

# NEWSLETTER



*Battelle-  
Tompkins*

## IN THIS EDITION...

After another busy academic year, we are happy to bring this next addition of the Department of History's newsletter!

This year, we have made it a priority to foster community throughout the Department of History, with both our faculty and students. In this edition, we feature events we've held, spotlight some of our alumni, remember Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon, and feature faculty achievements.

We hope you enjoy reading about what we've been up to this year, and we hope you'll join us in Academic Year 2024-25 for more events.

## AMERICAN UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

**Eric Lohr**, Department Chair

**Gautham Rao**, Director of Graduate Studies

**Dan Kerr**, Director of Public History

**Mary Frances Giandrea and Anton**

**Fedyashin**, Co-Directors of Undergraduate Studies

**Emily Lefeber-Dotzler**, Department Administrator

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 *American University Department of History*

## A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

*Dr. Eric Lohr, Chair of Dept. of History*



The History Department conducted a full self-study this year, with external reviewers. I am pleased to say that it confirmed that the state of our Department is strong. We compared ourselves to aspirational peer institutions and found that our faculty have been more productive in scholarship, impact, and public reach than comparable departments in higher ranked universities. We continue to buck national trends and keep the number of History majors and minors steady over the last couple decades. Innovative teaching and engaged faculty have

drawn and kept students in our major and minor. It has been striking to see our faculty, students, and alumni draw upon their historical knowledge and wisdom to engage in meaningful ways in contemporary debates.

Our public history program continues to thrive, with great students who are getting good jobs. Every year, the group of Public History MA students coming to AU is even more impressive. Dan Kerr's Humanities Truck keeps on trucking, bringing exhibits, oral history, and historical content out into the community. Kathleen Franz is curating and directing important exhibits at the National Museum of American History. The future of the study of the past at AU looks bright.

We love to hear from alumni. Please send us your news and stay in touch!

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**SEND US YOUR NEWS!**

*Email us at [history@american.edu](mailto:history@american.edu)*

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*Prof. Peter  
Kuznick*

*Erin Swartz is a history undergraduate student from Red Hook, NY. She studies Eastern Europe, art and architecture, and the medieval period, along with the Russian language. After graduating from American University, Erin plans to pursue a PhD in history.*

*Watch the recorded lecture, here:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t1DWyYNh9EI&t=8s>*

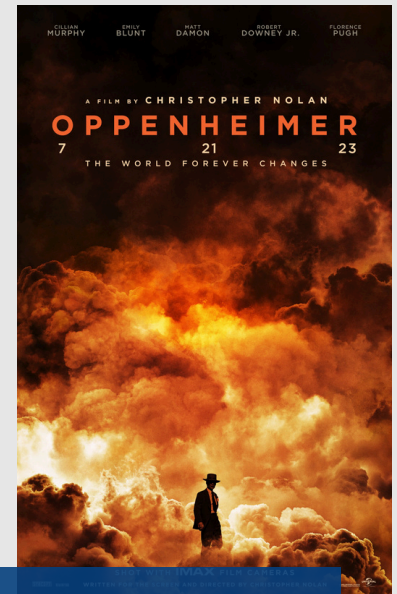
## **HISTORICAL ACCURACY & CHRISTOPHER NOLAN'S OPPENHEIMER**

By Erin Swartz, October 2023

On October 12, 2023 the History Department partnered with the Carmel Institute of Russian Culture and History, the Department of Physics, and the Department of Anthropology to host a talk about the newly released film *Oppenheimer* (Nolan, Universal Pictures, 2023). The speaker was Professor of History Peter Kuznick, professor of history and director of the Nuclear Studies Institute at American University. His scholarship specializes in nuclear history and American culture and includes *Rethinking the Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Japanese and American Perspectives* with Akira Kimura and *Nuclear Power and Hiroshima: The Truth Behind the Peaceful Use of Nuclear Power* with Yuki Tanaka. He is known for his collaborative work with filmmaker Oliver Stone on *The Untold History of the United States*. Kuznick is committed to nuclear disarmament and antiwar advocacy.

In his talk, Kuznick contextualized director Christopher Nolan's biopic in terms of historical accuracy, timeliness, and production. He first commended the biopic in its entirety as it "couldn't be more timely" in an era defined by the overarching threat of nuclear warfare. With the escalating tensions between Taiwan and China as well as the outbreak of war between Ukraine and Russia, Kuznick explained that the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists moved the arms of their "doomsday clock" to 90 seconds to midnight this past January, signifying that we are the closest to nuclear cataclysm that we have ever been since the clock's inception. He also stressed that at this time, *Oppenheimer* is especially "needed" to educate the younger generations about the dire consequences of nuclear conflict.

Kuznick also critiqued the historical accuracy and production of the film by noting that his contemporaries Kai Bird and Martin Sherwin, authors of Oppenheimer's biography *American Prometheus*, which Nolan's movie was based on, were unable to review or contribute to the script for a long time. Additionally, he noted that Nolan watered down some of the characters' personalities and attributes. For example, Jean Tatlock's sexuality overshadowed her "brilliance," and Leslie Groves appeared "warm and fuzzy" on screen when his peers regarded him as unpleasant. Kuznick further elaborated by explaining that Nolan also downplayed Oppenheimer's radicalism and "made him out to be a better person than he was," even after depicting some of his struggles and character flaws. Aside from how Nolan chose to depict these figures, Kuznick also critiqued Nolan's choice to spend little time on the decision to drop the bomb, which deemphasized its significance. The film also paid almost no attention to the Japanese victims of the two atomic bombs. Overall, however, Kuznick noted that the film is a timely meditation on an existential issue for the human race that has re-acquired its relevance.



