *Averroes' Natural Philosophy and its Reception in the Latin West*, ed. P. J. J. M. Bakker (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2015), 193-212; and "The Invention of Atmosphere," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part A 52* (2015): 44-54.

Elizabeth Shesko published "'Same as Here, Same as Everywhere': Social Difference among Bolivian Prisoners in Paraguay" in *The Chaco War: Environment, Ethnicity, and Nationalism*, edited by Bridget María Chesterton (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 21-41.

Also of note, Dan Clark received a book contract from the University of Illinois Press for his manuscript, *The Elusive Post-War Boom: Metro-Detroit Autoworkers, 1945-60*. Dan will deliver his revised manuscript to the press by early next year. And

Yan Li has recently received a book contract from Routledge Press to publish her book, *China's Soviet Dream: Propaganda, Culture, and Popular Imagination*. Yan also is set to deliver her revised and completed manuscript to the press by next year.

## HISTORY STUDENTS WIN HONORS, AWARDS, AND RECOGNITION

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It gives us great pleasure to recognize two outstanding History majors as recipients of major scholarships. **Quinn Malecki** has been awarded a Holzbock Humanities scholarship for 2016-17. **Anastacia Maurer** has been named the recipient of the George Matthews department scholarship for next year. **Maurer** also won an internship with the Smithsonian Institute for the summer. She is excited about the work and the opportunity and grateful to undergraduate advisor Craig Martin for recommending that she apply. **Karl Martin Adam**, a triple major (Philosophy, History, and Anthropology) was selected as a recipient of the Meritorious Achievement Award and was recognized at the April commencement ceremony as a featured speaker at the 2 p.m. commencement on April 29. He was also the subject of a nice feature article on the Oakland website. **Sarah Black** won first prize in the Frank Lepkowski Research and Writing Award presented by Kresge Library for her HST 300 paper. She presented a shorter version of her paper at the Phi Alpha Theta regional conference in April and won a "Best Paper" prize for it. **Michael Leskoviansky** has been named the department's Graduate Assistant for 2016-17, replacing the very able Katie Chaka.

## FACULTY UPDATES

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**De Witt Dykes** had a very active year giving lectures and

presentations, attending conferences, and engaging in a variety of activities. He spoke to the Dykes Family History Association in Newport, Tennessee, the Fred Hart Williams Genealogical Society at the Detroit Public Library, and the Plymouth United Church of Christ in Detroit. He introduced a speaker, Tim Wise, at the "Equity and Student Success in the Classroom" Conference sponsored by Oakland University at the Troy Marriott Hotel and, again at the "Diversity and Inclusion" Program at Oakland. He authored biographical articles on "Josephine Baker" and "Bessie Smith," in Lean'tin L. Bracks and Jessie Carney Smith, (eds.), *Black Women of The Harlem Renaissance Era*, (Scarecrow Press, 2015). As a conferee, he attended the Textbook and Academic Authors Conference in Las Vegas last June, the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History in Atlanta last September, and the Historical Society of Michigan's "Local History Conference" in Sterling Heights in March.

As part of Oakland University's African American Celebration Month, De Witt coordinated for the History Department two presentations in February by Diane Nash, a major civil rights activist of the 1960's and Co-Founder of The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, who later worked with Dr. M. L. King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference. He serves as a member of the Advisory Board for the Great Lakes Book Series of Wayne State University Press, and, on campus, is the Coordinator of the Urban Studies Concentration. He also continues to serve as a historical consultant to the Detroit Historical Museum on their projects. He authored text for panels on African Americans in baseball as part of an upcoming exhibit on "Chasing Dreams: Baseball and Becoming American" to be exhibited in 2016, and wrote a book chapter on race relations in Detroit, 1860-1915 for an upcoming book to accompany the planned exhibit on

the 1967 civil disturbance. Finally, he continues research and analysis for a future book on the history of African Americans in the State of Michigan.

**Todd Estes** participated in various conferences during the year that took him to Charlottesville, Virginia, Hermosa Beach, California, and Indianapolis. He completed an article manuscript, "The 18<sup>th</sup> Century Origins of the Modern American Presidential Campaign," which is now under review at a journal, and he wrote a book review essay for *Presidential Studies Quarterly* as well as individual book reviews for *Journal of American History* and the *Journal of Church and State*. Todd also served as the content advisor for a program on "The Bill of Rights" developed by WGBH-TV, the Boston PBS station. Additionally, he was an external referee for a tenure and promotion case at IU-PU Fort Wayne and also refereed an article manuscript for *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*.

