History WORKS

In This Issue

4 Learning about History with 21st-Century Methods
6 History Internships Work!
8 Travelling through Time
Studying the Past, Understanding the Present, Preparing for the Future

History is not only intellectually stimulating but also eminently useful. On the most basic level, it allows us to recover and interpret the past, whether the period under consideration is Periclean Athens, Ming China, Revolutionary America, or modern South Africa. And yet our field holds the promise of more than that, too, since a familiarity with distant or even recent peoples and events can help us make better sense of our own times. To choose a single — but especially salient — example, look no further than the U.S.-Mexico border, the subject of an intense and ongoing debate over immigration and citizenship. Any discussion of these issues should be informed by an understanding that until the mid-nineteenth century, the American Southwest was actually the Mexican, a fact that explains the enduring social, political, and economic ties that often frustrate the designs of officials in Washington, D.C.

But history also works in other — and more practical — ways for our students and graduates. In our classes here at SMU, undergraduates cultivate a set of skills that are of enormous consequence for their personal and professional development. The most important of these proficiencies we typically call "critical thinking," by which we mean the ability to gather subject, subject to rigorous analysis, and draw defensible conclusions, all the while making sense of competing — at times even contradictory — claims. This has perhaps never been more important than in the present moment, given the sheer availability of information (some of it reliable, much of it not) in our hyper-connected yet increasingly tribal age. Moreover, students in SMU history courses learn how to express themselves in clear and persuasive prose, essential in almost every contemporary profession, whether law, politics, medicine, education, business ... the list is practically infinite. Put more bluntly, we cultivate talents that employers want, and recent studies indicate that compensation for history majors over the course of their careers rivals that of many programs of study currently in vogue primarily because of their supposed promise of immediate post-graduation employment and remuneration.

Our goal in relaunching the William P. Clements Department of History annual newsletter is to share with you — our alumni, students, and friends — some of the many ways we are putting history to work here at SMU: in our undergraduate and graduate programs; in our first-rate research centers; and through individual faculty accomplishments. But we hope also to engage each of you in the life of our department, whether by attending a lecture, reading our work, assisting a student, or underwriting our efforts. In closing, let me offer my thanks to associate professor Erin Hochman and her Outreach Committee, who have worked so hard to bring this newsletter (back) to life. We hope you enjoy hearing more about what we do in Dallas Hall and beyond.

Andrew R. Graybill
Professor and History Department Chair
Co-Director, Clements Center for Southwest Studies

Mastering the Past: Student Accomplishments

Congratulations to those students who earned their doctoral degrees in 2018:

Zachary Adams completed a dissertation titled “Tras Americanismo: Mexican-American and Irish-American Nationalism Through the Twentieth Century,” and Anne Albrief defended a dissertation titled “Oscar Bruce: Jacobson, The Life and Art of a Cosmopolitan Cultural Broker.” Three students in the M.A. program also earned their degrees in 2018: Jonathan Angulo, Sean Kryan, and Andrea Stewart. Congratulations to them as well!

Roberto Andrade, a Ph.D. candidate, received the Joe Riley-Clements Center Research Travel Grant to conduct archival investigation for his dissertation, which explores the links between boxing and both Mexican and American identities.

Doctoral candidate Kyle Carpenter was awarded the Naylor Center for Economic Growth and Leadership Development Fellowship and a Clements Center travel grant to conduct research for his dissertation on European immigrants to the Rio Grande in the nineteenth century.

Ph.D. candidate Joshua Tracy received a Clements Center interdisciplinary grant in 2018 to visit archives in Mexico and Texas for his dissertation on the environmental history of the Rio Grande.

Pat Troost, a Ph.D. candidate, received the Doctoral Fellowship in Southwestern History at Fort Lewis College’s Center of Southwest Studies in Durango, Colorado for the 2018-19 academic year as well as an interdisciplinary research grant from the Clements Center to conduct archival work in Texas and Mexico for his dissertation on political violence in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands in the nineteenth century.

Ph.D. candidate Joel Zapata had an article accepted to Great Plains Quarterly on Chicanx activism. He also received a number of awards to support his dissertation research, including the Richard E. Greenlaw Fellowship from the University of New Mexico, a Masterson Fellowship from the University of Oklahoma, a Dissertation Fellowship from SMU, and a Mellon Fellowship in Technology-Enhanced Learning from Carnegie Mellon University.