*Oppenheimer  
Movie Poster*



*Group Photo from Dumbarton  
Oaks Museum Trip*

## **STUDENTS SEE DUMBARTON OAKS MUSEUM'S BYZANTINE TREASURES UP CLOSE**

By Prof. Anton Fedyashin, March 18, 2024

On Saturday, February 3, 2024, The Carmel Institute organized a trip to one of Washington's most unique museums, Dumbarton Oaks. Dr. Fedyashin brought students from American and George Washington universities to explore Dumbarton Oaks' new exhibit called "Rich in Blessings: Women, Wealth, and the Late Antique Household." The group received a 90-minute tour of the exhibit from its creator, Dr. Elizabeth Dospěl Williams. Dr. Williams is Curator of the Byzantine Collection at Dumbarton Oaks. Her teaching, publications, and exhibitions explore dress practice, gender, materiality, and aesthetics in Byzantium and the Islamicate worlds.

Museum visits, concert attendance, and class-trips have been part of the Carmel Institute's programming since its inception. As Professor Fedyashin has always reminded his students, although our knowledge about the past depends mostly on reading, history must also be walked, seen, touched, smelled, and tasted.

After the tour, the students went to lunch at Divan Café, where they sampled Turkish and Mediterranean cuisine. Experiencing the classical and Byzantine through exhibits helped to open young minds to the wonders of history as well as the great legacy of American philanthropy.

For more about the Dumbarton Oaks, please visit <https://www.doaks.org/>

## STUDENTS EXPLORE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS COLLECTIONS

By Gabriella Folsom, February 2024

This fall, students with a passion for history took advantage of American University's location in the nation's capital with a rare, behind-the-scenes tour of the Library of Congress. AU alumna Gabriella Folsom (BA history and political science '20) led the tour,

which was sponsored by the Carmel Institute of Russian Culture and History.

Students registered as researchers and received reader cards, granting them access to the library's extensive collections and making them part of a rich intellectual tradition. They explored the three iconic buildings—Jefferson, Adams, and Madison, which are connected by a web of tunnels, and visited the Office of the Librarian, the Mary Pickford Theater, the Great Hall, and the Gutenberg Bible. They got a rare glimpse into the library's vast collections and learned how they can use the library's invaluable resources in their future research. (...) AU students had the opportunity to explore the legacy of James Hadley Billington, former Librarian of Congress and author of *The Icon and the Axe*, among many other books and articles about Russia.(...)

Read about the many events sponsored by the Carmel Institute this Academic Year, here:

<https://www.american.edu/cas/carmel/news/events.cfm>



# AY 2023-24 HISTORY AWARDS & BRANDENBERG LECTURE

## WHITE POWER: LAW AND SLAVERY IN AMERICAN HISTORY

This year's Brandenburg Lecture featured professor Gautham Rao. Rao spoke on his current research on the American legal system and slavery in American history. Rao is the author of *National Duties: Custom Houses and the Making of the American State* (University of Chicago Press, 2016) and currently serves as the Editor-in-Chief for the *Law and History Review*.



In his lecture, Rao argued that for over two centuries, a legal system revolving around the bodies of enslaved people governed much of the British North American colonies and the United States. From 1619 through the end of the civil war, enslavers built a system of public laws and regulations which aimed to surveil, police, and coerce enslaved people. These systems were upheld by white men, women, and children, who were entrusted to watch over enslaved people's movements in public. Even after emancipation, ex-Confederates tried to resurrect this legal system, first through paramilitary groups such as the Klan, and even through the lynching mob. According to Rao, slavery's law would recede in the early twentieth century, but it would leave a shameful stain on America's legal system that remains visible even today.

## AY 2023-24 UNDERGRADUATE AWARD WINNERS

### Anna Katsen Nelson Awards

Isabella Brooke  
Jordyn Dawley  
Henry Erlinger  
Aaron Gedalia  
Makinsey Hamblin  
Sonia Harnish  
Nathan Harvanko  
Geoffrey Kelly  
Eli Kirith  
Tylette Martinez  
Stephanie Rahtz  
Grace Weinberg

### Phi Alpha Theta Inductees

Elizabeth Elio  
Nathan Harvanko  
Penelope Jennings  
Geoffrey Kelly  
Jackson Nielson  
Benton Resnik  
Riley Ricci  
Aaron Sittig  
Callen Wallace  
Grace Weinberg

### Dorothy Gondos Beers Scholarship

Samantha Barrett  
Callen Wallace



# GRADUATE AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

## **Roger Brown Outstanding Dissertation Award**

*The Roger Brown Dissertation Fund supports doctoral candidates in good standing and awards to students who recently completed their dissertation*

Jonah Estess (PhD, 2024)  
Andrew Sperling (PhD, 2024)

## **Valerie French and Robert Beisner Scholarship**

*Provides history students with support for major seminars, student research-related travel, and support doctoral students in completing their dissertations.*