**Yan Li** has recently secured a book contract with Routledge for her manuscript titled "China's Soviet Dream: Propaganda, Culture, and Popular Imagination." She has received a URC Fellowship to support the manuscript revision in Summer 2016. She presented a chapter of the manuscript related to the promotion of Soviet literature in communist China at the Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference. For professional service, she served as a discussant for a film screening and a panel during the 2015 Taiwan Week. She also delivered a public lecture on the history of Republican China at Troy Public Library. She has been appointed the accompanying instructor for the 2016 China Study Abroad program, and she is excited to take 7 OU students to study in Beijing and tour other parts of China between May and June.

**Craig Martin** returned from his year at the Folger Shakespeare Library to teach classes on magic

and alchemy, the history of science, and the Italian Renaissance. Several of his writings came out in the past academic year. These articles and book chapters looked at Renaissance medicine, Arabic philosophy in the Renaissance, and the origins of the concept of the atmosphere. He presented at the annual meeting of the History of Science Society in San Francisco and at a small conference at Harvard University on early modern religion and philosophy. He'll be spending the summer in Italy doing research and translating Latin medical texts from the Renaissance.

**Don Matthews'** article on the Kennedy administration, the International Federation of Petroleum Workers, and Iraq, which was published in *Journal of Cold War Studies*, was the subject of a (positive) review by Tareq Ismael for the H-Diplo list serve. Don continues to work on his book project on the US and Iraq in the 1960s, and he is also at work on an article addressing methodological issues in the literature on the origins of the 2003 Iraq War.

**George Milne** delivered a paper entitled "To Box Their Ears : Étienne Périer, the Moors, the Natchez, and Indigenous Sovereignities in Africa and Louisiana," at a conference at the University of Nantes in March.

**James Naus** had a busy and productive year. He put the finishing touches on a book called *Constructing Kingship: The Capetian Monarchs of France and the Early Crusades* that will be released by Manchester University Press in July 2016. He also contributed a chapter to a book on the memory of the crusading movement that will be published in September 2016. Thanks to a URC Research Fellowship, Professor Naus will spend time this summer in various European archives undertaking the early stages of research for his next project, a detailed study of the Norman first crusader, Bohemond of Antioch.

While in Europe, Naus will deliver a lecture in Odense, Denmark. During the summer, Professor Naus will also spend time writing a chapter for inclusion in the *Cambridge History of the Crusades*.

This winter, **Elizabeth Shesko's** chapter on Bolivian prisoners of war was published in an edited volume entitled *The Chaco War: Environment, Ethnicity, and Nationalism*. In October, she presented a chapter from her book manuscript at the annual meeting of the Social Science History Association in Baltimore. Professor Shesko is also presenting a new piece on separatism in Santa Cruz during the Chaco War at the meeting of the Latin American Studies Association in New York City. This academic year, she served as an anonymous peer reviewer for two article manuscripts. She also helped organize the Phi Alpha Theta Regional Conference, which the Oakland chapter hosted in April. Professor Shesko added two new courses (the colonial and modern surveys of Latin America) to her teaching rotation this year. She also designed a new course on Latin American Revolutions that has been added to the catalogue and that she looks forward to teaching in the future.

## LIST OF GRADUATES

**Congratulations to the following history students who earned degrees the past year:**

### History Bachelor of Arts degrees

**Summer 2015:** Emma Helen Barko, Jane L. Dixon, Aaron P. Kapanowski, Andrew Michael Laux, Stephanie L. Montgomery, Carly Jean Puzniak, David G. Reynolds, Edward D. Sitek, Abdullah A. Sobh.

**Fall 2015:** Bruce E. Bakken, Connor Sean Beltramo, Shawn Ryan Delgado, Elisabeth Ann Freeman, Paul Hunt Gardner, Bennett C. Gillam, Neill Jason Harris, Anib A. Issac, Erin Christine Kleist, Diane M. Kurkowski, Reid J. Majewski,

Tracy Margaret McLarty, Ashley Lynn Montgomery, Huma Riaz, Brandon M. Sackett, Michelle Schilling, Sarah Evelyn Schneider, Justin J. Schnurer, Mark Kenneth Strube.

**Winter 2016:** Michael F. Aiello, Robert Glen Belcourt, Roger A. Biernat III, Sarah Kay Black, Kyle Wallace Cooper, Jade M. Cummins, Adam Leo Derington, Nicholas Gianfranco DiPucchio, Ian Robert Grabski, Dan Ramiro Ibanes, Shanna Elizabeth Johnson, Michael John Leskoviansky, Ryan William Parish, Ashley Renee Raymoure, Nigel D. Salaz, Melissa M. Stewart, Joseph Eric Tinnion, Michael D. Walter, Joseph August Whitmer.

**Winter 2016 STEP Majors:** Edwin Joseph Hanson IV, Jessica Kaljaj, Sophia P. Kalliantasis, Jessica Elizabeth Robbins, Meghan M. Starr, Jeremy Michael Tadros.

