History WORKS

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Welcome to the latest edition of History Works, the newsletter of the Clements Department of History, edited by our colleague Professor Erin Hochman. We hope that you find these pages enjoyable and enlightening as they illustrate the wide-ranging ways that history works through the endeavors of our undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty.

SMU is home to renowned historians who are recognized internationally as leaders in their fields of expertise. Collectively, the department’s twenty tenure-line faculty have published forty-four single-authored volumes (winner of 25 book prizes in all), some sixty co-authored or edited volumes, and hundreds of journal articles and book chapters. The department’s faculty are winners of the university’s most prestigious awards for scholarly research and writing and for distinguished teaching as well as scores of prestigious research fellowships from outside of SMU. Putting these varied strengths to work in the classroom, we offer every semester an array of courses that span the globe, from the dawn of recorded history to the twenty-first century. Students can gain perspectives on every major troubled times in courses on the Civil War and Reconstruction, the two World Wars and the Holocaust, the creation and collapse of the Soviet Union, the Civil Rights Movement, conflict and coexistence in the Middle East, revolutions in China, and South Africa during apartheid. We even offer a class on medieval life that some students have labeled as “Quaesum and Mistrexus in Early Modern France,” while yet another offers “The Triumph of Cleopatra.” The list also includes the history of capitalism, of sports, and of time itself!

But, along with useful knowledge about the world of both the distant and more recent past, our courses afford the most important advantages a university education can provide. As our majors know, the study of history is empowering. It imparts improved skills in reading and writing; it helps students learn how to think analytically and critically and why it is important to ask questions about everything; it teaches them how to find things out through research; and it helps them to develop persuasive arguments. These are indispensable skills in today’s job market and requirements for graduate and professional schools.

I’m sure I speak for my colleagues when I say we hope that everyone reads a little history occasionally—for enjoyment, for its mysteries, its ironies, its occasional serendipity, and for the upholding of tradition and the pursuit of change, but also because it helps us all to grow as individuals and as a society. To some extent, we are all responsible for what goes on in the world, and so we all need to keep our perspective for historical self-criticism in good repair—because that is the source of change. And change must come first from within each of us as individuals before it can happen in greater spheres. In a democracy, there is not a single individual whose opinion is not of some consequence in making up the grand total, and to engage oneself in such a cooperative enterprise—be it in the world of politics or business, or in the classroom, or at home in one’s study—is a very significant thing.

Thomas J. Knock
Professor of History and Department Chair
Distinguished Fellow, Center for Presidential History

Mastering the Past: Student Accomplishments

Bradley Kucera, a history major, has been awarded First Prize in the 2021 Maguire Ethics Essay Prize (undergraduate division) for “The Ethic Considerations of SpermBank.”


Majors Ruth Demissie and Nora Jandres were selected to be McNair Scholars to research Ethiopian public health and international human rights, respectively.

In 2021, history majors Clare Ennis, Maria Katsoulos, and Natalie Miller were inducted into the Hsyi Society, SMU’s organization for high academic achievement.

Taylor Enslin and Derek Youngker, history students, were elected to Phi Beta Kappa.


In 2020, Roberto-Joseph Frano Andrade defended his dissertation, “Fighting to Define Le Mexican: Boxing in Working-Class Culture and Mexican American Culture.” He was also a finalist for the 2020 Jenkins Medal for Best Sportswriting, anthologized in The Best American Sports Writing in 2020, and received Honorable Mention in the Texas Observer short story contest in 2020. ESPN recently hired him as a full-time sports writer.


Doctoral Candidate Skye Crammey’s podcast about the Old Idaho State Penitentiary, Behind Gray Walls, won an Award of Excellence from the American Association of State and Local History in 2021.

Camille Davis, a Ph.D. Candidate, won a research fellowship in 2020-2021 and a material culture and critical race fellowship in 2021-2022 from the Winterthur Museum, Garden, and Library to work on her dissertation, “Visual Prestige: The Role of Portraiture in Constructing the Nascent Identity of American Leaders.” She also received an SMU Moody Dissertation Fellowship for 2021-2022.

Doctoral Candidate Austin Miller was selected as a 2021-22 Graduate Student in Residence at SMU’s Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute. He received a 2021-22 Clements Center Research Grant to work on his dissertation about energy and the environment in the Pecos Valley. Additionally, he was the recipient of the Lansing B. Bloom Award from the New Mexico Historical Review for Best Master’s Thesis on New Mexico and the Southwest in 2020.


Carlos Nava earned his M.A. in 2020.

