

Fall 2016



Chair's Column

Dear Students, Alumni, and Friends of the USD History Department:

Welcome to the 2016-17 academic year as well as the first edition of our new History Department Newsletter.

After a sabbatical year spent researching and writing, it's wonderful to return to the busy hive that is the USD History Department and reconnect with faculty, staff, and students.

Our talented and dedicated faculty spent the summer traveling to distant locations and working on articles and book projects. As usual, they are teaching exciting classes, such as Role-Playing the Renaissance, Global



Decolonization, the Fall of the Roman Empire, Modern Middle East History, the Vietnam Wars, and Japan: Samurai to Subaru.

Meanwhile our seniors are busy with initial work on their theses. The senior thesis is an opportunity for our seniors to hone the writing, research, and critical thinking skills that they have developed during their time spent at USD. These skills will serve our students well for the rest of their life, regardless of their career path.

Students last year produced outstanding scholarship on the development of Senegalese music, the development of San Diego's Little Italy, the isolation of Cuba by the Organization of American States during the Cold War, gender roles in Renaissance Italian city-states, and the influence of the Civil Rights and Antiwar Movements on Motown. I can't wait to see the scholarship produced by this year's cohort.

We also have some exciting fall events planned. As in years past, we will continue the History Department Brown Bag Lunch Research Talks. I am delighted to announce that on October 18 Dr. Molly McClain will give us a preview of her forthcoming book on the San Diego philanthropist Ellen Browning Scripps. We will also continue with our Alumni Career Talks. I am very pleased to announce that Brian Mooney will return to campus on November 1st. He will discuss how he uses history in his career as a prominent San Diego urban planner. In addition, Phi Alpha Theta/History Club has exciting events planned.

Whether you are a student, alumnus, or friend of the department, I encourage you to "like" the [history department Facebook Page](#). Here you can stay abreast of department events and see video interviews with our award-winning faculty.

I wish you a healthy, happy, and productive semester!

Colin Fisher, Professor and Chair of the Department of History

Events

[Homecoming and Family Weekend](#)

October 7-9, 2016

Brown Bag Research Talks

Dr. Molly McClain: Ellen Browning Scripps: Journalist, Suffragette, Investor, and Philanthropist

Tuesday, October 18

12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.

KIPJ 218

Alumni Career Talks

Brian Mooney: How my USD history degree helps me as a San Diego Urban Planner

Tuesday, November 1
12:15 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
KIPJ 218

Lunch and Learn

Come and listen to the History 490 Seniors share their ongoing thesis research. Lunch will be provided by the History Department!

Thursday, December 1
12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
KIPJ 218

Interested in History? Join the History Club!!!

Everyone is welcome. We usually plan one field trip and one undergraduate research presentation per semester. Past field trips have included the Command Museum at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot and the Japanese Friendship Garden in Balboa Park. Past presentations have included topics such as mass incarceration, the role of Motown in Civil Rights, the demonization of Yoko Ono, and the importance of aerial combat in World War II. For further information, contact Dr. Kathryn Statler at kstatler@sandiego.edu.

Phi Alpha Theta (National History Honor Society)

If you have 12 units of History, a 3.0 overall GPA and a 3.3 in History, you are eligible to join Phi Alpha Theta. You do not have to be a History major to join and 3 units of AP credit can be applied to the 12 units. For a lifetime membership in Phi Alpha Theta, you pay a one-time fee of \$60.00. Benefits include a one year subscription to the Historian (the society's journal focusing on cutting-edge historical research), invitations to all Phi Alpha Theta sponsored events at USD and the Spring Phi Alpha Theta initiation and lunch, opportunities to participate in and win prizes at regional conferences, and honor cords at graduation. For further information, contact Dr. Kathryn Statler at kstatler@sandiego.edu.

USD History Major Takes His Studies To London

by Professor Ryan Abrecht

Third-year History major Taylor Wright spent part his summer in London, where he participated in a course on Islamic faith and practice organized by Dr. Bahar Davary of USD's Theology and Religious Studies department. Having never traveled abroad, Taylor was eager to explore a world-class city where people from many different cultures and histories – British, Indian, African, Middle Eastern, and countless others – intersect and interact with each other every day. Inspired to travel by his own interest in Islamic history and culture, Taylor's work with Dr. Ali Gheissari of the History department (with whom he is currently taking "Modern Middle East") has also helped him decide (appropriately enough!) that,



“the Middle East is my cup of tea.” He was able to enroll in the London program with the help of a need-based grant from USD that helped defray the cost of his travel and expenses abroad.