## FULL-TIME FACULTY 2015-16

**Bekele, Getnet** (PhD Michigan State 2004; assoc. prof.) Africa  
[bekele@oakland.edu](mailto:bekele@oakland.edu)

**Chapman Williams, Sara E.** (PhD, Georgetown 1997; assoc. prof.) Early Modern Europe, France  
[chapman@oakland.edu](mailto:chapman@oakland.edu)

**Clark, Daniel J.** (PhD, Duke 1989; assoc. prof.) US Labor  
[djclark@oakland.edu](mailto:djclark@oakland.edu)

**Dwyer, Erin** (PhD, Harvard University 2012; asst. prof.) 19th-Century U.S., African-American History, Civil War and Reconstruction  
[dwyer@oakland.edu](mailto:dwyer@oakland.edu)

**Dykes, De Witt S.** (MA, Michigan 1961; assoc. prof.) African American, US Urban, Family and Gender  
[dykes@oakland.edu](mailto:dykes@oakland.edu)

**Estes, Todd A.** (PhD, Kentucky 1995; assoc. prof.) Early National US, Revolutionary US, Political Culture

[estes@oakland.edu](mailto:estes@oakland.edu)

**Hastings, Derek K.** (PhD, Chicago 2003; assoc. prof.) Modern Germany

[hastings@oakland.edu](mailto:hastings@oakland.edu)

**Li, Yan** (PhD, Northeastern University, 2012; asst. prof.) Modern China, Sino-Soviet, Relations East Asia

[yanli@oakland.edu](mailto:yanli@oakland.edu)

**Martin, Craig** (PhD, Harvard, 2002; assoc. prof.) Renaissance Europe, History of Science & Technology

[martin@oakland.edu](mailto:martin@oakland.edu)

**Matthews, Weldon C.** (PhD, Chicago 1998; assoc. prof.) Modern Middle East

[matthews@oakland.edu](mailto:matthews@oakland.edu)

**Miller, Karen A. J.** (PhD, Columbia 1992; assoc. prof.) US 1877-present, Diplomatic, Political

[kimiller@oakland.edu](mailto:kimiller@oakland.edu)

**Milne, George E.** (PhD, Oklahoma 2006; assoc. prof.) Early American and Native American History

[milne@oakland.edu](mailto:milne@oakland.edu)

**Moran, Seán Farrell** (PhD, American 1989; assoc. prof.) Modern Britain, Ireland, 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century European Intellectual

[moran@oakland.edu](mailto:moran@oakland.edu)

**Naus, James** (PhD, St. Louis University 2011; asst. prof.) Medieval Europe History

[naus@oakland.edu](mailto:naus@oakland.edu)

**Shesko, Elizabeth** (PhD, Duke University 2012; asst. prof.) Latin American History, Race and Ethnicity

[shesko@oakland.edu](mailto:shesko@oakland.edu)

## PART-TIME FACULTY 2015-16

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**Greenspan, Ian** (PhD, University of California (Berkeley) 2006; lect.) Early Modern and Modern Europe.

[greenspa@oakland.edu](mailto:greenspa@oakland.edu)

**Holland, Robert M.** (MA, Wayne State 1972; lect.) US

[holland@oakland.edu](mailto:holland@oakland.edu)

**Londo, William** (PhD, Michigan 2004; lect.) East Asia, Japan, Religion & Society

[londo@oakland.edu](mailto:londo@oakland.edu)

**Miles, Mary Jo** (MA, Detroit 1991 & Oakland 1992; lect.) US

[miles@oakland.edu](mailto:miles@oakland.edu)

**Powell, Jeffrey** (PhD candidate, Wayne 2006; lect.) US

[powell2@oakland.edu](mailto:powell2@oakland.edu)

**Prentiss, Dale** (PhD Stanford 1990; lect.) US

[prentiss@oakland.edu](mailto:prentiss@oakland.edu)

**Shelly, Cara L.** (MA, Michigan 1990; lect.) US

[shelly@oakland.edu](mailto:shelly@oakland.edu)

**Zellers, Bruce L.** (MA, Clark 1978; lect.) US

[zellers@oakland.edu](mailto:zellers@oakland.edu)

## DEPARTMENT STAFF

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**Chandler, Janet** (Administrative Secretary) [chandler@oakland.edu](mailto:chandler@oakland.edu)

**McReynolds, Johanna** (Secretary) [jkessler@oakland.edu](mailto:jkessler@oakland.edu)

**History department contact information:**

Department Chair: Todd Estes  
Office Address: Department of History  
416 Varner Hall  
Rochester, MI 48309  
Website: [www.oakland.edu/history/](http://www.oakland.edu/history/)  
Department Phone: (248) 370-3510 or (248) 370-3511

If you have information about yourself to contribute to the next newsletter please send it to [estes@oakland.edu](mailto:estes@oakland.edu). We especially love to have the latest news from our alumni.