In 2017-18, major Justin Yao was a Hamilton Undergraduate Research Scholar, an award that allows Dedman College’s most promising students to collaborate with faculty to carry out primary research. Justin consulted back issues of American and British newspapers for Professor Sabri Ateş’s project on the Kurdistan independence movement and is helping to create an accompanying website for the book that will include an extensive array of historical images and documents.

Major Kayla Graves was awarded a Mayer Undergraduate Fellowship from the Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute and in 2017 completed a historical and sociological research project titled “A Comparative Study of Declining Steel Towns in the United States and Germany.”

A number of our majors also received fellowships from the Engaged Learning Program. Brianna Hodg was awarded an Engaged Learning Fellowship in 2017 for “Women of the Arts in the Anti-Apartheid Struggle.” In the summer of 2017, Chailorbe Lord and Brianna Hodg held Summer Research Assistantships to work on “Oral History of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in North Texas.” And this past summer, Carson Dodick held a Summer Research Assistantship to contribute to the “Voices of SMU Oral History Project,” a multi-year initiative that records the experiences of black, Latinx, and other student communities at SMU.

Student Awards

Each year the department recognizes majors who have excelled in the classroom and beyond. We are extremely proud of the achievements of our students, and we want to acknowledge those who recently won awards or were inducted into Phi Alpha Theta, the national honor society for history.

Herbert Pickets Gambrell Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement

Mara Pitcher (2018)

Anthony A.J. Jeffries (2017)

Courtney Tibbett (2017)

Stanton Sharp Award for Outstanding Service and Academic Achievement

Karen Pizzi (2018)

Adem Sanchez (2018)

Hope Anderson (2017)

Henry Jacobsen Junior Paper Prize in History

Adam Sanchez, “Weimar German Catholicism: The Struggle for Relevance” (2018)


Phi Alpha Theta Inductees in 2017 and 2018

Michael Buttarazzi, Jr.

Lindsay Carrier

Phillip Chenes

William Church

Chloe Elizabeth Clark-Sole

Nicole Cohen

Thomas Nesbit Edins, IV

Myra Erwin

Karen Foli

Natalie Gulo

David Whitehead Hobbs, Jr.

Kathryn Igo

Rachel Mason

Scott Moore

Mara Pitcher

Connor Price

Jillian Ryne

Elizabeth Ridgway

Adam Sanchez

Cole Schenewerk

Michael Treford

John Werner

Margaret Willbanks

Research support is integral to the success of our undergraduate and graduate students as they complete their degrees, and we are fortunate to have several endowments that generate funds for such purposes. However, we are very grateful that annual gifts to support student research are vital, too. These research dollars help our students understand not only the past, but also the present and future. If you would like to support an individual undergraduate or graduate student with his/her history research, you can designate your gift to the Clements Center Gift Fund, account number 20-45005.
Learning about History with 21st-Century Methods

By Professor Jo Guldi

SMU is the home of leading initiatives in Videogame Design, Cybersecurity, Cloud Computing, and Creative Computation (where painters and composers learn to program). Increasingly, new digital methods also belong to disciplines in the traditional humanities and liberal arts. Students of history are translating documents from the past into digital formats. They are becoming adept manipulators of spreadsheets, maps, and statistics, adding a variety of interpretive tools to their already sharp skills of synthesizing and analyzing primary-source documents.

The Clements Department of History at SMU has been a pioneer in bringing the digital humanities to campus. Students began studying digital tools in Professor Kate Carté Engel’s honors seminar on the founding documents of the United States in 2014. Students read eighteenth-century travel journals to create digital representations of the past, coding maps based on travelers’ journeys. They then transcribed documents, analyzed them, and put together a bibliography linked to the Texas social studies curriculum (TEKS) so that public school teachers can directly apply this to teaching religion and the American Revolution. Their website, “Religion and the Founding of the United States,” still gets a significant number of hits (URL: http://people.smu.edu/religionandfoundingusa).

The history department has made strides towards growing a uniquely diverse program in the digital humanities through building a community of faculty who are constantly pushing each other to the cutting edge of methodology. For instance, I offered a text mining course in 2017, and invited other faculty to attend the class (including three history professors), as well as librarians, other SMU staff, and graduate students. Some of those professors began to integrate text mining into their classrooms. Among their ranks was Bianca Lopez, our newly-hired assistant professor of medieval history and already a student of statistical analysis. Within a few months of the text mining class, Lopez had asked her graduate students to code the history of crime and plague in medieval England.