Nathan Pavalko  
Carmen Bolt

## **Patrick Clendenen Dissertation Fellowship**

*This fund was established by Mary Grayden in memory of Patrick Clendenen.*

Alexandra Zaremba  
Carmen Bolt

## **Janet Oppenheim Endowed Scholarship**

*Supports prizes, scholarships, research funding, and projects.*

Reza Akbari  
Paul Kutner

## **Robert Griffith Public History Travel Award**

*Supports student travel to the National Council on Public History's annual conference. Established in memory of AU Professor Robert Griffith by Barbara Griffith and family.*

Alyssa Manfredi  
Caroline Shanley  
Corinne Davenport  
Emily Messner  
Gabiella Folsom  
Katherine Ryan  
Lillie Ortloff  
Logan Wills Elizondo  
Mattie Branson-Meyer  
Megan Henry  
Shelby Dunn

## **Richard and Carol Breitman Endowed Scholarship**

*This prize was made possible through the generosity of Margaret Anthon.*

Alexandra Zaremba

## **HELP US CONTINUE TO SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS**

*Your support means a great deal to our students. Please consider giving to the Department of History, or to one of our scholarship funds.*

*Donate online at <https://giving.american.edu/> and choose Department of History under "support a fund not listed"*

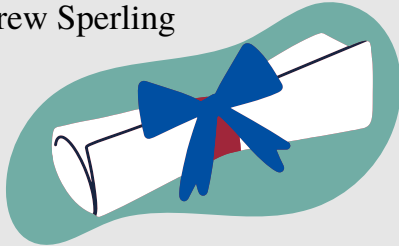
# CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATES!

## MA IN HISTORY

Ava Griswold  
Lauren Huber  
Patrick Sullivan

## PHD IN HISTORY

Dr. Jonah Estess  
Dr. Linda Killian  
Dr. Mark Episkopos  
Dr. Andrew Sperling



## MA IN PUBLIC HISTORY

Mattie Branson-Meyer  
Corinne Davenport  
Shelby Dunn  
Gabriella Folsom  
Megan Henry  
Alyssa Manfredi  
Emily Messner  
Lillie Ortloff  
Katherine Ryan  
Caroline Shanley  
Katherine Smokowicz  
Logan Wills Elizondo



# WELCOME, INCOMING GRADUATE STUDENTS

## HISTORY MA PROGRAM

Alivia Austin  
Mallory Cleere  
KC Flynn  
Zachary Holland  
Oliver Ind (Ollie)  
Irvin Shappell (Irv)

## HISTORY PHD PROGRAM

Amanda Gallagher  
Pavel Krasovitsky  
Derek Shavell

## PUBLIC HISTORY PROGRAM

Katherine Greenstein  
Mauricio Dias Barriga Lange  
Grace Beaulieu  
Autumn Menzock  
Lauren Sphar  
Ethan Norris-Weber  
Grace Corkran  
Bryanna Golmer  
Gabriella Thumm  
Harold Domville  
Madison Weber  
Jeremiah Kresky  
Kevin McGuire

Teresa Ahumada  
Claire Furgusson  
Willard Dodson  
Leo Mullen  
Tyler Robertson  
Jane Whelen  
Sophia Moody  
Nicholas Yu  
Claire Berlin

The word "Welcome" written in a large, white, bubbly font with a blue shadow, set against a light green circular background.





### MATTHEW SKIC

## Rare, Newly Discovered Eyewitness Sketch of Continental Army Sheds New Light on Wartime Life



*This pen-and-ink sketch on laid paper shows soldiers and camp followers of the Continental Army's North Carolina Brigade marching through Philadelphia on August 25, 1777. The sketch is attributed to Pierre Eugène du Simitière. Museum of the American Revolution, Gift of Judith Hernstadt.*

History alum, Matthew Skic, Curator of Exhibitions, made news in March, 2024, when the Museum of the American Revolution acquired a rare eyewitness pen-and-ink sketch depicting Continental Army soldiers and camp followers marching through Philadelphia in 1777. No other similar sketches have ever been documented or published by historians.

The Museum's press release quotes Skic as saying, "this sketch is extremely important to our understanding of the daily operations of the continental army. (...) It helps us visualize the everyday lives of these troops - the joyous, the difficult, and the mundane." After thorough research, handwriting analysis, and comparison to other similar sketches, Skic identified the artist to be Pierre Eugène du Simitière (1737-1784), who settled in Philadelphia in about 1774 and is now known for documenting the rising American Revolution as it happened.

The sketch depicts a lively scene which newspaper accounts place on the morning of August 25, 1777 as the North Carolina Brigade and its commander, Brigadier General Francis Nash, marched to join the rest of General George Washington's army. The inclusion of female camp followers is what makes this sketch particularly unique. These women shared life on the campaign trail with their enlisted husbands and fathers and provided support to the troops by sewing, doing laundry, and selling food.

Read more about this momentous discovery, here: <https://www.amrevmuseum.org/press-releases/rare-newly-discovered-eyewitness-sketch-of-continental-army-sheds-new-light-on-wartime-life>

## AU HISTORY ALUMNI



### SARAH ALDER

#### AU Public History Alumna, Sarah Alder, Publishes Second Book, *Happy Medium*

Since publishing her debut novel, *Mrs. Nash's Ashes*, in 2023, Sarah Alder has become a *USA Today* best selling author of romantic comedies. Her niche focuses on “lovable weirdos finding their happily ever afters.”

