

THE PRESENCE OF THE PAST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE



JANUARY
2021

BU HISTORY DEPARTMENT

FROM THE CHAIR'S DESK

NINA SILBER, PROFESSOR AND CHAIR



Greetings from Bay State Road, from home offices everywhere, and from Zoom!

As the new chair of the BU History Department, I am very pleased to send this greeting to our friends, alumni, students, and faculty as we stand at the mid-point of an unusual and challenging academic year. Everyone in the History Department has been working hard to adjust to new ways of teaching (in-person classes with

masks; zoom screens), researching (digging deep for online archival material), conferencing (webinars and other online formats), and more. Through it all, our students, faculty, and the larger History community have been tremendously creative and productive. Undergraduates in the “History of Boston” class, for example, created [a fantastic website](#) that showcases transcriptions of seventeenth century documents as well as a virtual tour of several Boston historical sites. Our faculty have continued to publish important books and win awards. Our PhD students continue to mark the milestones in their doctoral careers. We hosted an online “Historians at the Movies” event where several faculty and students discussed the recently released (and conveniently stream-able) Aaron Sorkin film, *The Trial of the Chicago 7*. And in December, under the auspices of the annual Howard Zinn Memorial Lecture, I had the honor of joining the History Department’s newest faculty member, Professor Ibram X. Kendi, for a virtual conversation on his pathbreaking anti-racist scholarship, his ideas about anti-racist activism, and his founding of the new BU Center for Anti-Racist Research.

Looking ahead to Spring, many of the challenges of online and hybrid teaching will remain but, with the experience of Fall under our belts, we feel a bit more confident about overcoming the obstacles. We will also resume some of our “usual” department activities like the [American Political History Institute lecture series](#) (online for Spring 2021) as well as our annual Bacon Lecture. For our first ever Bacon Lecture on Zoom, Professor Manisha Sinha, the James L. and Shirley A. Draper Chair at the University of Connecticut, will join us to discuss her recent scholarship on “the long nineteenth amendment”. The event will take place on April 14 at 5:30 pm, with more information, including Zoom link, to follow.

In this challenging time, we invite all of you who can to join us in sustaining our community by engaging in our public programs, lectures, and news events. I hope, too, that you will consider making an annual gift to support the History Department. I want to emphasize that gifts to this program will be a donation to the Department of History, that may also attract matching funds to our department from a university pool. Gifts, large or modest, will help us to build our efforts to support our teaching and student programs. While a small gift may enable a student to present original research at a conference, a slightly larger gift lets a professor take students into the field or sends a student to an archive. You can rest assured that your donation will go directly to the department and help us to maintain its record of excellence in scholarship and community service. In this financially uncertain moment, we would be especially grateful for those generous gifts that allow us to do the extraordinary and extracurricular things that often have a tremendous impact on our students. If you want to join us in enhancing the student experience, please visit [our online giving form](#).

We always enjoy hearing from our alumni; if you have anything you'd like me to include in a future newsletter, send me an email at history@bu.edu. For alumni I encourage you to keep us up-to-date on your activities and accomplishments for inclusion in the Newsletter. With best wishes for the new year!

Nina Silber
Professor and Chair, Department of History

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JON WESTLING, IN MEMORIAM



This month, the BU community lost **Jon Westling**, Professor of History and the Humanities and President Emeritus of Boston University. Professor Westling held many teaching and administrative positions over the course of his 46-year tenure at BU, including serving as President of the University from 1996 to 2002, after which time he joined the History Department to teach medieval and early modern European history. *BU Today* wrote an article commemorating Professor Westling's life and work, which you can read here: <http://www.bu.edu/articles/2021/remembering-former-bu-president-jon-westling>.

Professor **Clifford Backman** wrote a few further words remembering Professor Westling:

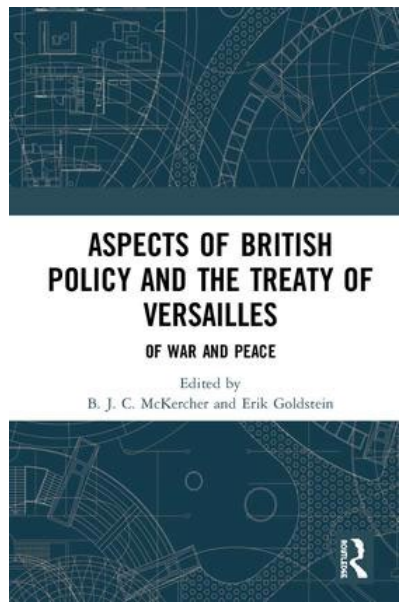
“On an official level, Jon had a long and complicated history with our department; on a personal one, I shall miss the hours I spent with him discussing everything from English Common Law to obscure Canadian poets, the beauty of the American Northwest, Boston restaurants, and the strengths and weaknesses of various makes of motorcycles. As a fellow medievalist I was able to relate to Jon in a way that was perhaps unique among members of our department. I found him a good colleague and delightful conversationalist. Many of the students we shared commented to me on his impressively broad knowledge and ability to handle extemporaneously almost any question put to him. I shall miss his deep laugh, his lively opinions about everything -- even the ones I disagreed with-- and our medieval-nerdy emails written in Latin. His story is surely an unusual one, with a BA from Reed College, advanced study as a Rhodes Scholar at St. John's College (Oxford), then rising through the administrative ranks at BU until finally reaching the presidency (1996-2002). His career was controversial. The man I knew was all the more interesting because of that.”