Christopher Walton was awarded the 2022 Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati Fellowship by the American Revolution Institute to conduct research for his dissertation on religion during the American Revolution. He published an article, “Religion and Collective Identity in Massachusetts, 1760-1775,” in the Journal of the American Revolution (online) in 2021.

Doctoral Students Ashton Reynolds (2020), Jonathan Angulo (2020), Brianna Hogg (2020), and Madeline Dixon (2020) were selected as Maguire Ethics Fellows.

Gray Walls, an award-winning film, was produced by the American Association of State and Local History in 2021.

COVER PHOTO: SMU students tour the USS Daniel Inouye while visiting Hawaii for the 80th anniversary of Pearl Harbor. See page 9.
Class of COVID Oral History Project

By Clare Ennis, Class of 2022

As the COVID-19 pandemic swept the nation and globe, SMU and thousands of other universities sent their students home, in response to this monumental and catastrophic event. Dr. Jill Kelly, a professor in history, and Joan Gosnell of the SMU Archives created the Class of COVID Oral History Project to document the experiences of the SMU community. Through interviews with students, faculty, staff, and administration, the project team has been able to gain important insights into how the pandemic affected everyday life during this time for those at SMU and the larger DFW area.

Collaborating with four undergraduate and graduate students, I served as a student research assistant on the project beginning in the summer of 2020. I continued in that role alongside history graduate students Jonathan Angulo and Ashton Reynolds until the conclusion of the project in the fall of 2021. By serving on the project for its entirety, I was able both to gain new skills relevant to my history major and to witness history unfold in real time via the changes in interviewees’ continued testimonies.

Senior Jack Lucas, an undergraduate history major; who along with Cola Fontenot and me, has been involved in the project since its inception, concurred in the inherent humanity found within the interviews, stating, “I learned that even though everyone was living in isolation, we were going through such a shared experience. We shared uncertainty, fear, and loneliness, but we also shared moments of joy, bits of good news, and pieces of hope.”

None of us would have succeeded in our endeavor without the aid and leadership of so many. In addition to the amazing support of the History Department itself, we received in kind support from the SMU Libraries. The Office of Engaged Learning and the Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility funded our student researchers. Furthermore, alum India Simmons contributed to the project as a graduate assistant, performing much of the integral behind-the-scenes work of sourcing interviewees, organizing and scheduling interviews, and record-keeping. The project also adopted many of its foundational components and practices from the ongoing Voices of SMU Oral History Project, which records the experiences of SMU alumni of color.

However, while Class of COVID gleaned much from Voices, its unique position in addressing an ongoing and ever-changing pandemic required creative methods and empathetic attention to the conditions of a global health crisis. Adapting to social distancing requirements, we conducted over 100 interviews with staff, faculty, administration, and students via Zoom from our homes. Some participants were interviewed multiple times to track changes in their views and experiences over the course of the pandemic. Regarding the sensitive nature of the topic being discussed, interviews have been embargoed in the archives for a period of sixteen years, adopting many of its foundational components and practices from the ongoing Voices of SMU Oral History Project, which records the experiences of SMU alumni of color.

With support from the Maguire Center for Ethics, we were particularly interested in how our community members navigated questions of ethics in the pandemic, particularly those related to the responsibilities we have to our community members. We asked questions on a wide array of topics, ranging from how individuals made decisions about mask-wearing and gathering with family. We took a "life history" approach, asking participants about their background to contextualize their responses to the pandemic. Beginning with questions regarding childhood, we were able to build a fuller picture of those being interviewed and their personal experiences during this tumultuous period. These individual interviews also facilitated our ability to form broader insights.

Graduate assistant Jonathan Angulo encapsulates some of these observations perfectly, saying, “COVID impacted the SMU community in several ways that made people create their own bubbles. Students, faculty, and staff thought about who they could let into their social circles, especially those who lived with people with pre-existing conditions.”

In addition to its importance as a historical record for future researchers, the project also allowed me and my fellow student researchers to hone pre-existing skills and develop new ones regarding archival research, oral history interviewing, digital archive processing, and participant confidentiality. Angulo said that he learned "to actively listen… I often caught myself because I wanted to engage in conversations with interviewees. However, in oral history interviews, the interviewee actively listens to let the participants express themselves. Narrators (interviewees) taught me how to listen to people instead of automatically thinking about my reply.”