Students who take these classes have an opportunity to contemplate how relevant the study of history can be in an information economy, and faculty are energized by witnessing these connections. Lopez explains, “Going in, I wanted to introduce students to many of the exciting possibilities digital history has to offer. The field is going in all of these interesting directions, and I wanted students to feel free and confident enough to explore and experiment, and inevitably discover one or two favorite methods, tools, or topics that they could then use in their own work.” Likewise, Engel notes that she “is thrilled at the way that digital history has expanded and germinated in lots of different quarters. I think that’s what’s really exciting: it’s not the province of any one department, but our students can take advantage of it in many different departments.”

Indeed, students from a range of majors have found such courses beneficial for their studies as well as their future careers. Rachel Thimmig, an anthropology major with minors in history and sociology, found learning GIS (geographic information system mapping technology) in Professor Engel’s course on mapping early American markets “valuable” because “it is a great skill that can help archaeologists and historians better understand events with a broader geographic context.” Additionally, these courses help prepare students for diverse careers. As Grace Powers, a finance major, remarked, learning GIS provided critical skills for her summer internship with a real estate investment banking firm. She had to make “a color-coded map to analyze the ownership type (private owner, municipal, retail) of thousands of properties across three counties in North Texas. The county appraisal maps are all in GIS format, so my class experiences with GIS mapping, and even of this exact type of ownership mapping, was immeasurably helpful. I would have had no idea how to do this project without my digital history class!” Through work in many quarters, the Clements Department of History is leading the university in training students and faculty alike on the frontiers of knowledge.

American markets “valuable” because “it is a great skill that can help archaeologists and historians better understand events with a broader geographic context.” Additionally, these courses help prepare students for diverse careers. As Grace Powers, a finance major, remarked, learning GIS provided critical skills for her summer internship with a real estate investment banking firm. She had to make “a color-coded map to analyze the ownership type (private owner, municipal, retail) of thousands of properties across three counties in North Texas. The county appraisal maps are all in GIS format, so my class experiences with GIS mapping, and even of this exact type of ownership mapping, was immeasurably helpful. I would have had no idea how to do this project without my digital history class!” Through work in many quarters, the Clements Department of History is leading the university in training students and faculty alike on the frontiers of knowledge.
History Internships Work!

By Professor Jill Kelly

Internships offer history majors tremendous opportunities to develop new skills, gain on-the-ground work experience, and establish relationships with community and campus organizations and employers. In 2018, we had fifteen students intern across campus and the city—in libraries, museums, and non-profits such as the World Affairs Council of Dallas/Fort Worth, the George W. Bush Library & Museum, and the Commit Partnership, a coalition working on equitable education in the DFW Metroplex.

These experiences provide students with the opportunity to cultivate skills beyond the classroom. For instance, in her internship at the Old Red Museum of Dallas County History and Culture, Julia Davis learned how to create and implement school group programs for class visits to the museum and also participated in marketing campaigns. Mara Pitcher, who interned with the Norwick Center for Digital Solutions, built skills in cataloging digital archival collections and generating metadata for these materials.

Students can market these new skills in their pursuit of employment after graduation and draw upon the relationships they build with supervisors for recommendations. Two of our majors, interns with Bridwell Library Rare Books and Manuscripts Collection and SMU Archives, turned their internships into part-time jobs during their studies. Alumnus Stephen Fagin (class of 2001) interned at the Sixth Floor Museum and has been there ever since! Fagin shares, “I began there as an intern in 2000, and some four or five job titles—and 18 years—later I am Curator. It was a unique journey from Dallas Hall to the sixth floor of the former Texas School Book Depository building. I am ready to host SMU history majors in internships, too.

Internships offer the ability to explore the diverse careers that can be pursued with a history major. Many students see history as a pathway into careers in teaching and law—both excellent choices. But the research, communication, and writing skills that majors develop in the classroom prepare students for a wide array of professions. History students use their communication skills in social media campaigns and their research abilities to help produce podcasts and museum exhibits. They use critical thinking as they help non-profits thrive.