Paula Austin was featured in *BU Today* several times, including [an interview](#) about her 2019 [book on NYU Press](#) *Coming of Age in Jim Crow DC: Navigating the Politics of Everyday Life* as well as her plans following the release of the book, including a digital mapping project in collaboration with [Prologue DC](#). Austin also wrote [an article](#) for *BU Today* titled “POV: Trump’s Call for a National Garden of American Heroes Misses the Point.” Austin participated in several events and conferences at BU, including [a new CAS video series](#) on faculty research, a webinar hosted by the BU Initiative on Cities titled “Confronting Systemic Racism: Policing, Mass Incarceration & Black Lives Matter,” and the opening plenary discussion of BU’s Day of Collective Engagement, along with **Ibram X. Kendi**, who acted as moderator.

Brooke Blower was a recipient of the [Public Scholars](#) grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for her project “American World Wars: Intimate Histories from the Crash of the Yankee Clipper.” Blower was also one of a handful of scholars selected by the Organization of American Historians as the 2019–2020 additions to their [Distinguished Lectureship Program](#).

Arianne Chernock published a couple of reviews in the *Times Literary Supplement*, [one in September 2019](#) titled “Pills, thrills and bigotries: Women’s lives in the Swinging Sixties” and [another from June 2020](#) called “The wars women wage: Marking the centenary of the Sex Qualification (Removal) Act.” Chernock also wrote an article for [a special volume](#) of the *Romantic Circles Praxis Series* on Mary Wollstonecraft.

Louis Ferleger released [a book](#), titled *Planting the Seeds of Research: How America’s Ultimate Investment Transformed Agriculture* (see right), on Anthem Press in 2020.



Erik Goldstein published [a new book](#) with Routledge Press titled *Aspects of British Policy and the Treaty of Versailles: Of War and Peace* (see above). The book was co-edited with B. J. C. McKercher.

In April, the American Academy of Arts & Sciences announced its [list of newly elected members](#) for 2020. The AAAS’s list of the newest additions to its ranks includes two of the History Department’s own faculty: Professor **Linda Heywood** and Professor **John Thornton**.





James McCann was invited to lecture and respond to comments from Ph.D. students at the University of Illinois in October on his book *The Historical Ecology of Malaria* assigned to their semester's reading. He has also been invited to a panel on "Water in East Africa" of the European Society of Environmental History bi-annual meeting in Bristol UK in July. In December he reviewed an article on "Small Grains in Zimbabwe" for *Revue d'histoire contemporaine de l'Afrique*. He awaits approval for grant proposals on the Cultures of Fish and Ecologies of Humans from National Geographic and the American Society for Environmental History. Both grants would involve colleagues from History, Earth and Environment, Conservation Biology, and Remote Sensing. In November he was a consultant for a project on historical foods for the *New Yorker* magazine. His book *Stirring the Pot* was named to the list of the top 25 all-time best of *Gourmand Magazine's* award winners to be celebrated at the Louvre in Paris in June. Inshallah, each of these events await some resolution of Covid travel! Hope for the best.

Last year, the History Department was honored to welcome **Ibram X. Kendi** (see above) to the faculty. Since joining Boston University, Professor Kendi has established the [BU Center for Antiracist Research](#) and [been named](#) the recipient of the Andrew W. Mellon Professorship in the Humanities, a position previously held by the late Elie Wiesel. In December, Professor Kendi gave the 2020 Howard Zinn Memorial Lecture in the form of a virtual conversation with Professor **Nina Silber**.

Deanna Klepper gave advice to the Class of 2020 in [a video from BU Today](#). Professor Klepper recommended that students "find some way to ritualize this transition. Celebrate yourself, celebrate your families, celebrate your friends and everyone who has helped to bring you to this moment."

Professor Emeritus **Fred Leventhal** is the joint author (with Peter Stansky of Stanford) of [a new biography](#), *Leonard Woolf: Bloomsbury Socialist*, published in August 2019 by Oxford University Press.

David Mayers published an article in [The Journal of Transatlantic Studies](#) titled "The Lure of Ethiopia and the Saga of Colonel John Robinson, 1935-1937."

This month, **Eugenio Menegon** was a participant in [an online conference](#) hosted by the Center for Democracy, Toleration and Religion at UC Berkeley on "Toleration in Comparative Perspective." Professor Menegon presented his paper on "The Way Has Not a Constant Name': State Attitudes to Religious Toleration in Chinese History."

In [an article](#) in *BU Today*, Eugenio Menegon discussed his work on the [China Historical Christian Database](#) based at the [Center for Global Christianity & Mission](#) at the BU School of Theology. The project seeks to visualize the presence of Christianity in China from 1550 to 1950.

Cathal Nolan was promoted to the rank of Full Professor of History.