While in London, Taylor worked on a project that involved collecting data about immigrant neighborhoods by spending time on the streets and interviewing local residents. The experience brought home both the vibrancy neighborhood life and the anxieties that often accompany the immigrant experience. Taylor writes: “I believe at

one point I was mistaken for an undercover cop. I say this because I was the one pale soul with a strange accent in a strongly Bangladeshi area in the East

End, and a man I interviewed gave me a very obvious fake name (*halal*, Arabic for ‘permissible,’ which is basically equivalent to a rabbi saying his name is ‘Kosher’). The man went on to probe me with questions of his own, and then wanted to know when I would be leaving town.” Taylor went on to say that conversations like this, though at times disorienting, helped connect his academic study of Islamic cultures to the lived experience of people on the ground in a way that enhanced and enriched his understanding of both. For that reason and others, he writes, “I definitely feel that this trip was complimentary to my studies in history at USD.”

Turning a Passion for History into a Winemaking Career

by Professor Molly McClain

David Marchesi (BA 1997) graduated with a passion for history. Fascinated by the impact of wine and spice on the culture of early European civilizations, he went on to study viticulture and winemaking at Napa Valley College while working for Oakville’s Cakebread Cellars. He continued his studies at the University of Adelaide in Australia before returning to Sonoma to work at several prestigious wineries. He became director of winemaking at the historic Madrone Vineyards Estate, first planted in 1863, and now runs his own consulting business, Marchesi Wine Consulting.



Alumni, update your contact information [here](#).

History 490 spotlight

By Professor Kathryn Statler



History 490 (1 unit) is the first part of a two semester senior seminar (History 490/495W) that highlights undergraduate research and writing. Students engage in extensive secondary and primary research and then write a 30-50 page senior thesis.

In History 490 students decide on a viable topic, situate themselves within the secondary literature on that topic, come up with a historical question, write literature and primary source reviews, and finish the semester by producing a research proposal. In History 495W (3 units), students focus exclusively on research and writing, submitting multiple drafts to their peers and advisers before turning in the final product. They also present their research at Creative Collaborations.

This fall, twelve seniors are already busy deciding on topics. Our first day of class was off to a great start as we examined potential avenues of inquiry. We also discussed some of the skills a History major leaves college with: the ability to sift through massive amounts of information, organize it, make sense of it, and prioritize it; the ability to create a compelling narrative; and the ability to recognize that every problem exists in a context that must be understood before decisions can be made. Finally, we debated the dangers of using incorrect historical analogies. Senior Cami Carlomango had read a recent *New York Times* article, “Anne Frank Today is a Syrian Girl.” comparing the Frank family’s attempts to first flee Europe as Jewish refugees and then their plight under Nazi occupation to a Muslim girl trapped in the middle of the current Syrian conflict. Cami challenged some of the similarities sketched in the article. A lengthy discussion then ensued over the strengths and the weaknesses of this particular analogy. We recommend you read the article [here](#) and decide for yourself. We are constantly drawing analogies as we try to make sense of our experiences and the information we receive. History majors learn to systematically break down analogies to see when they should and should not be applied.

Professor Ryan Abrecht's Timely Summer Research on Immigration

by Holly Smith

As Professor Ryan Abrecht was completing summer research in Athens, Greece, he came across Victoria Square, a park in the city center. As he took in the scene, he noticed a different immigrant family seeking shade under every tree, and snapped this photo of the sculpture "Theseus rescues Hippodamia," located in the center of the square. He shared that "it was a very arresting image and moment."



The refugee crisis in Europe, particularly Greece, has been in the forefront of the media for some time now. Abrecht's research focuses on ancient immigrants in Athens and Rome, what caused them to migrate, and what happened to them when they reached their destinations. His aim is to recapture what street level life would have been like in ancient Athens and Rome. He spent time in both cities on his research trip and while there was a strong immigrant presence in both, he shared that, "it felt more desperate in Athens than in Rome." The conclusion he draws from his research is that, "societies that are willing to or able to incorporate differences and

newcomers can really grow and thrive, while societies that struggle with this can sometimes limit their potential to grow and prosper."

This semester, Abrecht is teaching HIST 102: The Ancient World and a new class, HIST 321: The Fall of the Roman Empire. He is the director of USD's Classical Studies Minor and serves as book review editor for the journal *Studies in Late Antiquity*.

Professor Thomas W. Barton, PhD, Wins Prestigious Book Award

Professor Thomas W. Barton has been awarded the 2013-2015 Best First Book Prize by the Association for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies for his book [*Contested Treasure: Jews and Authority in the Crown of Aragon*](#). This is a major award because it considers all first books on Iberian history, from ancient to modern, published over the past three years in English, Spanish, or Portuguese. The prize committee noted to Tom that it was “very impressed by the significance of your project, breadth and creativity of your research, and your lively, clear prose.” Professor Barton received the award at the Association’s annual meeting from the prize committee chairperson, Dr. Erin Rowe of The Johns Hopkins University. Congratulations Professor Barton!



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