

PAST AND PRESENT

Newsletter of the CSB/SJU History Department

Volume 2, Issue 1, October 2020

Greetings from the History Department!

Although Covid-19 scrambled classes and scuttled the Tegeder-Berg Society event last spring, the History Department has adapted. Students are back on campus, and we are teaching our courses in a block plan using a hybrid format. Students are now taking one class at a time, rather than four simultaneously over the semester, and they are rotating between days of in-person and online instruction.

The Tegeder-Berg Society has adjusted as well. This fall we will host a virtual roundtable that addresses the timely question of dismantling historical monuments that commemorate racism and colonialism. “Are We Really Erasing or Replacing the Past? A Roundtable on Monuments and Memory” features three history faculty members—Dr. Shannon Smith, Dr. Brittany Merritt, and Dr. Elisheva Perelman—and will take place on Thursday, October 29 beginning at 7:00 pm. Look for an email invitation from Alumnae and Alumni Relations and please sign up to join the conversation about this important current issue.

I hope to see you all soon.

Brian Larkin
History Department Chair



Tegeder-Berg Society Fall 2020 Roundtable

Are We Really Erasing or Replacing the Past?: A Roundtable on Monuments and Memory

Black Lives Matter protests following the death of George Floyd have prompted global debates about Confederate memorials and monuments to colonization. A common criticism of removing monuments is the fear that protestors are “erasing history.” But why are those monuments there in the first place, and who gets to decide how and where to commemorate the past? Join CSB/SJU History professors Brittany Merritt Nash, Elisheva Perelman, and Shannon Smith for a discussion on monuments and interpreting the past in Japan, Great Britain, and the United States. We will examine how communities are dealing with existing monuments and explore exciting new avenues of memorialization for a more representative society.

Thursday, October 29, 7:00pm [Register](#)



Dr. Brittany Merritt Nash researches the history of the British Empire in the Caribbean, and teaches about imperialism in Africa, colonial medicine, and race in European history.



Dr. Elisheva Perelman studies modern Japanese history, the history of medicine and Christianity in Asia, and gender and labor in Japan.



Dr. Shannon Smith researches the Civil War and Reconstruction in American culture, protests and riots, and race and gender in the US.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS



Cassandra Gronning - History Major '22

I have loved history ever since I can remember. As a child I loved learning about different religions, mythologies, ancient cultures and civilizations, and today these comprise my primary fields of interest within the broader topic of history.

My favorite history class thus far at CSB/SJU has been *Debating the French Revolution*. Despite the fact that we were interrupted and sent home in the middle of the semester, I enjoyed the class because the professor made the subject engaging and relevant to today's world, which is one of the reasons I am interested in history – it is all still relevant today. While technology and clothing styles may have advanced, the lessons we learn from history still hold true today. History courses here teach students how to research properly, think critically and communicate effectively. History students and faculty are welcoming and wonderful individuals who will help you succeed in whatever way they can.

My recommendation? Take a history course! Do a history minor! Its only 5 courses! History was instrumental in creating the world we live in today and changing the world we will live in tomorrow. History is all around us, waiting to be written and explored; explore it here at CSB/SJU.



Brendan Lempe - History Minor '22

I started working in the History Department earlier this year and now I can't imagine not being involved with the history program.

For the longest time, I wasn't able to explain to myself or others how history courses could help me in the real world. I always enjoyed history on a personal level but it never felt like more than a hobby to me. It wasn't until I took the course Writing in Business that I realized just how many real-world skills I had developed in all those history courses. History courses teach you how to do proper research, how to understand different perspectives, and how to write effectively. It's cliché to say it, but history is always relevant. I'm looking to become a technical writer when I leave college and that's a profession most would associate with an English degree. However, I don't think I would have half the skills needed to pursue that career if I didn't take any history courses.

While I strongly encourage a history major or minor, I think just taking one or two extra history courses is a wonderful idea. For those looking for an opportunity to sharpen their research/writing skills, I recommend taking *Inventing the Conquest of Mexico* or *China: Global Domination*. History is always relevant so don't be afraid to take a chance on it.

Alumna Spotlight

Heather Hinrichs '99
City Administrator
Lauderdale, MN

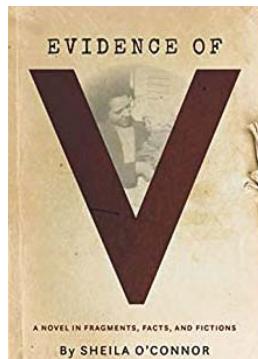


Why history? I told my parents at an early age that I wanted to study history in college. I never considered another major. I was fascinated by the people, places, and events of the past. What the CSB/SJU faculty taught me, however, was how to make sense of my thoughts and put them to paper. This was no easy task; I can still hear my English-major best friend at CSB say “you are too colloquial” after reading my papers. I will always love history but my marketable skill is my ability to write. As a city administrator, I have to be sure what I say and write is clear and concise. It is only by being clear and concise that you build the public’s trust.