Her second novel, *Happy Medium*, was released April 30, 2024 to a flurry of positive reviews and acclaim. *Happy Medium* tells the story of Gretchen Acorn, a fake spirit medium who is hired to investigate unexplained phenomena preventing the sale of a struggling goat farm. Gretchen has one month to convince Charlie, the owner of the farm, of the very real, very chatty ghost. To save the farm, its friendly phantom, and the farmer she’s beginning to love, Gretchen must pull off the greatest con of her life: being fully, genuinely herself.



Visit Sarah Alder’s Website:  
<https://sarahadlerwrites.com/>



### KELLY MARANCHUCK

#### Kelly Maranchuck Awarded \$25,000 Milken Educator Award



Maranchuck receiving award at surprise ceremony

Kelly Maranchuck (BA, 2016) was recognized with the prestigious Milken Educator Award in November 2023. Maranchuck works as a senior curriculum coordinator and instructional coach for grades 5-12 at BASIS Washington, DC. The award is given to 75 educators annually across the United States and comes with a \$25,000 cash prize. The Milken Family Foundation seeks to reward exceptional, engaging, and innovative teachers who are early to mid career.

Read more: <https://www.mff.org/newsroom/press-releases/view/kelly-maranchuck-washington-dc>



### **REBECCA BRENNER GRAHAM** **AU PhD Alum Rebecca Brenner Graham to Publish *Dear Miss Perkins* in January 2025**

Dr. Rebecca Brenner Graham's (Public History MA, 2017, PhD, 2021) first book, *Dear Miss Perkins: A Story of Frances Perkins's Efforts to Aid Refugees from Nazi Germany* will be published with Citadel Press in January 2025. Based on archival research, includes letters housed at the National Archives, Brenner Graham brings to light new information on Perkins's efforts to fight antisemitism and isolationism and her role in saving Jewish refugees during the Nazi regime.

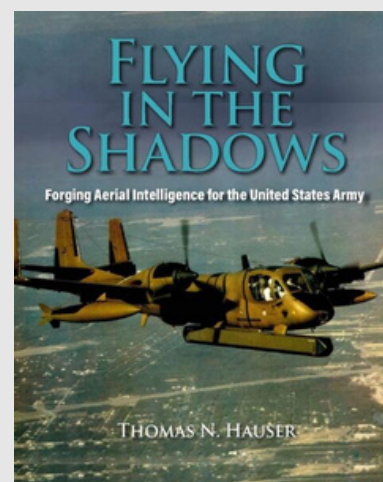
Beginning in Fall 2024, Brenner Graham will join Brown University as a Postdoctoral Research Associate.



### **THOMAS HAUSER**

### **AU PhD Alum, Thomas Hauser, Publishes *Flying in the Shadows***

Dr. Thomas Hauser published *Flying in the Shadows: Forging Aerial Intelligence for the United States Army* (U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2023). In this monograph, Hauser argues that war and conflict opened opportunities to redefine the field of tactical and aerial intelligence and thereby enable the US Army Intelligence and Security Command to avoid a catastrophe in East Asia.



### **ALLISON JOBE** **AU PhD Alum Allison Jobe hired at USC Lancaster and Secures Book Contract**

Dr. Allison Jobe (PhD, 2022) will join USC Lancaster as an assistant professor of history in Fall 2024. In addition, her book project, *James W. Ford: Communist Visionary*, was enthusiastically approved for an advance contract by UNC Press.

# PUBLIC HISTORY PROGRAM PARTNERS WITH HEURICH HOUSE MUSEUM

## NEW COURSE OFFERED IN SPRING 2024: *Reinterpreting Historic House Museums with Dr. Jenna Febrizio, Curator and Director of Education*

The Public History Program continues to create partnerships with historic sites and public history institutions around Washington, D.C. As part of a new partnership with Heurich House Museum, the program offered “Reinterpreting Historic House Museums” in Spring 2024, taught by Heurich House’s Curator and Director of Education, Dr. Jenna Febrizio.



*Heurich House Museum*

This brand-new course focused on the unique space that Historic houses occupy in the museum world and public history field. Throughout the course, students gained hands-on experience with scholarly research, creating interpretive content, and public programming.

The Heurich House Museum explores the American experience through the legacy of German immigrant Christian Heurich and his Washington, D.C. brewery. In recent years, they have expanded their interpretation to include more voices, including those who had been silenced by previous interpretations. Learn more about Heurich House Museum on their website:

<https://heurichhouse.org/>

With the success of this first course, we are looking forward to a continued and fruitful partnership with Heurich House Museum.



## IN MEMORIAM



*Photograph by Dan A. Penland, 1981, Smithsonian Libraries*

### **DR. BERNICE JOHNSON REAGON** *1942 - 2024*

*Excerpt from announcement by Toshi Reagon. [Click here to read the full announcement.](#)*

Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon, a multi-award-winning force and cultural voice for freedom, transitioned on July 16, 2024. As a scholar, singer, composer, organizer and activist, Dr. Reagon spent over half a century speaking out against racism and systemic inequities in the U.S. and globally. Born in Dougherty County outside of Albany, Georgia on the 4th of October 1942, she was field secretary of SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) and a founding member of the original SNCC Freedom Singers, formed in 1962. In 1966, she was a founding member of the Atlanta-based Harambee Singers. In 1973, while a graduate student of history at Howard University and vocal director of the D.C. Black Repertory Company, Dr. Reagon founded the internationally renowned African

American women's a cappella ensemble, Sweet Honey In The Rock, leading the group until her retirement in 2003. In 1974, Dr. Reagon began her leadership role at the Smithsonian Institution, which included curating the African Diaspora Program, creating the Program in Black American Culture, and producing and performing on numerous Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. For a decade, beginning in 1993, she served as Distinguished Professor in History at American University in Washington D.C. Dr. Reagon was named Professor Emerita of History at AU and Curator Emeritus at the Smithsonian. She is the author of numerous publications, compositions and recordings.