Simon Payaslian organized and chaired a panel entitled “State and Diaspora Policies on Ethnicity and Political Engagement,” at [the annual meeting](#) of the American Political Science Association on September 13, 2020. Payaslian also published [an article](#) entitled “Daniel Varoujan à l’Université de Gand (1905-1909),” in *Revue belge de Philologie et d’Histoire / Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis*. The article appears in a special issue entitled *Daniel Varoujan: Un poète arménien à Gand – cent ans après*.

Amalia Pérez-Juez’s archaeological research in Menorca, Spain was featured in *El País* in [an article](#) titled “La espada del guerrero que destrozó el juguete.”

Ron Richardson published several articles during the Fall 2020 semester, including [an article](#) titled “Home Sweet Home” in the online literary journal Litbreak Magazine. The piece is a chapter from his auto-ontological memoir “Endowed by Their Creator: White Supremacy and the Autonomous Self.” In October, Richardson published [an piece](#) in *Epoché*, a monthly online philosophy magazine. Richardson will also be publishing an article on “The White Supremacist Collective Unconscious and the Autonomous Self” in Harvard’s [Transition Magazine](#) in March.

Jon Roberts was the 2020 faculty recipient for the History Department’s Gerald and Deanne Gitner Family Undergraduate Teaching Prizes in History.

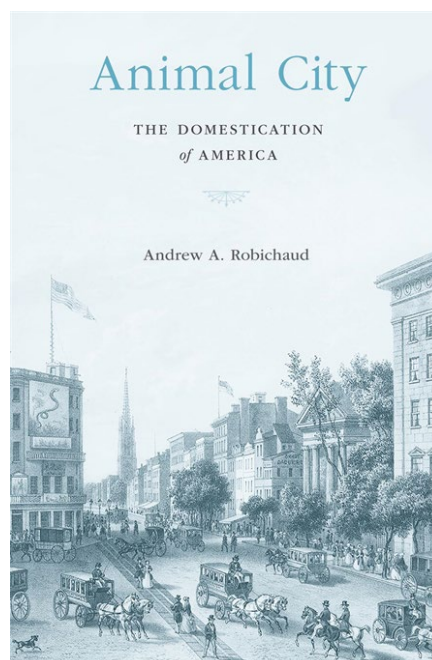
Andrew Robichaud’s [book](#) *Animal City: The Domestication of America* (see right) was released in December 2019 on Harvard University Press. Professor Robichaud gave a couple of interviews in which he discussed the book and his research with [CAS Communications](#) and with “[Living on Earth](#),” a syndicated radio show that airs on NPR.

Several days ago, Professor Robichaud published [an article](#) in *The Boston Globe* called “Coasting into winter 2021” on 19th century Bostonians’ recreational activities in snowy weather.

In May, **Jeffrey Rubin** co-wrote an article on “The Social Cost of Bolsonaro’s Denial” with Gana Ndiaye, a PhD student in the BU Anthropology Department, which was published in Portuguese in [Sul21](#) and in English in [NACLA](#).

Bruce Schulman was featured in *BU Today* several times over the past year, including providing [an interview](#) about the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol Building on January 6th and discussing the Electoral College in [a Q&A session](#) BU Today conducted with a handful of BU experts on the 2020 presidential election,.

Schulman also wrote about current events in [an article](#) for BU’s alumni magazine *Bostonia* on the “historic” nature of this week’s presidential election and [a piece](#) in *The Washington Post’s* “Made by History” series on “Court packing – and other radical constitutional reforms – might save America.”



Benjamin Siegel writes: “I spent my first summer in the United States in more than a dozen years, and spent a lot of that time preparing for our new hybrid courses this fall. But I was also pleased to see three big articles come out in the latter half of this year. One, related to my current book project on the transnational origins of the American opioid crisis, appeared in the *Indian Economic and Social History Review*. Another, on the strange journeys of a stubborn weed, appeared in *Environmental History*. And the third, on a strange, decades-long meeting between India’s post-colonial Gandhians & Israel’s development apparatus, appeared in this October’s issue of the *American Historical review*.”

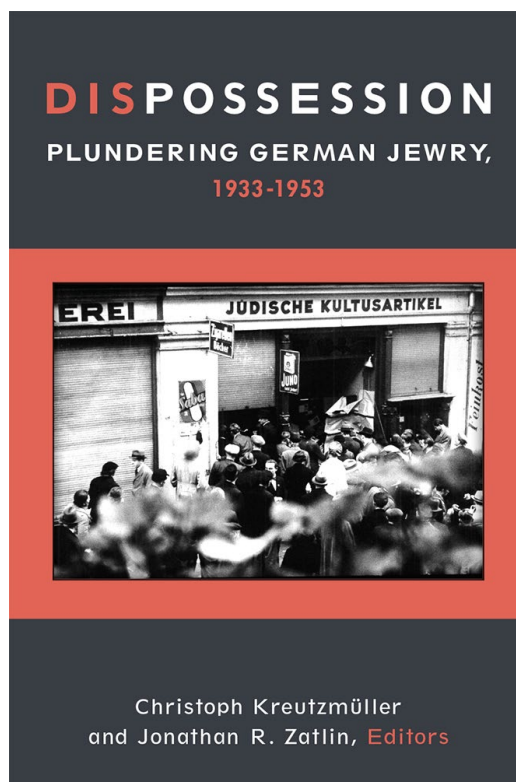
Nina Silber writes: “No surprise: I had many speaking engagements cancelled, including ones at Bryn Mawr; York College; Gettysburg College; and at the bi-annual meeting of the Society of Civil War Historians. Ditto for my research trip last June. I did publish a couple of op-ed pieces, one for the [“Made By History” series](#) in the *Washington Post* on HBO’s re-packaging of “Gone with the Wind” and one in [WBUR’s *Cognoscenti*](#) on “Rhett” the BU mascot. Lots of news outlets - in Japan, Denmark, Norway, and the US - wanted to talk about the threat of a new “civil war” in the US. Not sure I was able to give a definitive answer to that grim question. My interview with the Danish newspaper, *Politiken*, can be found [here](#) although you’ll need to read Danish to know what it says. In the Spring, my recently published book, *This War Ain’t Over: Fighting the Civil War in New Deal America*, received an “honorable mention” from the New England American Studies Association.”