And for students who love history and want hands-on experience with historical documents beyond the classroom, internships are just plain fun. Chaudhry Hameed, who interned with the Dallas Historical Society this past summer, enjoyed the refuge provided by the “cold, carefully monitored temperature and humidity” of the DHS archive. He explained: “Open a random file cabinet drawer and you are bound to be transported into the distant past, from letters signed by Sam Houston to century-old city maps.”

Our students are doing great work in and out of the classroom. If you are a student interested in pursuing an internship or an alumnus who would like to work with an intern, please contact Professor Jill Kelly (jillk@smu.edu).
We did. Next summer, you can too.

Students explored the world with SMU Study Abroad programs this year. SMU–Rome–Paris and SMU–in–Oxford, two programs directed and taught by history department faculty, studied on site, in museums, and at palaces and archaeological excavations.

With Professor Kathleen Wellman, I led sixteen hardy students across history from the foundations of Rome to the French Revolution. Our first day began in the Roman Forum, our second was spent in the Colosseum. With stops for cappuccino and gelata, we marched through the development of the Roman Empire. We explored the ancient port city of Ostia, climbing around Roman apartment buildings from the third century. We stood on ancient mosaics at Tivoli, Hadrian’s opulent villa. We discussed the fall of Rome while touring early Christian catacombs and Saint Peter’s Basilica. We saw the ancient antecedents of our architecture at SMU, and we read the texts that so inspired the founders of our own country.

In Paris, our group crisscrossed the city by century, starting about history where it happened! The Sharp Study Abroad Scholarships award up to $5,000 to history majors who participate in programs taught by our faculty, including courses offered in Rome, Paris, Oxford, and India. For application information, students should contact the SMU Abroad Office.

“ar was lucky enough to participate in the SMU–Rome–Paris program last year due to the generosity of donors,” said Chloe Clark–Soles (’19). “Being in Paris and Rome and having the opportunity to learn with Dr. Dowling and Dr. Wellman was invaluable.” If you would like to support history students like Chloe, please make a gift to the Stanton Sharp Trust Endowment Fund for History, account number 20–47377.

This program not only brought the best out of me academically, but I also made friends, many of whom share similar aspirations to me, such as pursuing a job in Europe or a form of international-related law or business. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience with many memories that I will treasure forever.”

The Oxford program is over forty years old. We have children and grandchildren of alumni who now take the trip. Former students stop by while visiting or studying in Oxford. Many readers of the newsletter have anecdotes and photographs from earlier years; please share them with us!

**Study Abroad Scholarships**

Students can now receive financial help to learn about history where it happened: The Sharp History Study Abroad Scholarships award up to $5,000 to history majors who participate in programs taught by our faculty, including courses offered in Rome, Paris, Oxford, and India. For application information, students should contact the SMU Abroad Office.

Study Abroad Scholarships

We live in University College, the oldest of Oxford’s colleges, dating back to 1249. Fortunately, the plumbing is up to eighteenth-century standards. After class, students went punting on the river or had a coffee at the Eagle and Child (where Tolkien and C.S. Lewis shared manuscripts). They also enjoyed World Cup games, dancing at the Purple Turtle, and weekend expeditions to such as pursuing a job in Europe or a form of international-related law or business. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience with many memories that I will treasure forever.”

The Oxford program is over forty years old. We have children and grandchildren of alumni who now take the trip. Former students stop by while visiting or studying in Oxford. Many readers of the newsletter have anecdotes and photographs from earlier years; please share them with us!

We live in University College, the oldest of Oxford’s colleges, dating back to 1249. Fortunately, the plumbing is up to eighteenth-century standards. After class, students went punting on the river or had a coffee at the Eagle and Child (where Tolkien and C.S. Lewis shared manuscripts). They also enjoyed World Cup games, dancing at the Purple Turtle, and weekend expeditions to such as pursuing a job in Europe or a form of international-related law or business. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience with many memories that I will treasure forever.”

The Oxford program is over forty years old. We have children and grandchildren of alumni who now take the trip. Former students stop by while visiting or studying in Oxford. Many readers of the newsletter have anecdotes and photographs from earlier years; please share them with us!
Major Opportunities

Through a consideration of the past, the history major helps students understand the present and hopefully 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, peoples, tribes, economics, science, religion, and sexuality, all the way down to our families, our languages, and our senses and self-awareness. Students also learn to think creatively and critically, to conduct research, to analyze complex material, to make persuasive arguments, and to communicate ideas effectively. Two of our current undergraduate students reflect on their experiences in the major thus far.