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*“If you live your life in such a way that your actions transform the space you operate in, that’s a way of asking to be remembered”*

Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon, Commencement Address for Barnard College, 2001

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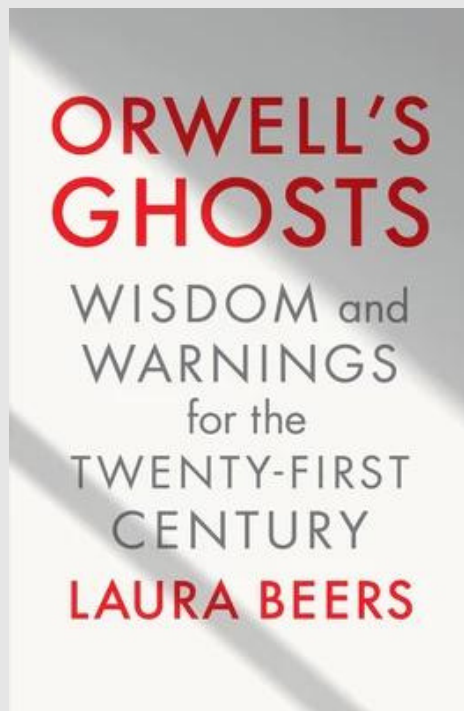
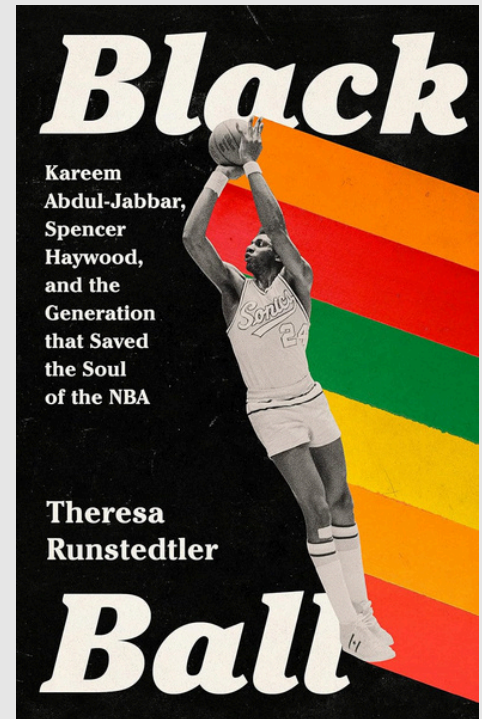
## NEW FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

### **BLACK BALL: KAREEM ABDUL-JABBAR, SPENCER HAYWOOD, AND THE GENERATION THAT SAVED THE SOUL OF THE NBA**

**Theresa Runstedler**

Bold Type Books, 2023

In *Black Ball*, Theresa Runstedtler rewrites basketball's "Dark Ages." Weaving together a deep knowledge of the game with incisive social analysis, Dr. Runstedtler argues that this much-maligned period was pivotal to the rise of the modern-day NBA. Black players introduced an improvisational style derived from the playground courts of their neighborhoods. They also challenged the team owners' autocratic power, garnering higher salaries and increased agency. Their skills, style, and savvy laid the foundation for the global popularity and profitability of the league we know today.



### **ORWELL'S GHOSTS: WISDOM AND WARNINGS FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

**Laura Beers**

W. W. Norton & Company, 2024

In *Orwell's Ghosts*, historian Laura Beers considers Orwell's full body of work—his six novels, three nonfiction works, and brilliant essays on politics, language, and the class system—to examine what "Orwellian" truly means and reveal the misconstrued thinker in all his complexity. She explores how Orwell's writing on free speech addresses the proliferation of "fake news" and the emergence of cancel culture, highlights his vivid critiques of capitalism and the oppressive nature of the British Empire, and, in contrast, analyzes his failure to understand feminism.