Dave Shorten was one of three BU faculty interviewed by *BU Today* for [a feature](#) on the vice presidential debate between Kamala Harris and Mike Pence.

In March 2020, **John Thornton** published [a new book](#) titled *A History of West Central Africa to 1850* on Cambridge University Press.

Diana Wylie’s course “HI 320: Understanding Revolution: France and Algeria” was recently featured in *BU Today* in [an article](#) titled “Listen to a Lecture about Revolution? Why Not Play a Revolutionary in Class?”

Jonathan Zatlin published [a new book](#) titled *Dispossession: Plundering German Jewry, 1933-1953* (see below) with University of Michigan Press. Professor Zatlin was co-editor along with Christoph Kreutzmüller, a Senior Historian of the House of the Wannsee-Conference, Berlin.



COURSE SPOTLIGHT

PAULA AUSTIN ON HI 298: AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY



The Unessay Midterm

HI 298, cross-listed as AA 371, is the history of Black life, politics, activism, and ideologies in what becomes the United States. The course begins just before the 1600s and ends in the contemporary moment and aims to highlight African American history as vital to our understanding of United States history, and to survey Black historical experiences. It examines the changing nature of the institution of slavery, political economies of freedom and citizenship, the evolution of racial ideas, racial segregation, and racial violence, and movements for equality and justice. Through engagement with primary and secondary sources, literature, film, art and popular culture, we look at

experiences and responses to forced migration, the abolitionist movement, Black institution building, the Great Migration, the long struggle for civil and political rights and recognition, and the changing definitions of freedom and “blackness” that struggle engendered and produced. In Fall 2019, which was also my first semester in the BU History Department and the African American Studies program, I experimented with the unessay assignment as our midterm assessment.

We spent the first half of the semester reading about and discussing Black presence and experiences in colonial North America, the evolution of the institution of slavery and its relationship to racial ideas and hierarchies. My usual midterm assessment has been either a traditional essay that examines Black life from approximately 1600 to just before the Civil War. I ask students to only consider the materials we have used, which include excerpts of monographs like Marcus Rediker’s *The Slave Ship: A Human History*, Jennifer Morgan’s *Laboring Women*, and Stephanie Camp’s *Closer to Freedom*, as well as primary source material from early legal codes, court testimonies from the Revolutionary War era, and radical Black abolitionist speeches. Or when this course has been offered as a very large class (over 120 students), I’ve felt compelled to do midterm and final exams that included multiple choice, short and long answer questions, fill-ins and match questions.

Last fall, I decided to try a more creative approach to assessing takeaways from our first seven weeks. The Unessay has gotten some attention in the last few years. It has been described and implemented, mostly by rhetoric and writing instructors, as a pedagogical tool that “undoes” the formulaic and rule-bound nature of the traditional essay format. The Unessay helps students engage intellectually and imaginatively with the subject matter; it builds on the skills and interests of the students. It can also be an entry point for introducing digital humanities tools in the classroom. Because this was my first semester using the Unessay as an assessment tool, I was unsure how students would respond, what products would result, and what support students would need. As we got closer to the middle of the semester and the due date for the Unessay Midterm, I introduced the assignment and encouraged students to think of this as an experiment.

The Assignment

The Unessay Midterm was worth 20% of students’ grade. This was my usual weight for a mid-term assessment, whether a traditional essay or an exam. Students were given a prompt that asked about how the conditions and characteristics of the institution of slavery changed over time and about what Black life from the colonial period to the antebellum period looked like across regions. Students were able to choose their medium, think about their overall argument, how they would support it, and how they would represent it. They were given some parameters on how to prep for the production of the unessay, and then depending on their medium and plan, they were asked to produce the final project during our class time. In addition to whatever they decided to create, they also wrote a short blurb that summarized their argument and that referenced sources from our first 6 to 7 weeks. I shared with them some samples that included posters and infographics, and a Timeline designing website. I also discussed the rubric I would use to grade these, which included legibility, congruity between form and medium with argument, and credibility and persuasiveness. The results were pretty spectacular.