Amanda Oh ’20
Double Major in History and Political Science

SMU: Why did you decide to major in history?
Amanda Oh:
I decided to major in history because there is beauty and wonder in piecing together our past, determining themes, and connecting events to one another to analyze how our present day came to be. In order to understand modern-day conflicts—whether they be ethnic, economic, political, or rooted in something else—we must have a strong understanding of the factors that led up to them.

From a more technical perspective, I decided to major in history because it exercises critical analysis, command of writing, and the ability to piece together lots of information to draw meaningful conclusions. These skills are important in any line of work.

SMU: What has been your favorite part of the major?
Amanda Oh:
My favorite part of the major has been writing my junior seminar–turned distiction thesis under the guidance of Professor Wellman. I loved learning about how to put primary sources and secondary research together to create an original product that contributed to the body of historical knowledge. I wrote my seminar paper in Dallas, then got fully funded by the Richter Foundation and Engaged Learning to travel to England for archival research that I am using to complete my full distinction paper. I was fortunate to travel to the British Library, Lambeth Palace Library, and Bodleian Library. Sitting in these libraries, with access to the same documents as the professional historians sitting right next to me, was incredibly exciting and an opportunity I don’t believe I would have had anywhere else.

The support of Professor Wellman, who guided my writing, and ideas every step of the way, and Professor Winnie, who listened to my research proposal and helped me improve upon it, and Professor Doyle, who helped me move through Richter, has been indispensable in the creation of my distinction thesis.

SMU: Why did you decide to major in history?
Amanda Oh:
I decided to major in history because it is something I have been passionate about since I was a child. I am happy to have been able to apply my excitement, interest, and passion for learning history at SMU in the present all the while gaining the necessary skill sets required by my future goal of attending law school.

SMU: What has been the most valuable part of your history major thus far?
Amanda Oh:
The history department offers many amazing internships in which you can learn so many valuable skills. This past summer, I interned at the Dallas Historical Society and got to work in the archives as well as help conduct research for the Society’s 208 State Fair of Texas exhibition on Texas inventors. Moreover, besides learning history, I picked up mass amounts of practical knowledge in research and archival work.

To top it off, I gained three credit hours and got an A.

SMU: What has been your favorite part of the major?
Amanda Oh:
Getting to learn further in depth about the places I’ve visited! For example, I had an amazing experience when I took an ancient Greek history course during my first semester because I had previously been to Greece in high school. I was able to really hone in and connect what I remembered seeing (temples, statues, art, culture, etc.) to the history I was learning, which made my overall coursework very enjoyable and relatable.

SMU: Why did you choose to pursue a Ph.D. in history?
Amanda Oh:
I chose to pursue a Ph.D. in history because there is beauty and wonder in piecing together our past, determining themes, and connecting events to one another to analyze how our present day came to be. In order to understand modern-day conflicts—whether they be ethnic, economic, political, or rooted in something else—we must have a strong understanding of the factors that led up to them.

From a more technical perspective, I decided to major in history because it exercises critical analysis, command of writing, and the ability to piece together lots of information to draw meaningful conclusions. These skills are important in any line of work.

SMU: What has been your favorite part of the major?
Amanda Oh:
Got to experience some of my own history, culture, and civilization as my family is from Lahore, Pakistan in the Punjub. It was very eye-opening and mind-expanding to take a history course that related to me and my ancestors personally.

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 Southwest, the U.S.-Mexico borderlands and the American West, U.S. political history, the history of race and ethnicity, and early American history. Moreover, the department boasts topical and methodological expertise in global/comparative history, cultural history, digital humanities, and the history of gender. 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 a wonderful home to explore their interests in the professional study of American history.

Joel Zapata ’19
Ph.D. Candidate

SMU: Why did you choose to pursue a Ph.D. in history?
Joel Zapata:
I studied history and learning and wanted to have a career where I can do both.

SMU: Why did you choose to attend the Ph.D. program at SMU?
Joel Zapata:
SMU has a strong support system for graduate students through its various academic centers, the Office of Research and Graduate Studies, along with its libraries and archives. The history program is also small enough for graduate students to receive individual attention and mentorship from professors.