Beyond the interviewing and archiving experience itself, the project allowed research assistants to hone their oral communication and writing skills via presentations about their findings and submissions of articles for publication. Several students, including myself, have submitted work to be published, an illuminating and valuable experience that will benefit our later educational and professional endeavors. Jack Lucas described his research, saying, “I focused on overreactions and underscinations in predicting a post-pandemic future, meaning that I was able to see how people applied the (then) current state of emergency to years and decades down the road.” Based on this research, he wrote an article, entitled “The New Normal: The Historical Validity of Common Predictions for a Post-Covid Future.” Published by the journal Sound Historian, his article won a prize from the Texas Oral History Association. My own paper, which has been accepted for publication in The Historian, explores the varying experiences of interviewees throughout the pandemic based on differing socioeconomic and racial factors within our own community and its parallels to nationwide trends.

The Class of COVID Oral History Project, while concluded, has provided a valuable and unique record of this period for future researchers to reference. It has importantly highlighted the humanity behind the statistics and case counts that predominate in discussions regarding the impact of this pandemic. Furthermore, it has afforded its student research assistants an amazing opportunity to develop important skills in research, communication, and project management that will be applicable to myriad career paths.”

Above: History Major Clare Ennis presents on her findings.

Above: Jack Lucas with his award-winning article. Right: Professor Jill Kelly’s Modern Africa class during the pandemic.
History Majors Earn Distinction

By Professor Melissa Barden Dowling

Every year several of our majors take on the substantial task of transforming a seminar paper into an original scholarly thesis, writing a 50+ page paper, and then discussing this work before a panel of three faculty. The challenge is formidable, but the deep pleasure of developing one’s own ideas, of digging deeply into a topic, and having the luxury of months to read and think makes the long hours well worth the time. The distinction paper is also an excellent way for students to hone their research, critical thinking, writing, and oral communication skills, especially in preparation for graduate school or law school. For all, the distinction project is one of the great capstones of an undergraduate career, when students not only study history in-depth but also contribute to new knowledge about the past.

In the fall of 2021, I was delighted to serve on the committees that awarded departmental distinction to two highly accomplished history majors: Maria Katolou and Nathan Greenhaw. Both are graduating with many EMU awards and national honors, and both are heading to Ph.D. programs in history. We are enormously proud of their work and enjoyed contributing to their development as scholars.

Maria’s distinction paper, “At Once Surface and Symbol: The Portraiture of the Favorites of Henri III of France and James VI & I of England,” examined the ways that artists depicted the male lovers of two powerful kings in order to strengthen or to undermine the regimes. Propaganda takes many forms, of course, and Maria analyzed original texts, paintings, and mass-produced prints to understand the nuanced language of propaganda in the royal courts. Professor Kathleen Wellman supervised Maria’s work, helping her polish and develop her ideas.

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“Nathan, also working with Professor Wellman, wrote an 80+ page distinction paper, “God’s Kings Established and Rusted: The Divine Right of James I and Charles II and the English Revolutions,” an exploration of the arguments for the divine right of kings in the English and French courts and laws.

Nathan observed, “Writing my distinction thesis was the most rewarding and intellectually fulfilling experience I have had during my undergraduate studies. Not only was it crucial towards the development of my future professional career as a historian, but it also enabled me to explore a plethora of ideas on the true nature of humanity and government, concepts which have provoked political theorists, theologians, and historians since the beginning of history itself. Do we believe that individuals are self-serving and cynical, and thus should adhere to Hobbes’s social contract or James’s divine monarchy? Or are they fair-minded and rational, capable of governing through democracy or republicanism? These are just some of the concepts I grappled with while developing my thesis. A consensus will probably never be reached on most of them. Nevertheless, it was the process itself that made me realize how certain ideas can incite historical developments. This phenomenon is why I want to explore political history in my graduate studies, and I hope future undergraduate history majors will take the opportunity to develop their own distinct theses in the future.”

Nathan comments, “Writing my distinction thesis was also a labor of love—even though there were many long nights and many rewrites, it always felt like a worthwhile pursuit and the perfect end to my history major. I am so passionate about bringing new light to the subject of royal portraiture through lenses of LGBT+ studies, and this project really allowed me to challenge myself and grow as a scholar and a person.”

For all, the distinction project is one of the great capstones of an undergraduate career, when students not only study history in-depth but also contribute to new knowledge about the past.

Credit Where Credit is Due: Graduate Seminars in History

By Professor Crista DeLuzio

Students pursuing graduate degrees in history take a variety of courses that lay the foundation for their future work in academia and other related careers. All students begin their graduate studies with a seminar in historiography, in which they explore how the study of history has developed over time. Additionally, doctoral students also take a professionalism seminar, in which they learn about writing grant applications, publishing, and searching for jobs in the academy and beyond.