While some students opted to write traditional essays during class time, others created timelines, podcasts, a ‘zine issue, art, three-dimensional objects, a prototype for a board game, videos, a narrative poem, and digital exhibits. One of my concerns was about being able to judge all of these different kinds of projects, but their blurbs really helped. For folks who struggled a bit with the assignment, we met after they turned them in to discuss what they had planned, how it had gone, and what they would add if they could edit it. (And the few people who fell into this category, with whom I met, did make edits and turned in a new version. Most students received the full points for what they produced.) Finally, and maybe more importantly, I asked students to reflect on the process and the assignment (anonymously). Since it very much felt like an experiment to me, I wanted to really get a sense of how it went (I thought it had gone great!!!). Many students were surprised at their own creativity and others said that they opted for a traditional essay because trying to think of something caused some anxiety. Students said, though, that despite their choices for the assignment, they appreciated the energy of the room during the midterm. One student said that unlike their other midterms, the room felt so “calm.” I definitely have tweaks I would make to the assignment, but I plan to use it again.

Joshua Castillo gave a public lecture in Northampton, MA on October 27th, 2019 regarding “Congo’s Recent History and Contemporary Situation” as part of a seminar on the Democratic Republic of the Congo organized by the Pioneer Valley Interfaith Refugee Action Group. The arrival of over sixty Congolese refugees to the Northampton area over the past two and a half years has sparked local interest in the challenging situation these refugees left behind. The seminar was attended by around sixty area residents including several Congolese refugees, and also included a lecture by African Historian John Higginson of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst on Congo’s colonial history under Belgian rule. During the lectures and lively Q & A session that followed, the speakers and audience discussed major themes in Congolese history such as state violence, conflict over control of natural resources, and popular resistance. Castillo emphasized the remarkable resilience that Congolese have displayed in both surviving war at home, and adapting to the many challenges presented by life as refugees in the United States.

Jamie Grischkan was selected to be the [Raoul Berger-Mark DeWolfe Howe Legal History Fellowship](#) at Harvard Law School for the 2020-2021 academic year.

In the summer of 2020, **Elizabeth Hameeteman** helped organize the [#FlipTheList](#) initiative. She worked together with Justin Fisher, Sara Pritchard, Chris Slaby, and Ramya Swayamprakash to update and enrich Wikipedia’s “[List of environmental books](#)” by including more books written by scholars of color, scholars from the Global South, and/or scholars who identify as women, trans and non binary people. Through an edit-a-thon—sponsored by [Environmental History Now](#), [NiCHE New Scholars](#), [ASEH’s Committee on Diversity,](#)

[Inclusion and Equity](#), [ASEH’s Graduate Student Caucus](#), and the [Women’s Environmental History Network](#)—more than 100 people crowdsourced a list with over 800 entries, far exceeding the initial goal of 300 recommendations. The work to add all the entries to the Wikipedia page, as a way of bringing the diverse and multi-layered nature of environmental-related work and expertise to the forefront, has been ongoing. Elizabeth and the rest of the [#FlipTheList](#) team hope to expand the initiative’s impact over the course of the coming year.

On March 6, 2020, Hameeteman gave a lecture at the University College Roosevelt in Middelburg, the Netherlands, about her dissertation project, titled “Water for a Thirsty World: Desalination, Development, and the Global Quest for Water in the 1960s.”

Kacie Harris was the 2020 teaching fellow recipient for the History Department’s Gerald and Deanne Gitner Family Undergraduate Teaching Prizes in History.

Jeanna Kinnebrew writes: “As part of [Contingent Magazine’s](#) “History Now” series this April, I published a short essay about how the pandemic has affected my work as a historian. In July, I published a guest piece in [the Southern Historical Association’s blog](#) series highlighting graduate students living, teaching, and working under the pandemic. In it, I explored the challenges - and, surprisingly, a benefit - of attempting to write a dissertation while parenting a four-year-old full-time.”

Tom Sojka was a recipient of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences’ 2019-2020 Outstanding Teaching Fellow Award.

Henry Tonks published an article in the Journal of Pacific and American Studies. The journal is published by the [Center for Pacific and American Studies](#), a part of the Institute for Advanced Global Studies at the University of Tokyo. The article, titled “Looking East: What American Neoliberals Learned from Japanese Political Economy – and How They Unlearned It,

1981-1994,” is on the formulation of neo-liberal politics within the Democratic Party in the 1980s and early 1990s. Tonks discusses this in terms of how neoliberals’ economic policies were inspired by Japan’s ‘economic miracle,’ rather than necessarily being accommodations to conservative or free-market economics.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MUSEUMS AND THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT

With **Evelyn Carmen Ramos** (SAAM) and **Aaron Bryant** and **Ariana A. Curtis** (NMAAHC) | Wednesday, January 27, 2021 | 5:30 - 7 PM | [Link](#)

RACE, PLACE, AND SPACE SERIES: COMING OF AGE IN JIM CROW DC: NAVIGATING THE POLITICS OF EVERYDAY LIFE

With **Paula Austin** | Wednesday, February 3, 2021 | 4-5 PM | [Link](#)

ANIMAL CITY: THE DOMESTICATION OF AMERICA

With **Andrew Robichaud** and **Catherine McNeur** (Portland State University) | Tuesday, February 9th, 2021 | 4-5 PM | [Link](#)

APHI LECTURE: THE WOUNDED WORLD: W. E. B. DU BOIS AND WORLD WAR I

With **Chad Williams** (Brandeis University) | Wednesday, February 10, 2021 | 12:20 PM | [Link](#)