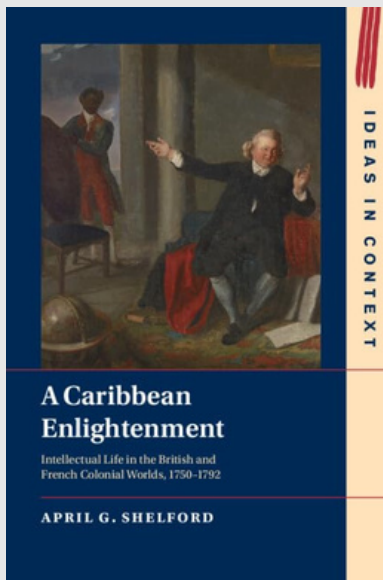
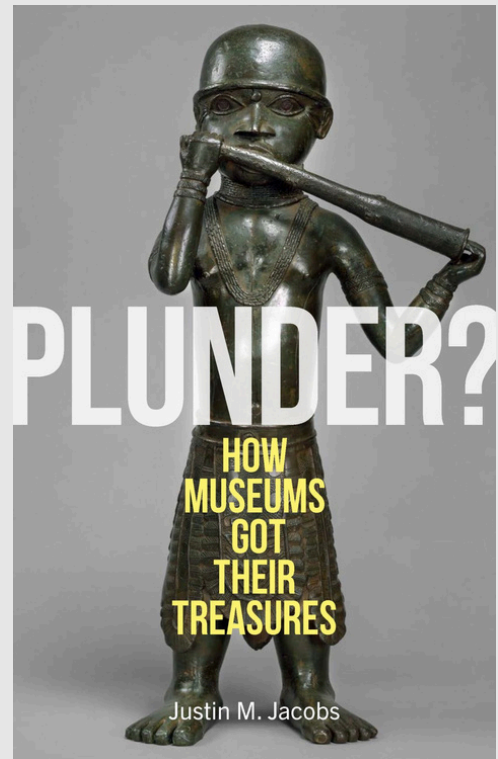
## NEW FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

### PLUNDER? HOW MUSEUMS GOT THEIR TREASURES

Justin Jacobs

Reaktion Books, Coming October 2024

In this thought-provoking new work, historian Justin M. Jacobs challenges the widely accepted belief that much of Western museums' treasures were acquired by imperialist plunder and theft. The account reexamines the allegedly immoral provenance of Western collections, advocating for a nuanced understanding of how artifacts reached Western shores. Jacobs examines the perspectives of Chinese, Egyptian, and other participants in the global antiquities trade over the past two and a half centuries, revealing that Western collectors were often willingly embraced by locals. This collaborative dynamic, largely ignored by contemporary museum critics, unfolds a narrative of hope and promise for a brighter, more equitable future—a compelling reassessment of one of the institutional pillars of the Enlightenment.



### A CARIBBEAN ENLIGHTENMENT: INTELLECTUAL LIFE IN THE BRITISH AND FRENCH COLONIAL WORLDS, 1750 - 1792

Prof. Emerita April Shelford

Cambridge University Press, 2023

Exploring the intersection of Enlightenment ideas and colonial realities amongst White, male colonists in the eighteenth-century French and British Caribbean, *A Caribbean Enlightenment* recovers a neglected aspect of the region's history. Physicians to planters, merchants to publishing entrepreneurs were as inspired by ideologies of utility and improvement as their metropolitan counterparts, and they adapted 'enlightened' ideas and social practices to understand their place in the Atlantic World. (...) Ultimately, becoming 'enlightened' was a colonial identity that rejected metropolitan stereotypes of Caribbean degeneracy while validating the power to enslave on a cultural basis.

# FACULTY UPDATES

## Laura Beers

Laura Beers published *Orwell's Ghosts: Wisdom and Warnings for the Twenty-First Century* with W.W. Norton in June, 2024. The book, which the *New Yorker* called "lucid and engaging," considers the ongoing relevance of Orwell's writing on truth, liberty, totalitarianism, and social inequality for our contemporary political moment. She argues that Orwell's work offers a valuable blueprint for modern progressive politics, even as the author fails to consider the importance of feminism for social change. This book grew out of Prof. Beers' experience teaching the AU Core course, HIST 235: The West in Crisis: George Orwell and the Making of the Modern World.

## Michael Brenner

In June 2024, Michael Brenner was awarded the Cultural Prize of Honor of the City of Munich -- a prize awarded in previous years to violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter, film director Werner Herzog, and philosopher Jürgen Habermas. He published "The Wall and the Mountain: Two Symbols of Israel," in a volume of *New Perspectives on European Jewish History*, as well as numerous articles in English and German media.

## Andrew Demshuk

Andrew Demshuk received a 1-month grant from the Leibniz Association for July 2024 to conduct research in Germany for his next book project, *Cold War*

*Coal Pits: The Politics of Devastation in East and West Germany*. He has applied for several other grants to support further research. Demshuk's new monograph, *The Filthiest Village in Europe: Grassroots Ecology and the Collapse of East Germany*, will soon be under contract with Cornell University Press for publication in 2025 or 2026. He was featured in a new documentary on the political and cultural effects of the bombardment of European cities during World War II. Finally, he published articles in *Journal of Contemporary History*, *Urban History*, and *German Studies Review*.

## Anton Fedyashin

Anton Fedyashin is currently writing his next book, *Superpower Subconscious: The Cold War and the Spy Novel*. Over the past year, he has published multiple book reviews, opinion pieces on current affairs, and given dozens of media interviews. He has also taken students and fellow academics on multiple Russian- and Soviet-themed museum trips to the National Gallery of Art, the National Air & Space Museum, Hillwood Estate, the Woodrow Wilson House, Dumbarton House Museum, and more. In December and June, he facilitated a course trip to Istanbul, Turkey entitled "The Culture of Eastern Orthodoxy: From Constantinople to Eurasia." He looks forward to continuing his service as the co-director of undergraduate studies for the department.

## Eileen Findlay

Eileen Findlay continued to serve as the chair of the Department of Critical Race, Gender, and Culture.

## Kathleen Franz

Kathy Franz continues to teach at American University in addition to working as a Supervisory Museum Curator at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. She will serve as the Public History Program Director for the coming academic year, 2024-25.