As most students in the graduate program specialize in U.S. history, at the heart of the program’s course offerings is a series of four colloquia that explores the history of the United States from the colonial era to the present. Students also choose from an array of thematic courses, ranging from digital history to global and comparative history. Finally, students may take classes in other departments, which opens up possibilities for an interdisciplinary perspective. “I have found the seminar classes overall to be an excellent training ground for the basic nuts and bolts skills that go into being both a teacher and a scholar,” reflects Patrick Troster (Ph.D. ’21). “My seminars on nationalism and global and comparative history introduced me to a lot of new ideas and theories that have proven very useful in my own research. The colloquium series was particularly helpful for preparing me as a teacher, giving me a broad understanding of U.S. history before I had to teach it myself.”

Rigorous preparation is required for seminar meetings. In most courses, students read at least one historical monograph and/or several scholarly articles every week. Each three-hour seminar session affords them the opportunity to develop their historical knowledge and skills with the guidance of their professors and in collaboration with their peers, whether by debating the finer points of a historian’s argument, workshopping their own written work, or facilitating class discussion. Doctoral student Gene Alviar says this kind of learning environment helps students to develop self-confidence by enabling them to learn from one another. “I had thought coming into the program with just a B.A. and being a first-generation student, I wouldn’t have the knowledge or experience that would allow me to contribute to class discussions. Yet throughout each seminar I can see my colleagues benefiting from my unique perspective on the material.”

Students also gain ample practice with writing in a variety of forms, turning out a steady stream of book reviews, historiographical essays, and analyses of primary sources. In research seminars, they conduct original research, with the goal of producing a publishable article by the end of the semester. Roberto-José Andrada Franco (Ph.D. ’20), who wrote his dissertation on the history of Mexican boxing and currently works as a writer for ESPN, appreciates both the discipline his graduate training required and the freedom it afforded him to find his own voice. “I was fortunate enough to have professors who emphasized writing,” he notes, “while also, so long as it was well structured, letting me do it in my style.”

All of this work in the classroom prepares graduate students to take their comprehensive exams and to research, write, and defend their theses. Most importantly, as master’s student Walt Coleman describes, it cultivates the capacity for critical thinking that is so essential to the historian’s craft, however and wherever it is practiced: “Many times, you read a monograph and develop your thoughts on its meaning. Then in the seminar one of your classmates offers an entirely different interpretation. Do you agree or disagree? If you disagree, how are you going to counter that argument? This dynamic enhances your learning process because you must try to understand and deal with difficult and complex questions. And what better mental exercise is there than that?”
The summer of 2022 will witness the remembrance of the SMU-in-Oxford program after a two-year hiatus due to COVID. This is SMU’s oldest and largest study abroad program held since 1980 at University College, Oxford, which also happens to be Oxford University’s oldest College founded in 1249. The program began across The High Street at Queen’s College in 1978. It has been affiliated with the History Department since its founding by two of our professors, Jim Hopkins and O. T. Hargrave, and has been home to literally hundreds of our majors and thousands of SMU students.

The program annually features outstanding classes by SMU history and other faculty and the remarkable opportunity to have an Oxford-style tutorial taught by inspiring and dedicated Oxford faculty (don’t I say brilliant, amazing, and sometimes eccentric?). Students can earn course credits taking a diverse array of classes and tutorials on topics such as European diplomacy, Roman Britain, gender in classical antiquity, Shakespeare, Georgian and Victorian England, political economy, the civilization of India, comparative empires, and the Gothic novel.

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In Oxford, one learns the meaning of the collegial model by living, dining, and studying together and of tutorial instruction. Furthermore, students get the exciting opportunity to see the artifact visit the Forum, the Colosseum, the Pantheon, the Baths of Caracalla among other sites, they acquire a vivid understanding and appreciation of the history of ancient Rome. In Paris, visits to castles, museums, and churches and historical walking tours allow students to move through history from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, to the golden age of French cultural preeminence in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Both these courses give students a direct and vivid exposure to the history of these two cities; they can see their histories everywhere they go and come to appreciate the development of the arts across time and the imprint of the classics on later periods. The program features trips to several museums in both cities, including the Vatican Museum and the Louvre. It also includes excursions out of the cities: Hadrian’s Villa and Ostia Antica for the Rome portion of the program and the chaiats of Fontainebleau, Vaux-le-Vicomte, and Versailles for Paris.