APHI LECTURE: NELSON ROCKEFELLER’S DREAMS OF GLORY: THE QUEST FOR NATIONAL LEGITIMACY VIA NATIONAL SECURITY, 1952-1960

With **Andrew David** | Wednesday, February 24, 2021 | 12:20 PM | [Link](#)

APHI LECTURE: THE POLITICS OF RELIEF: TRACING THE 20TH CENTURY ORIGINS OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE

With **Julia Irwin** (University of South Florida) | Wednesday, March 31, 2021 | 12:20 PM | [Link](#)

APHI LECTURE: THE WHITE POWER MOVEMENT AND RACE IN AMERICA

With **Kathleen Belew** (University of Chicago) | Wednesday, April 7, 2021 | 12:20 PM | [Link](#)

2021 GASPARD G. BACON LECTURE

With **Manisha Sinha** (University of Connecticut) | Wednesday, April 14, 2021 | 5:30 PM | [Link TBA](#)

JAMES JOHNSON - HI 200

A devoted class of 18 students took my section of *The Historian's Craft* (HI 200), attending live in our classroom, the BU dorms, Western Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Minnesota, and (in the case of one well-traveled student) Norway, London, and the Bahamas. It was one of the most engaged and eagerly participative group of students I've ever taught. Everyone was present for most every class. They were infallibly prepared for discussion with their Zoom cameras on! However unlikely it sounds, we bonded and got a lot done. I will remember that class and its extraordinary students fondly.

TEACHING
DURING
COVID-19

GRAD STUDENT PROFILE

JEANNA L. KINNEBREW, PHD STUDENT



What are your principal research interests?

I follow the money! I study private philanthropy, public policy, and social change in twentieth-century America. In particular, I am interested in how and why some non-profit organizations have exerted disproportionate influence on public life. My dissertation focuses on midcentury battles over sexual health, particularly birth control, and the handful of nonprofit groups leading the fights on either side. My MA thesis explored American philanthropy's involvement in 1960s foreign policy.

Why were you drawn to BU?

BU's excellent History department faculty and five years of Ph.D. funding stood out when I was considering graduate programs. We have a supportive and welcoming university-wide community, and I have particularly enjoyed the opportunities to work with graduate students from several other departments.

What's the most interesting or weird thing you found in the archives or while conducting primary research?

I recently read through a collection of sex education pamphlets from the 1880s to the 1950s, advising men and women how to avoid contracting a sexually transmitted infection. Much of the advice was (unintentionally) hilarious – and some of it was terrifying!

Though we were unable to hold our annual convocation ceremony for our graduating seniors, the History Department wanted to virtually commemorate the all the hard work of the Class of 2020. Department staff asked History faculty members and graduating students to share their thoughts in [a video tribute to the graduates](#).



History major **Solomon Shuangyu Liang** (*see above*) received an Outstanding Student Researcher Award from UROP for his research on Christianity in modern China on behalf of the BU DH project China Historical Christian Database (CHCD), conducted during Summer 2020 with a UROP Humanities Grant under the direction of Professors **Eugenio Menegon** (History, CAS) and Daryl Ireland (Center for Global Christianity and Mission, BU School of Theology). All outstanding student awardees will be featured in the UROP Symposium booklet and will be celebrated on the UROP website in November. Shuangyu has taken several courses with Professor Menegon over the years, and received so far four UROP grants for this project. Currently he is also training in CHCD data input methods two MA students from the Institute of Qing History at Renmin University of China (Beijing), a partner of the CHCD. He assisted in the CHCD Zoom workshop

“Mapping Christianity in China, 1550-1950” on November 19-21, 2020.

Five History students (out of a total of 25 awardees for all humanistic disciplines), in collaboration with History faculty, have received UROP Humanities Scholars Awards for Summer 2020. These awards provide students with stipend and supplies/travel support and research funding to their faculty mentor. Our students will present their findings at the Annual UROP Research Symposium and through other activities during academic year 2020-21. Below are the names of the students and faculty mentors, and their topics of research:

Kaasinath Balagurunath, a History major, is conducting research with Dr. Benjamin Siegel (CAS History) on a project titled, “Physicians’ Approaches to the Problem of Pain, the 1980s to the Present.”

Julia Furmanek, a History major, is conducting research with Dr. Bruce Schulman (CAS History) on a project titled, “Personal Trauma in the Public View: Understanding the Postwar Experience in America through Confessional Poetry.”

Shuangyu Liang, a History major, and Xincheng Zhou, an International Relations major and History minor, are conducting research with Dr. Eugenio Menegon (CAS History) on a project titled, “The China Historical Christian Database (CHCD). An Essential Digital Tool for the Cartography and Prosopography of Christianity in China.”

William Santarsiero, a History major, is conducting research with Dr. Andrew David (CAS History) on a project titled, “America’s Hypocritical Destiny: America’s expansion in the mid-1800s and the problems of Manifest Destiny.”

UNDERGRADUATE PROFILE

PEYTON COEL, CAS '23; PARDEE '23

Where are you from?

South Burlington, Vermont.

What has been your favorite History class you've taken at BU so far?