Share your “HISTORY” story!

Spotlight

Faculty Book/Movie Suggestions



Sheila O’Connor, *Evidence of V: A Novel in Fragments, Facts, and Fictions* (Rose Metal Press, 2019). O’Connor creates a novel based on her own research into her maternal grandmother’s incarceration for “immorality” at the Minnesota Home for Girls in the 1930s. This novel asks important questions for historians about what we can know when there is a lack of evidence, the roles of context and historical imagination in writing history, and how to understand emotional “truths” about the past.

~Dr. Shannon Smith



Spike Lee offers sharp commentary on the pervasiveness of white supremacist ideas in US society and questions which social movements are really “radical.” I think his take on gender is especially smart—read alongside Elizabeth Gillespie McRae’s *Mothers of Massive Resistance: White Women and the Politics of White Supremacy* (2017). Plus it has a great 1970s vibe!

~Dr. Shannon Smith



As trite as it sounds, I’m recommending Bill and Ted Face the Music. Sure, it’s got no real plot to speak of, and even then, it tends to be wholly nonsensical, but for nostalgia’s sake (and what’s history without the weird dichotomy with nostalgia?), it’s a fun ride. Plus, it offers an interesting guide to historiography, namely “sometimes things don’t make sense until the end of the story.” As historians, we get to figure out how to end the story. Maybe we can help out screenwriters and directors, but until then, enjoy the primary sources and see what it might mean when we reach an end.

~Dr. Elisheva Perelman



Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Shannon Smith

Meet Dr. Shannon Smith, an Associate Professor of History CSB/SJU. Dr. Smith teaches a variety of courses from *Protest, Riot and Rebellion* to *Gender in US History*. Outside of the classroom, Dr. Smith enjoys kayaking, spending time with her dog, snowshoeing, and so much more! Due to the pandemic she hasn't been able to pursue her passion for travel, but she hopes to spread her wings and explore the world soon.

Dr. Smith loves history because she believes it's the best way to understand a multitude of perspectives and understand others no matter how different they are. It gives us a wider view that can give us ideas to solve modern-day problems.

Her academic interests include 19th and 20th century United States history. This is because she feels these time periods have directly formed our country as we know it today. She is particularly fascinated by how so many of our modern problems have their roots in the American Civil War which was over 150 years ago. She believes it's empowering to see how people have taken matters into their own hands and shaped the world.

Many of Dr. Smith's projects have been delayed due to the pandemic, but she has still written some pieces for websites such as The Conversation. Additionally, she continues research into Confederate monuments and their influence on certain gender norms. If you're interested in Dr. Smith's work, you can check out published works such as "They Met Force with Force: African Americans as Citizen Workers in Louisville's 1877 Strike," with the Register of the Kentucky Historical Society.

~ submitted by Brendan Lempe '22



A Tribute to Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Since we could not hold an event in honor of Ruth Bader Ginsburg's passing, an interdisciplinary group of faculty and staff collaborated and produced a video tribute to RBG. We wanted to honor RBG for her work to end gender discrimination and to guarantee that everyone received equal protection under the law. We hope this will help you reflect on the life and legacy of such a historic figure.

History faculty members Shannon Smith and Brittany Merritt Nash contributed to the video.

[RBG Video](#)

Meet Our “Little” Historians

Dr. P and her spouse, philosophy professor Dr. Paul Benjamin Cherlin, welcomed their first nonfeline child on August 21, 2020. Xanthippe Sulamith Cherlin was named for a strong woman from history



(Xanthippe, the wife of Socrates), as befits the child of two academics. The future historian (or philosopher--since philosophy at its best is intellectually history, let's be honest) enjoys eating too much, pooping, and screaming, which basically is how many of us are spending our pandemic. She looks forward to

being as advanced as her colleague, Harold Merritt Nash (or her parents do), but until then, she is happy to cause trouble, like a true scholar should!

~submitted by Dr. Elisheva Perelman

This spring, Dr. Brittany Merritt Nash and Dr. Jonathan Merritt Nash welcomed their son, Harold, to the world! He was born on April 30, 2020. Harold is a very happy little historian, and can't wait to "make history" as he continues to grow and change. He also looks forward to meeting his fellow history friend, Xani, in person when the pandemic is over!



~submitted by Dr. Brittany Merritt Nash

Clio's Corner

Clio the History Cat just celebrated her second birthday (and her brother, Dio, just celebrated his third). While both siblings missed their friends and colleagues in the department, Clio and Dio understand the importance of social distancing in this historically unfortunate time. They look forward to the future reunion when Covid is on its way to being vanquished, just like Clio and Dio vanquish any flies that enter their abode.

In other household news, Clio is excited for the arrival of her weird looking and unfortunately hairless human sibling. Dio was less thrilled, and greeted the new being by throwing up, but now both cats are satisfied that baby will be another sucker to play with them and feed them tuna, as befits all humans, historians and babies alike.

~submitted by Dr. Elisheva Perelman