Furthermore, students do not merely come to appreciate these cities in their historical contexts. As they travel through the modern cities, they become very familiar with two of the most intriguing European capitals and get a taste of what they offer. Group dinners allow them to sample Italian and French cuisine, and they enjoy cultural activities from a cooking class, to a wine and cheese tasting, to a play, and sound-and-light show. The program offers all this with six hours of college credit.

By Professor Melissa Dowling. They then fly to Paris and pick up the story by focusing on the city from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, to the golden age of French cultural preeminence in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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History Internships Work!

By Professor Kate Carle

Although these in-person options were hard to do during the COVID crisis, SMU’s history majors found ways to get-on-the-job experience, nonetheless. When the spring 2020 shutdown started, history interns joined the Class of COVID Oral History Project. This effort was the brainchild of history professor Jill Kelly and university archivist Joan Gosnell. Kelly described the project’s origins: “As the spring 2020 semester wrapped up, summer study abroad programs and student plans for internships were cancelled due to the pandemic. Several of my students came to me with questions of ‘Now what?’ I hoped such a project could provide our students with the opportunity to develop research and other professional skills if they would need to be isolated at home.”

The Class of COVID project will undoubtedly be a wonderful resource for historians of the future, but it was helpful to its participants as well. History intern Clare Ennis noted the ways that the project helped her professionally. “From submitting an article to be published to learning how to conduct interviews and create an archive, I’ve gained important skills and experiences that will aid me in my career later on.” Ennis will be the rare undergraduate student to publish in The Historian, the journal of Phi Alpha Theta (the history honor society).

As life has returned to a version closer to normal, history interns have resumed a wider range of internships. Gabriel Rauen worked with Gosnell at the University Archives, researching and cataloguing SMU’s engagements with religious institutions over the years. “I enjoyed the freedom to explore more specific historical events through the application of research skills I had gained from my other history classes,” Rauen wrote. “The SMU Archives were the perfect place for me to do that!”

Those research skills can come in handy outside of the university as well. This semester, history major Palmer Bradshaw has an internship with a sports broadcasting company. “My favorite aspect of my internship has been witnessing the vast application of research across different fields, especially the radio industry.” Bradshaw reported. “For my internship conducting research on the NFL Draft, I have enjoyed learning how crucial the analysis of historical statistics and trends are to preparing for radio shows!”

The history internship program offers the department’s majors and minors opportunities to put these important skills to work, and to combine them with cutting-edge technologies. Their contributions are vital to the institutions they join, as well. Professor LanYue Leong, with the Center for Presidential History, works with interns nearly every semester. “Undergraduate interns—who are ‘digital natives’—have been indispensable in helping me navigate some of the technical aspects of research and knowledge production (such as webpage design, development and podcasting).”

The COVID pandemic offered both challenges and opportunities for history interns, but all are glad that things are returning to normal. More and more of Dallas’s institutions are beginning to reopen their doors to SMU students. Anyone interested in an internship for course credits should contact the internship coordinator at historyinternships@smu.edu.

Alumni Putting History To Work

A history major gives students the critical thinking, research, and writing skills needed to excel in diverse careers, including business, law, medicine, education, and more! Here two of our alumni explain how the history major prepared them for professional and personal success after graduation.

Walt Coleman ’01

SMU: What career(s) have you pursued since you graduated from SMU?
Coleman: I was a double major in history and financial consulting while an undergraduate at SMU. After graduation, I moved to New York for a job as an investment banking analyst with Merrill Lynch. I returned to Dallas and spent seventeen years as an analyst and portfolio manager for two different multi-billion-dollar hedge funds. Along with my financial services career, I also started to officiate football. I began working high school games in the Dallas area, moved to small college games, worked for nine seasons in the Big 12, and was hired by the NFL in 2015.

SMU: Do you feel your history major has helped you to succeed in your career? If so, how?
Coleman: As I look back on my career, I recognize that my history major played an instrumental, if not dominant role, in my success. My history courses required me to research using multiple sources, synthesize that information, critically think through it, and then reach a conclusion about what I had found. To put it bluntly, my history major taught me how to think. While I may have forgotten facts or events that I analyzed in my classes, I did not forget how to mentally process information to generate arguments and conclusions. This vital skill was required every day of my finance career, and I searched for it in others when making hiring decisions. Finally, studying history requires you to ask questions and look deeper. This came in handy as I frequently was required to meet with and ask questions of company management teams. I imagine that some executives at times wished my history professors had not taught me to ask questions so well! My career had a much greater upward trajectory due to my history major than it would have with only a business degree. For this reason, I am a passionate advocate for the importance of a liberal arts education, preferably in history, in addition to a specialized field. I left SMU with a love of history that continued even as I began a career in finance. For many years, it only shone through my continual habit of buying books faster than I could read them. Today, it has inspired me to go back to school in order to pursue an M.A. in history, and possibly a Ph.D. My history major contributed to not only success in my first career but also the opportunity for a potentially rewarding and fulfilling second career.