SMU: What has been the most valuable part of your time at SMU thus far and why?
Joel Zapata:
This summer I had the opportunity to teach a history class with open-minded and dedicated students who valued learning history during each class period. I did not enter the Ph.D. program thinking about how rewarding teaching could be, but my summer class quickly changed that.

SMU: What is the topic of your research?
Joel Zapata:
My dissertation project, titled "The Mexican Southern Plains: The Making of an Ethnic Mexican Homeland," centers upon the ethnic Mexican history of the southern Great Plains from the second half of the eighteenth century to the present day. Overall, my work counters the trope of depicting ethnic Mexicans as recent immigrants and adds to the ongoing scholarly project of enlarging Chicano/a history and the interdisciplinary field of Chicana/o Studies beyond the core of the Southwest.

SMU: How and why did you choose your dissertation topic?
Joel Zapata:
I chose my topic by diving into small, un-computerized, rural archives in the plains where I found a story yet to be written.

Roberto José Andrade ’20
Ph.D. Candidate

SMU: What has been your most interesting finding about your topic?
Roberto José Andrade:
My biggest accomplishment has been publishing an op-ed in the Washington Post that looked at Trump’s sudden concern over the MS-13 gang and comparing it to the hysteria the pachucos inspired in the 1940s. A lot of that research came from a historiographic essay I wrote for Dr. Thomas Knock. So essentially, the Ph.D. program gave me the tools that I needed to relate historical research to current-day concerns.

SMU: What has been your favorite moment as a Ph.D. student at SMU and why?
Roberto José Andrade:
My favorite moment was during the first semester when every couple of weeks Dr. Sherry Smith had had fellowships from the Clements Center for Southwest Studies speak to the class. They discussed their research, their writing process, and even insecurities that come from being a historian. Those talks helped show a side of academia that I was completely unaware of and in certain ways, made the people who wrote the books – who’re often faceless and just a name – much more real.

SMU: What is your research about?
Roberto José Andrade:
I research how boxing influences identity. And since I’m specifically focused on Mexican and Mexican American identity, masochism seems to be a running theme in how boxing is used not just by boxers but also fans, promoters, advertisers, etc.

SMU: What has been your most interesting finding about your topic?
Roberto José Andrade:
Seemingly everything in sports and athletics, let alone boxing, is intertwined with politics. There are class and race components to something as simple as the difference between working out in a CrossFit or boxing gym. The sports that we watch and the way we say so much more about who we are than we expect.

Zapata: My dissertation project, titled “The Mexican Southern Plains: The Making of an Ethnic Mexican Homeland,” centers upon the ethnic Mexican history of the southern Great Plains from the second half of the eighteenth century to the present day. Overall, my work counters the trope of depicting ethnic Mexicans as recent immigrants and adds to the ongoing scholarly project of enlarging Chicano/a history and the interdisciplinary field of Chicana/o Studies beyond the core of the Southwest. How and why did you choose your dissertation topic? Zapata: I chose my topic by diving into small, un-computerized, rural archives in the plains where I found a story yet to be written. SMU: What has been your most interesting finding about your topic? Andrade: My biggest accomplishment has been publishing an op-ed in the Washington Post that looked at Trump’s sudden concern over the MS-13 gang and comparing it to the hysteria the pachucos inspired in the 1940s. A lot of that research came from a historiographic essay I wrote for Dr. Thomas Knock. So essentially, the Ph.D. program gave me the tools that I needed to relate historical research to current-day concerns. SMU: What has been your favorite moment as a Ph.D. student at SMU and why? Andrade: My favorite moment was during the first semester when every couple of weeks Dr. Sherry Smith had had fellowships from the Clements Center for Southwest Studies speak to the class. They discussed their research, their writing process, and even insecurities that come from being a historian. Those talks helped show a side of academia that was completely unaware of and in certain ways, made the people who wrote the books – who’re often faceless and just a name – much more real. SMU: What is your research about? Andrade: I research how boxing influences identity. And since I’m specifically focused on Mexican and Mexican American identity, masochism seems to be a running theme in how boxing is used not just by boxers but also fans, promoters, advertisers, etc. SMU: What has been your most interesting finding about your topic? Andrade: Seemingly everything in sports and athletics, let alone boxing, is intertwined with politics. There are class and race components to something as simple as the difference between working out in a CrossFit or boxing gym. The sports that we watch and the way we say so much more about who we are than we expect.
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 are two of our alumni explaining how the history major prepared them for life beyond graduation.