## Max Paul Friedman

Max Paul Friedman published "A Latin American Third Way? Juan José Arévalo's Spiritual Socialism, 1916-1963" in *The Americas: A Quarterly Review of Latin American History* and "La doctrine Monroe. Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose" in *Idées d'Amérique*. He and Prof. Núria Vilanova received a book contract for their edited collection, *Transnational Humans and Transnationalism in the Humanities: Crossing Boundaries in the Americas* with University of New Mexico Press. Friedman gave a paper, "Promises and Limits of the Good Neighbor Policy," to the conference *Washington et l'Amérique Latine entre hégémonie et partenariat*, Aix-en-Provence, France, 2024 (via Zoom). He received an American Philosophical Society Franklin Research Grant and did six commentaries on Germany's national public radio network on



# FACULTY UPDATES

the Israel-Gaza conflict, U.S. foreign policy, and U.S. political culture. *Making Peaceful Revolution Impossible: Kennedy, Arévalo, the 1963 Coup in Guatemala, and the Alliance against Progress in Latin America's Cold War,* co-authored with Roberto García Ferreira and published in the *Journal of Cold War Studies*, won the annual William M. LeoGrande Award for the best book or article in Latin American or Latino Studies published by a member of the American University community.

## Mary Frances Giandrea

Mary Frances Giandrea continued her service as Co-Director of Undergraduate Studies, as well as acting as the faculty advisor for the student organization, Phi Alpha Theta National History Honor Society. During academic year 2023-24, Giandrea taught core undergraduate courses, including Research Seminar and Conversations in History. She also taught her popular courses on medieval and Viking history.

## Kate Haulman

Kate Haulman completed *The Mother of Washington in Nineteenth-Century America*, to be published by Oxford University Press, and chaired the session 'Southern Borderlands in the Revolutionary Era' at the 2024 meeting of the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic.

## Justin Jacobs

Justin Jacobs will publish his fourth book, *Plunder? How Museums Got Their Treasures* (Reaktion Books) in October 2024. He also released his second Great Courses series, "World Heritage Sites II: 12 More of the World's Greatest Places." He is also overseeing a Chinese translation for Peking University Press of his last research monograph, *The Compensations of Plunder: How China Lost Its Treasures* (University of Chicago Press, 2020).

## Anna Kaplan

Anna Kaplan's article "A Black Women's Practice: Oral History from Fisk University's Ex-slave Narratives and the Black Women Oral History Project" (funded by an Oral History Association/National Endowment for the Humanities mini-grant) will be published in the Fall 2024 issue of *The Oral History Review*. Anna is also working on an oral history project with the Montgomery County Parks Commission to document and update interpretation of African American history at two of its sites.

## Julie Keresztes

Julie Keresztes's first book, *Photography and the Making of the Nazi Racial Community*, will be published by Cornell University Press in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

## Dan Kerr

Dan Kerr continued his service as Public History Program Director

for academic year 2023-24, in addition to directing the Humanities Truck. The Humanities Truck is funded through generous grants from the Mellon Foundation and the Henry Luce Foundation.

## Alan Kraut

Alan Kraut celebrated 50 years of service at American University this academic year. Kraut chairs the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island History Advisory Committee of the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation. He is also a consultant for the American Civil Liberties Union on the on-going immigration crisis at the southern border. He published "The Immigrant Superpower: How Brains, Brawn, and Bravery Make America Stronger" in *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*.

## Peter Kuznick

Peter Kuznick continued his global efforts as a public intellectual and antiwar activist. Since the start of the last academic year, he has done more than 350 interviews (mostly TV) around the world on topics ranging from Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its disastrous aftermath and the U.S.'s new two-front Cold War with Russia and China; Taiwan, the South and East China Seas, and the growing militarization of the Pacific; Hamas's heinous attack on October 7 and the brutal Israeli invasion of Gaza; U.S. politics and the assault on American democracy; the heightened threat of nuclear war in general and the lessons of the *Oppenheimer* movie in particular;

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the growing independence and assertiveness of the Global South; the resurgence of campus protests across America; the implications of NATO's resurgence; the Trump assassination attempt; and, most recently, Kamala Harris's replacement of Joe Biden atop the Democratic Party ticket. He was most in demand in the U.S., China, India, Russia, Germany, Canada, Japan, Qatar, Spain, England, Pakistan, Vietnam, Ukraine, and Iran. He also gave a couple dozen talks, keynote addresses, and lectures in the U.S., Vietnam, and Italy, and remotely in India, the Vatican, Russia, Canada, Japan, South Korea, and Alaska. He's been busy writing articles and book chapters and is looking forward to the long-delayed publication of the graphic novel version of *The Untold History of the United States*.

## **Lisa Leff**

Lisa Leff is still serving as the Director of the Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, alongside her work with students and colleagues in the AU Department of History.

## **Allan J. Lichtman**

Allan J. Lichtman has provided more than fifty interviews worldwide on the political situation in the United States. He has published two guest editorials for Politico and two for the New York Daily News. His interviews on YouTube have garnered some ten million views. His next book, *The*

*Truth About Conservatism: It's Not What You Think*, has passed peer review for Notre Dame University Press and is under final review by the Board. It should be published in 2025. In July, Rowman & Littlefield published the 8th Edition of Lichtman's Keys book series: *Predicting the Next President: The Keys to the White House 2024*. He and his son, Sam, have started a live show on politics and history on YouTube every Thursday at 9 pm eastern, [@AllanLichtmanYouTube](#). Their show now has over 54,000 subscribers.