Claire Piepenburg ’13

SMU: What career(s) have you pursued since you graduated from SMU?
Piepenburg: I worked in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at SMU for two years before attending Vanderbilt Law School. Since graduating from law school in 2018, I have worked in private legal practice. Currently, I am a litigation associate in the Labor and Employment Section at Gray Reed LLP.

SMU: Do you feel your history major has helped you to succeed in your career? If so, how?
Piepenburg: Without question, my history major has helped me to succeed in my career. Undergraduate history courses helped me to develop research skills, which I put to use in my work with opposing counsel. At the offer with opposing counsel. At the

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Major Opportunities

Through a consideration of the past, the history major helps students understand the present and shape the future. Our students study the past and understand change through the many ways, both big and small, that we make sense of the world: from nations, empires, economics, science, religion, and sexuality, all the way down to our families and our self-awareness. Students also learn to think creatively and critically to conduct research, to analyze complex material, and to make persuasive arguments. Two of our current undergraduate students reflect on their experiences in the major:

Angela He ’22
Double Major in History and Biochemistry; Minor in Chinese

SMU: Why did you decide to major in history?
He: What I love most about history is that even though you’re learning about events in the past, every piece of information is incredibly relevant to contemporary society. The history courses that I’ve taken have given me so much insight into why the world is the way it is today, and, as a result, have helped me better understand the world around me. Furthermore, as I will be attending medical school next year, my future will involve hearing about the many different stories. Though there will always be opportunities for me to engage with the humanities via books and other mediums in the future, I felt that this was really my last chance to take a deep dive into history and learn from all of these amazing historians.

SMU: What has been the most valuable part of your history major thus far?
He: Through my time as a history major, I have become a much better writer. A critical component of every history class is writing, and all of that practice definitely honors every history major into a much better writer than when they first started college. A lot of people don’t realize it until much later, but being a proficient writer takes you very far, regardless of which career path you choose in the future. As someone who has gone through the entire process of applying to and interviewing at various medical schools, I cannot even emphasize how grateful I was for all of the writing practice I had as a history major.

SMU: What has been your favorite major opportunity so far?
He: One of my favorite opportunities is actually visiting that place all within the history course requirements, with several SMU-Abroad programs that revolve around history courses. I personally had the opportunity to attend SMU-in-Oxford in the summer of my freshman year and it was one of the most amazing experiences in my time at SMU. Not only did I have the chance to travel and have fun with friends, but I was also able to fulfill history course requirements, with one of my courses even being taught by a former Oxford professor. It was meaningful being able to learn about a particular moment and then actually visiting that place all within the time span of that course.

Maria Katsiulis ’22
Double Major in History and English (Creative Writing); Minor in Art History, Classical Studies, French, and Women’s and Gender Studies

SMU: What has been the most valuable part of your history major thus far?
Katsiulis: Studying abroad during summer 2019 in Paris, Riom, and Oxford. I’d read so much about the histories of those places, but nothing compares to actually walking the same streets that famous figures have walked. It was on that trip that I had a serious conversation with Dr. Dwelling about pursuing history as a career, which set me on the path to starting my Ph.D. in fall 2022.

SMU: What has been your favorite major opportunity so far?
Katsiulis: My favorite is probably finding out that I had passed my thesis defense and would be graduating with distinction in the major. I had spent the better part of a year thinking nonstop about my thesis topic and loved getting to have a deep conversation with my committee about what I had learned and what questions I still wanted to explore. Peacing with distinction was the icing on the cake.

SMU: What would you tell incoming students about picking a major?
Katsiulis: I would tell them to follow their passion in choosing their major—and don’t be afraid to change your mind but that is okay, take a lot of different classes to find out! You can’t go wrong here at SMU, and by fulfilling UC [Undergraduate Curriculum, now Common Curriculum] requirements, you can sample widely across campus to discover what most piques your interest.

Looking Back, Thinking Ahead

Our department offers innovative graduate study in American history (Ph.D. and M.A.) and global history (M.A.). The department has particular strengths in the history of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, the American West, U.S. political history, the history of race and ethnicity, and early American history. The graduate student experience is enriched by our two scholarly centers: the Clements Center for Southwest Studies and the Center for Presidential History. Two of our current doctoral students explain why SMU has provided an excellent home to explore their interests in the professional study of American history.