Gregory Thompson '85

**SMU:** What career have you pursued since you graduated from SMU?

**Thompson:** I have been a physician and anesthesiologist for the past twenty-eight years. I am currently the president of Lifetime Anesthesia Corp., which is an anesthesiology practice management company. Prior to my association with Lifetime, I had been in private practice and held many hospital administrative and leadership positions over the years including president and chief of staff of a large multi-center hospital system.

**SMU:** Do you feel your history major has helped you succeed in your career, and if so, how exactly?

**Thompson:** I have always felt that my degree in history has been a great asset in life. A liberal arts education teaches a person to think critically, which is a vitally important life skill. More importantly, the study of history teaches about the human experience. No matter what business you may go into, it ultimately is all human experience and interactions. A study of history has helped me to be able to learn from the past and place both current and future decisions in context. The years of study required for a degree in history also taught me the skill of organizing my thoughts and expressing them clearly in both verbal and written forms. I actually think this has been an asset for me in the medical world where the majority of my colleagues have scientific backgrounds. It is unfortunate how many people struggle to write and speak clearly or with proper grammar. In my mind, the purpose of a college education is to teach a person to think critically and expose them to new ideas. Once you develop this skill through education, you can do most anything you set your mind to. Do you think a degree in history offers this core value? I worry that the vocationally focused education of today pigeon-holes students into narrow career choices too early before they have been exposed to much of the real world. If you get a degree in logistics then decide later that it’s not for you, what then? I am not sure what the answer ultimately is; however, I would rather hire a person who can think than someone who has been trained.

Marion Hodges Biglan '83

**SMU:** What career have you pursued since you graduated from SMU?

**Biglan:** I am the founder and principal of MHB Consulting, LLC, which I started in 2005. In my work as a consultant and executive coach, I work with nonprofit administrators to help them grow their impact as leaders, and to help ensure that their organizations’ approaches to people, diversity, and culture foster success in achieving their missions. Before starting my own practice, I was an education non-profit leader for twenty years and a teacher after graduation from SMU.

**SMU:** Do you feel your history major has helped you succeed in your career, and if so, how exactly?

**Biglan:** 100% and without a doubt! I remember the first day of my first history class at SMU, the professor said: “Forget everything you have ever learned about history. Everything you learned was wrong. You will now learn the rest of the story.” This was so true, and I’m still learning! From day one in the history department I learned the skill of inquiry. There is always more to the story and another point of view. There are facts, but history is the interpretation of facts and the narratives we construct around those facts. My classes taught me to be curious about what, who, and why, and to understand what was underneath the surface. In short, my history classes taught me to think. The content in which I immersed myself helped me begin to understand why our country was so racially and economically divided. The more I learned the more I wanted to know, and the more I wanted to be part of the solution. What I learned gave me the context I needed to be passionate about pursuing a career of social justice. My history classes were the stepping stone for my joining Teach for America after graduation, first as a teacher and then as a leader in the organization. My experience in the SMU History department provided a critical foundation of inquiry skills as well as the historical context for understanding inequality that have both been instrumental in my career as a non-profit leader and now consultant.

Celebrating the Past: Faculty Awards

Sabri Ates was awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship for the 2017-18 academic year to work on his book project about the quest for a Kurdish state between 1880-1925, when the creation of such a state emerged as a distinct possibility but then quickly unraveled.

Rachel Ball-Phillips won a Manodharma Faculty Travel Grant to set up internships for students in India. She was also awarded a Leadership ISD Civic Engagement Fellowship to host Community Conversations events at Dedman College.

Kate Carté Engul received a Sons of the American Revolution Visiting Professorship from King’s College London to advance research on a book manuscript that explores Protestantism during the American Revolution.


Jill Kelly was awarded a Fulbright U.S. Scholar Grant and a Dedman College Dean’s Research Council Grant in 2018-19 to conduct archival and oral history research for her second book project, “The Burden is Heavy. We Need the Men: Gendered Knowledge in the 1059 Revolutions in South Africa,” which examines gender and ethnicity during anti-apartheid resistance.


Alexis McCrossen received the inaugural Coleman Family Faculty Research Award, generously established by departmental alum Walter Coleman (’01). She used the fellowship to visit archives related to New Year’s Eve broadcasts from Times Square for her book project “Time’s Touchstone: The New Year in American Life.”