HI 287, or History of American Foreign Relations since 1898. The content of the course is incredibly interesting not only because it covers an era of American history that was marked by interactions with other nations, but really digs deep into the intentions and meanings behind many American foreign policy decisions.

What inspired you to become a History major?

In high school, history was truly the only subject that I felt fully engaged with inside and outside of class. The moment we learned something new, I would want to know everything I could about it. I found it fascinating to connect where we are today with what happened in the past, and that's something I want to study for the rest of my life because it's always going to be important.

What advice do you have for students considering a major or minor in History?

Go for it! History is such an amazing major and I've valued every second spent in my history classes. There are so many courses taught by a range of outstanding faculty, so try a little bit of everything to see what you like.

What is one interesting or fun fact about you?

I've met Bernie Sanders twice!



JAMES JOHNSON - HI 190

Making History: Conflict and Community in Boston's Past (HI 190) is an intensely hands-on class, with archival research at the Massachusetts Historical Society, visits to historical sites in the city, a bus tour of Boston's neighborhoods, and regular in-person collaboration for out-of-class group-work. Each of those components was a victim of the pandemic. The class's 45 students--attending in Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, China, and India--were undeterred. They did their research with scans of original 17th-century books and artifacts, transcribed scanned letters written by settlers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, met regularly with their project partners on Zoom, and did their own self-guided tours of historic sites, sketching, photographing, and describing them for the class. A team of web-designers build the class website to showcase the superior work of this class, which can be found at <https://sites.bu.edu/hi190/>.

TEACHING
DURING
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ALUMNI PROFILE

AARON HILTNER, GRS '18



What have you been doing since leaving the History Department?

Since graduating, I moved with my wife Tessa to Madison, WI where she works as the Senior Historian at American Girl. I now teach writing and ethics at UW-Madison within the College of Engineering. I also just published my first book, *Taking Leave, Taking Liberties* with The University of Chicago Press. The book examines civil-military conflict between servicemen and civilians on the U.S. home front. I am now researching U.S. cowboys and ranchers traveling abroad to places like Argentina, Australia, and Rhodesia as part of a larger imperial struggle to control the Beef export market. It connects the history of empire, capitalism, the environment, and animals. Beyond that, we now have a lovely daughter who brings endless joy and fun to our lives.

How did your experience in the department shape your professional and personal life?

The department taught me the skills I now use everyday: how to write, how to argue,

how to research, and how to teach. I came in to the program straight from undergrad and really did not understand how to do these things. The classes and guidance from faculty helped me become a more incisive writer and reader, while also driving me to “learn the language” of my sources. Being a TA also helped me see how different faculty members connected with their students. The department is obviously filled with superb researchers and writers, but it is also driven by a real commitment to getting students across the university engaged in interpreting and analyzing history. It’s rewarding to see liberal arts, engineering, and comm students all collaborating in breaking down a George Bellows painting or a Dolly Parton song.

What interactions with members of the History faculty did you value most during your time in the department?

I feel incredibly lucky to have had Professor Brooke Blower as my advisor. She consistently provided substantive feedback that drove my growth as a writer and researcher. I remember going to a regional

National Archives location and finding that most of the records I needed had been destroyed. It was gutting, but she helped me salvage the research trip and provided valuable ideas about how to find supplementary archival material. I wouldn't have been able to write the book without her encouragement, advice, and humor.

Professor Bruce Schulman always drove me to see the bigger picture and offered excellent models for using cultural sources to teach political history. Professor Diana Wylie helped me see new ways of understanding urban history. Professor Sarah Phillips sparked an interest in environmental history and offered a clear view of how to think about consumer politics. Professor Jon Roberts provided excellent guidance of our dissertation workshops and was always up for talking baseball. Professor Eugenio Menegon gave us a solid foundation in historical methods. Professor David Mayers offered incisive ways of understanding diplomatic history and sources. I could go on.

If you could give a piece of advice to your past self, what would it be?

The first year of grad school will end, so just keep going. More seriously, I'd tell myself to spend more time reading and thinking about the intersections between urban and environmental history. I'd also recommend all grad students pick up the old dusty books that look really uninteresting. I found some of my most useful sources in "The Green Books," a series of military histories with boring titles like "The Technical Services." These were quite interesting and valuable histories, so don't discount the old works. The same principle applies to archival research--boxes with dull titles like "Logistical planning and operations in district 9" have some of the most fruitful and interesting material.

KACIE HARRIS - TF FOR HI 272

Admittedly, upon returning to campus last fall, I was a bit skeptical of BU's "Learn from Anywhere" approach to the 2020-2021 academic year. I was anxious about meeting with students in-person while at the same time having students tune-in to class remotely. How would the students in the classroom communicate with those learning from home? Would they be able to see and hear each other? How could I keep students engaged if we were to encounter technical difficulties? I knew that BU had equipment in place to assist with hybrid learning, but I was not confident that I could operate it correctly. The first few weeks of the semester were an adjustment, but with the patience and understanding of the students, the encouragement from faculty, and the assistance of staff, the semester flew by with surprisingly few difficulties. I am especially grateful to the in-classroom student moderators who were always quick to help adjust cameras and make sure microphones were working. Heading into the spring semester, I am more of a believer in Learn from Anywhere than before, and I am fortunate to both work for and attend a university that seeks to accommodate the needs of its students, especially in such trying times.