SMU: What has been your proudest accomplishment thus far and why?
Cranney: I think passing comps has been one of my proudest moments here at SMU. It was a big moment that I had been nervous about for months, so it felt really good to do well on that. Outside of SMU, one of my proudest moments was my participation in the Old Idaho State Penitentiary, Behind Gray Walls, winning an Award of Excellence from the American Association of State and Local History.

SMU: What is your dissertation research about?
Cranney: I am researching the interaction of gender, film culture, and Americanism between the 1920s and 1940s. Old Hollywood has been a personal and academic passion of mine, but I didn’t want to focus solely on film analysis. After taking a class on nationalism, I became interested in taking that film that is not just the film, but Hollywood as an institution played in disseminating ideas about Americanism. I’m therefore examining three specific sites: the Sun Valley ski resort, the Hollywood Studio Club, a boarding house for studio artists and the Hollywood Canteen, a club for servicemen on leave in Los Angeles. Fan magazines wrote about famous women’s participation in these sites, so I will be exploring what kind of ideas about American womanhood these magazines promoted, especially as relevant to living and working (Hollywood Studio Club), playing (Sun Valley), and volunteering (Hollywood Canteen).
History Works by Faculty

In addition to their devotion to teaching, our faculty members are distinguished and productive scholars. They conduct research around the world and have written and edited numerous books that expand knowledge of it. Below is a list of books published by our faculty in the last two years. Be sure to check them out!

**Katherine Carté**
Religion and the American Revolution: An Imperial History (Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and the University of North Carolina Press, 2021)

For most of the eighteenth century, British protestantism and the American Revolution were seen as separate events. Katherine Carté argues, British imperial protestantism proved remarkably effective in advancing the interests of empire and the cause of religion—until the war for American independence disrupted it. Sweeping and explicitly transatlantic, Religion and the American Revolution: An Imperial History tells the story of how imperial politics. As Katherine Carté argues, British protestantism proved remarkably effective in advancing the interests of empire and the cause of religion—until the war for American independence disrupted it. Sweeping and explicitly transatlantic, Religion and the American Revolution, Katherine Carté, 2021.

**Neel Foley**

The Violence of War, it likewise set the terms through which Anglo-Americans encountered the imperial crisis and the violence of war. It is an important book for anyone interested in the history of war and its impact on societies around the world. Neel Foley, 2020.

**Jo Guldi**
The Long Land War: The Global Struggle for Occupancy Rights (Yale University Press, 2022)
The Long Land War tells a story as old as human history: the global struggle against land, water, and shelter. The book traces state-engineered "land reforms" projects from their trumped-up origins in Victorian Ireland to their quiet assassination by the United States in 1914, creating a diversity of reformers along the way, among them Irish peasants, Hindu saints, development analysts, economists, and indigenous farmers. In a tale of thwarted idealism, the book illuminates the complex interplay of Cold War ideology, United Nations Idealism, World Bank propaganda, grassroots activism, market ideology, and human shortcomings. With a command that readers have compared to Lewis Mumford's The City in History and E.P. Thompson's Whig Capitalism, Jo Guldi delivers a devastating, definitive narrative of land redistribution—its failures and its lessons—and a glimpse into the future of justice on a changing planet.

**Daniel Orlovsky**

A Companion to the Russian Revolution (Rutledge Blackwell, 2021)

A Companion to the Russian Revolution is a comprehensive guide to more than 50 scholarly essays and contemporary viewpoints on the upheavals and transformations of 1917. The Russian Revolution of 1917 revolutionized and transformed a continent that covered much of the globe. It altered the geopolitical landscape of not only Eurasia, but also of the entire globe. The impact of this immense event is still felt in the present day. This volume challenges conceptions of the 1917 revolution as a monolithic entity—the causes, meanings and places of revolution are many. Although primarily focused on 1917 itself, the book also explores the early Soviet government, the Civil War period, and outcomes into the 1920s. The essays are largely based on original research, and the volume contributes to the ongoing scholarly debate of how to compare and connect theories and experiences of revolutions and civil wars.

**Ariel Ron**


In this sweeping look at rural society from the Russian Revolution to the Civil War, Ariel Ron argues that agricultural history is absolutely central to understanding the nation’s formative period. Spanning the length of the Civil War period between an agrarian South, Groznost Lezhat traces the rise of a powerful agricultural reform movement spearheaded by northern farmers. Showing that farming dominated the lives of the majority of Americans, in the North and the South, through almost the entire nineteenth century, Ron traces how middle-class farmers in the “Greater Northeast” built a movement of semipublic agricultural societies, fairs, and periodicals that, togetherness, fundamentally rewrote the relationship of rural people to market forces and governing structures.