Ariel Ross won a 2018 Dedman College Linking Fellowship, which will enable her to acquire GIS skills in order to support her research on examining and understanding the American economic history in the nineteenth century.

Kathleen Wellman was named an Althuler Distinguished Teaching Professor; the highest award for teaching at SMU, in 2017. She also received the Lawrence Perrine Prize, which recognizes professors who embody the ideals of a liberal arts education, from the SMU Phi Beta Kappa Chapter. In the Fall of 2018, she holds the Center for Presidential History Writing Fellowship to finish a book manuscript titled “Hijacking History: How the Christian Right Teaches World History and Why It Matters.”
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 within the last five years. Be sure to check them out!

**Kenneth Andrien**

This book traces seven decades of intermittent war by Russian, British, Ottoman, and Iranian technical and diplomatic teams to turn an ill-defined and highly porous border into an internationally recognized boundary. By examining the Muslim world’s oldest boundary, the book details how internationally recognized boundary. By examining the Muslim world’s oldest boundary, the book details how

**Neil Foley**

This book highlights the interplay between Spain and Spanish America under the Bourbon monarchy. It sets the stage for the better-known agenda of Enlightenment reforms, and shows how these reforms were a consequence of military exigencies and a response to Enlightenment ideas.

**Joy Guild**
*With David Armitage.*

This book investigates the public clock era, the period between 1880 and 1890, when tower, street and gallery clocks saturated towns and cities, and Americans rich and poor kept clocks in their homes and carried watches in their pockets. The book ultimately explores how the distribution and the standardization of clock time resulted in the ideal of American synchronicity.

**Alumni Books**

Matthew M. Babcock
*Apache Adaptation to Hispanic Rule* (Cambridge University Press, 2016)

Timothy P. Bowman
*Blood Orange: Colonialism and Agriculture in the South Atlantic World* (University of North Carolina Press, 2018)

Lisa A. García
*Guerra y Frontera: El Ejército del Norte entre 1855 y 1858* (Archivo General del Estado de Nuevo Leon, 2007)

Jill Kelly

Joel H. Bronson
*The Life and Times of George McGovern* (University of Texas Press, 2015)

José A. Ramirez

Paul T. Nelson
*Wreaks of Human Ambition: A History of Utah’s Canyon Country to 1885* (University of Utah Press, 2014)

Amy Moscheta Porter

Jeffrey M. Schulze
*To the Edge of the Mexican Tonantzin and War World* (University of Texas Press, 2009)

Jeffrey M. Schulze
*To the Edge of the Mexican Tonantzin and War World* (University of Texas Press, 2009)

Joy Guild
*The Life and Times of George McGovern* (University of Texas Press, 2015)

Joel H. Bronson
*The Life and Times of George McGovern* (University of Texas Press, 2015)

José A. Ramirez

Paul T. Nelson
*Wreaks of Human Ambition: A History of Utah’s Canyon Country to 1885* (University of Utah Press, 2014)

Amy Moscheta Porter

Jeffrey M. Schulze
*To the Edge of the Mexican Tonantzin and War World* (University of Texas Press, 2009)

Jeffrey M. Schulze
*To the Edge of the Mexican Tonantzin and War World* (University of Texas Press, 2009)

Joy Guild
*The Life and Times of George McGovern* (University of Texas Press, 2015)

Joel H. Bronson
*The Life and Times of George McGovern* (University of Texas Press, 2015)

José A. Ramirez

Paul T. Nelson
*Wreaks of Human Ambition: A History of Utah’s Canyon Country to 1885* (University of Utah Press, 2014)

Amy Moscheta Porter

Jeffrey M. Schulze
*To the Edge of the Mexican Tonantzin and War World* (University of Texas Press, 2009)

Jeffrey M. Schulze
*To the Edge of the Mexican Tonantzin and War World* (University of Texas Press, 2009)
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 Mary Lynn Amoyo at mamoyo@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.

Study Abroad offers students the chance to travel through time! Our students visit the ruins of the Roman Empire, marvel at the royal palaces of early modern France, and stay at a thirteenth-century college in Oxford (among other adventures)! Here majors Diana Miller and Barrett Stout enjoy the Blenheim Palace Battle Proms. See page 8.