## **Eric Lohr**

Eric Lohr has continued his service as chair of the Department of History in addition to co-chairing the Washington Russian History Workshop. In academic year 2023-24, he oversaw a comprehensive programmatic review of the Department of History's undergraduate and graduate programs.

## **Pamela Nadell**

Pamela Nadell spent her sabbatical year writing her upcoming book, *Antisemitism: An American Tradition* and actively engaging with the public and media on the rising antisemitism crisis in the United States. In November, 2023, she testified in the widely publicized [congressional hearing with the presidents of Harvard, University of Pennsylvania, and MIT](#). Other speaking engagements included [speaking before the House Judiciary Committee](#), meetings

with MIT students, faculty, and presidents cabinet, and participating in a panel discussion with Ted Mitchell, president of the American Council of Education, for the NYU Board of Trustees.

## **Pedram Partovi**

Pedram Partovi published a chapter in *The Routledge Companion to Global Film Music in the Early Sound Era* in January 2024. He contributed [two articles](#) to the *Cinema Iranica Digital Compendium*, generously supported by the Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute. He has also been named to the [Cinema Iranica](#) editorial board. He has continued his work on a book manuscript about youth mobilization in Modern Iran, which he hopes to complete in the coming academic year.

## **Gautham Rao**

Gautham Rao was appointed Editor-In-Chief for the *Oxford Bibliography of Legal History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024-). He has also been appointed to a program committee, "100 Years Later: J. Franklin Jameson and Revolutions on the Eve of the 250th" with the John W. Kludge Center, the Library of Congress, and McNeil Center for Early American Studies. Rao participated to the [Littleton-Griswold Book Prize Committee](#) with the American Historical Association. He co-authored a historian's amicus brief in [Donald J. Trump v. United States no. 23-939](#), and served as a plenary speaker at the

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American Political History Conference at Vanderbilt University, June 6, 2024. Finally, Rao secured a book contract with Hodding Carter Books for *White Power: Policing American Slavery*.

## **Theresa Runstedtler**

Theresa Runstedtler published *Black Ball: Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Spencer Haywood, and the Generation that Saved the Soul of the NBA*; *Black Ball* made the shortlist for Museum of African American History's 2023 Stone Book Award. She gave book talks at a variety of venues, including the University of Iowa, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Shippensburg University, the Schomburg Center, Humanities North Dakota, the Enoch Pratt Library, the Gilder Lehrman Center, and the Gaithersburg Book Festival. She has two forthcoming articles: "Unnecessary Roughness: The NFL's War on Drugs in the 1970s" in *Modern American History* and "Self-Care is an Act of Athletic Activism" in *Get in the Game: Sports and Contemporary Culture*.

## **MJ Rymsza-Pawlowska**

MJ Rymsza-Pawlowska completed a scholar residency at [Heurich House Museum](#). Over the summer, she has been working with the Humanities Truck on a project entitled *Visitor: Information?* with help from Public History MA students Marie, Bennett, and Emma, and Humanities Truck Fellows Daiki and Inaya. She has also finished two chapters of her

book entitled *Our Nation's Capital: How Visitors, Newcomers, and Outsiders Came to Dominate Washington, D.C.* For AY 2024-25, Rymsza-Pawlowska has been selected for a [Us@250 fellowship](#) with New America to support her research, as well as a longform article on local and federal efforts for Bicentennial planning in D.C.

## **Elke Stockreiter**

Elke Stockreiter has been actively involved with the University, including serving on the Undergraduate Committee with History and presenting as a panelist for the AU Core event, "We're Awesome! A Conversation on How We Should Define Teaching Excellence in the Core" in November 2023. She is also active on committees in the Department of Critical Race, Gender, and Culture, where she is jointly appointed. In Summer 2023, she spent time in Dakar, West Africa to conduct research at the Senegalese National Archives for her next book project. In August 2023, she presented "Codification on the Swahili Coast" at a workshop at University of Bergen Norway, in which she reflected on the history of the codification of Islamic Law on the East African Coast.

## **Lauren Strauss**

Lauren Strauss was featured in the feature-length documentary "[The Catskills](#)" and was interviewed for an upcoming TV series on the US-Israel relationship for Israel's History Channel. Strauss continued her service on the boards of the

Association for Jewish Studies and Heart of a Nation, an organization focused on Israel-Palestine dialogue, and co-chaired the Greater DC Forum on Israeli-Arabs. She served on American University's Committee on Freedom of Expression and Expressive Conduct. Strauss spoke on various panels on topics including Jewish Women Lawyers in Nazi Germany (sponsored by the American Bar Association), antisemitism and racism in the 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, VA, the legacy of Jews on the Lower East Side in NYC, Black-Jewish relations in America, European antisemitism at the Romanian Ambassador's residence, and more.

## **Katharina Vester**

Katharina Vester published "How Dare You Hoard Fat When Our National Needs It?-- Weight Loss Advice and Female Citizenship During World War I and the 1920s" in September 2023 in *Subjectivity*. For Fall 2023, she received a 4-month extension for her Humbolt Fellowship, for which he is doing research for her second book project. She is an editor of the *Routledge History of the American Dream*, along with Michaela Hampf, which will be released in 2025.