**Kathleen Williamson**

Hijacking History: How the Christian Right Tames History and Why It Matters (Oxford University Press, 2021)

Hijacking History analyzes the history textbooks produced by the three most influential publishers of Christian educational materials. They argue that history, the record of God’s activity through time, must be interpreted through the Bible. History thus becomes a weapon to condemn civilizations that do not adopt “biblical” positions and single out ideas God abhors—evolution, humanism, biblical modernism, socialism, and climate science among them. Students are led to believe that Christianity is essential of other religions and non-evangelical Christianity and unquestionably anchored to right-wing political, economic, and social positions. To retain God’s favor, America must be a Christian nation, spreading evangelical Christianity and capitalism throughout the world. Hijacking History explores the roots of these arguments in the history of American evangelicalism and fundamentalism. The idea; these textbooks promote significant implications for contemporary debates about religion, politics, and education, and directly challenge a pluralistic democracy.

**Neel Foley** received a U.S. -Spain Fulbright Senior Scholar award to the Juan March Institute for Research at the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (UC3M) from January to July 2022. He will be teaching and conducting research on the politics of migration and citizenship after Spain’s transition to democracy.

**Jill Kelly** received a 2022 Johannesn Institute for Advanced Study Writing Fellowship to complete her second book project, “The Burden in Heavy: Gendered Knowledge in the 1959 Rebellion in South Africa.” She also won the 2021 American Historical Association’s William and Edwyna Gilbert Award for the Best Article on Teaching History. This article, “Teaching South African History in the Digital Age: Collaboration, Pedagogy, and Popularizing History,” was co-authored with Dame Beseda and appeared in the journal History in Africa. In 2020, she received the M. Davis and the Aftschuler Distinguished Teaching Award from SMU.

**Macabe Kellner** is a 2022-23 Wilson Global Madison Fellow to conduct research on his project, “Political Economy and the Structures of Power in Postwar Hong Kong.” He was also awarded the 2022-23 The Shin-sheng Prize for scholarship in Chinese history. His book, The Board of Rites and the Making of Qing China, received the 2021 Joseph Levenson Prize honorable mention.

**Bianca Lopez** received a Center for the Rescue of Italian Art (CRIA) Fellowship from T. Tatti, the Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, to spend the academic year 2021-22 in Italy to research her book project, “The Migrant Plague-Bearers of Late Medieval Italy: The Formation of a Minority Culture.”

**Daniel Orlovsky** received the Center for Presidential History Writing Fellowship in fall 2021 to work on his book about the history of the Russian Provisional Government of 1917.

**Ariel Ron’s** book, Grassroots Leviathan: Agricultural Reform and the Rural North in the Shkodër Revolution, won the 2020 Theodore Saloutos Memorial Award from the Agricultural History Society and the 2021 Wiley-Silver Book Prize from the Center for Civil War Research at the University of Mississippi.

**Melissa Dowling, Carlos Hernandez, Jill Kelly, Macabe Kellner, and Patrick Troester** were all nominated for the IMU HOPE Professor of the Year in 2022.

Supporting History Research

Research support integral to the success of our undergraduates and graduate students as well as our faculty. Your annual support helps our students and faculty understand not only the past, but also the present and future. If you would like to support our students or faculty with their research, you can designate your gift to the Clements Center Gift Fund.

See the back cover for more details.

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Giving

The students and faculty of the William P. Clements Department of History are enormously grateful for your donations. Our funding priorities include study abroad opportunities for undergraduates as well as research funding for students and faculty. Gifts can be made online at giving.smu.edu or by check. For more information, please contact Clayton Ellis at crellis@smu.edu or 214-768-9202. Every gift matters.

Affiliated Centers

The Department of History is home to two centers that enrich its core offerings through research colloquia, visiting postdoctoral fellows, and scholarly lectures. The Clements Center for Southwest Studies has long been the nation’s leading venue for research in the history of the Southwest in a transnational perspective. And since 2012, the Center for Presidential History promotes critical inquiry into the rich history of U.S. politics and government, broadly defined. For more information on these centers visit: smu.edu/dedman/academics/institutescenters/swcenter and smu.edu/cph.

Internships Work!

Palmer Bradshaw conducts research on the NFL draft for his internship at The Ticket Sportsradio. The History Department has an internship program that enables its majors to earn credit hours while using their history skills to gain real-world work experience! See page 10.

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