TEACHING
DURING
COVID-19



On November 6, 2019, BU History Ph.D. **Anne Blaschke** (GRS '12) gave a talk at Bard College at Simon's Rock on "Title IX, Women's Team Sport, and Advocacy" (see above). The talk traced the impact of post-1960 sex equality law on U.S. athletes, corporations, and politicians. Using as lenses the team sports of soccer, football, and basketball, the talk examined how gender, race, and class affect the ways in which Americans have long connected with sport via both politics and policy. Denied equal treatment at work—as well as mainstream media coverage and comparable sponsorship money—female athletes have founded upstart entrepreneurs challenging long-held understandings of gender and used historic sex equality laws to bring suit against their employers. Blaschke is currently an Associate Lecturer in American Studies at UMass Boston and a Lecturer in the BU Writing Program.

Seth Blumenthal (GRS '13), a Senior Lecturer in the CAS Writing Program, [was named](#) a recipient of the 2020 Metcalf Award for Excellence in Teaching.

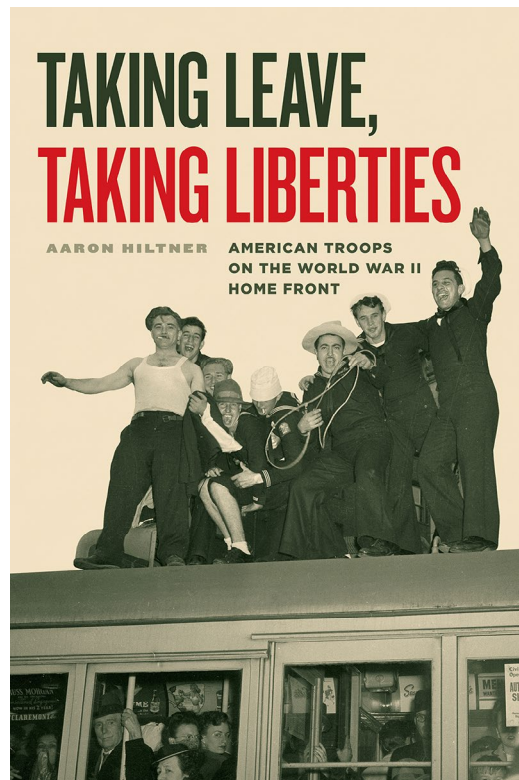
Blumenthal also shared advice for 2020 graduates in [a video from BU Today](#).

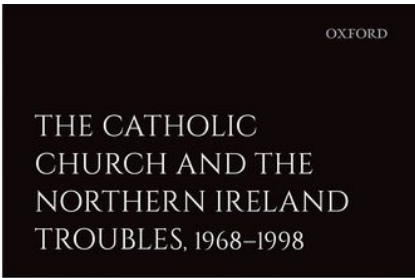
Andrew David (CAS '05, GRS '18) was interviewed in *BU Today* for [a piece](#) titled "The Trump Tapes vs the Nixon Tapes."

David was also featured in *BU Today* for the course he taught in Summer 2020 in [an article](#) titled "Trump and Nixon: Separated at Birth?"

Zach Fredman (GRS '16), currently Assistant Professor of History at Duke Kunshan University, published [an article](#) in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* discussing his experiences with teaching remotely while under quarantine in Suzhou, China due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Aaron Hiltner (GRS '18), currently a faculty member at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, revised his dissertation into [a book](#), *Taking Leave, Taking Liberties: American Troops on the World War II Home Front* (see below), which was published by the University of Chicago Press last Fall.





MARGARET M. SCULL



Emma Schlauder (CAS '19), currently a postgraduate student at the University of Sheffield, writes, "I spent last semester working on a project proposal for the Barzun Prize for Youth Engagement. The award is through Fulbright and is supported by the previous ambassador to the UK. I am excited to say that I did receive the award which provides \$10,000 in funding (*see below.*) My project will involve engaging a local school (16-18yr olds) in archae-

ology in order to show them the work we do, why preservation is important, show that the field is open to them and connects to many others, as well as foster understanding between groups. The project will likely be carried out in June and will focus on an industrial site since that will connect to many of the students' backgrounds. They will ideally participate in all aspects of the archaeological process culminating in a creative project (exhibit, writing, art) which will reflect their interests and interpretations. Small workshops and talks will also occur."

Maggie Scull (CAS '11) published her first monograph with Oxford University Press on the role of the Catholic Church during the Northern Ireland Troubles, 1968-98 (*see left*). Scull completed her Masters and PhD at King's College London and is now an Irish Research Council Postdoctoral Fellow at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

Susan Zalkind (CAS '11) has a book contract, writing about the Patriots Day bombing (and links to a Waltham murder). She has also [published an article](#) with the Daily Beast on the Coronavirus.

KEEP IN TOUCH!

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! EMAIL HISTORY@BU.EDU TO SHARE RESEARCH, EVENTS, PUBLICATIONS, OR OTHER MILESTONES. CONSIDER FILLING OUT A [GRADUATE STUDENT](#), [UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT](#), OR [ALUMNI](#) PROFILE FORM TO GET FEATURED ON OUR WEBSITE OR IN THE NEWSLETTER!