

Chair's Column

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

Welcome to the spring 2017 edition of the History Department Newsletter!

This semester is an eventful one for the history department. After nearly fifty years at USD, Dr. Engstrand has decided to retire. This spring we are celebrating the extraordinary career of a beloved colleague, an extraordinary teacher, and a path-breaking scholar in the fields of California and Spanish history. I know many readers of this newsletter are “Dr. E’s” former students. If you get a chance, be sure to send Dr. Engstrand a note congratulating her on a remarkable career and thanking her for the contributions her teaching made to your life. I know she will appreciate it!



In addition to celebrating Dr. Engstrand’s career, the department this semester is hosting Dr. Teofilo “Teo” Ruiz, the Spring 2017 Knapp Chair. Dr. Ruiz is a renowned medievalist and the recipient of the National Humanities Medal by President Obama, so we are greatly honored that he is visiting us.

Dr. Ruiz will give the Knapp Lecture on Friday Feb 24 in the IPJ Theatre, 6:00-7:30 pm. The title of his lecture is: "1492 Revisited."

Also I invite everyone to the Department of History Brown Bag Research Talk on Tuesday, February 21, KPJ I, 12:15-1:45. Professor Kenneth P. Serbin will discuss "The Rise and Fall of Dilma Rousseff: Brazil's First Woman and Ex-Revolutionary President."

There are many additional history department events. If you want to stay up to date on department news and events, I encourage you to "like" the [history department Facebook Page](#).

Sponsoring events for students, hosting world-class scholars such as Dr. Ruiz, taking students on fieldtrips, and supporting faculty and student research is expensive. Luckily, generous contributors to the History Donors Fund help defray some of these costs. If you would like to support history education at USD, be sure to click on the "Support us" button below. Thank you!

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

[Colin Fisher, Professor and Chair of the Department of History](#)

Upcoming Events

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Lunch and Learn with [Teo Ruiz](#), Knapp Chair
12:15-1:45 p.m. KIPJ, Conference Rooms E & F

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Brown Bag Research Talk with [Professor Kenneth P. Serbin](#): The Rise and Fall of Dilma Rousseff: Brazil's First Woman and Ex-Revolutionary President
12:15-1:45 p.m. KIPJ, Conference Room I

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Lunch and Learn with [Salim Yaqub](#): US Policy Toward the Middle East, Then and Now
12:15-1:15 p.m. KIPJ, Room 253 (The map room)

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24

[Teo Ruiz Knapp Lecture: 1492 Revisited](#)
6-7:30 p.m. KIPJ Peace and Justice Theatre

SATURDAY, APRIL 8

[Regional Phi Alpha Theta Conference](#)
California State University-Northridge
(deadline to submit a paper-March 12)

TUESDAY, APRIL 18 and THURSDAY, APRIL 20

[The 27th Annual Creative Collaboration Undergraduate Research Conference](#)
Come and check out posters by 495W History Senior Thesis Students
12-2 p.m. Hahn University Center

THURSDAY, MAY 4

Phi Alpha Theta Initiation and Presentations on 495W History Senior Thesis Research.

Lunch will be served!

12:15-1:30 p.m. KIPJ, Room 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. The deadline for Spring Initiation is March 24, 2017. For further information, contact Dr. Kathryn Statler at kstatler@sandiego.edu.

From Medieval Europe to the Marine Museum

by Professor Ryan Abrecht



History major Abigail Beck spent her Fall semester studying abroad in Vienna, Austria, where she studied German and medieval history. As the picture shows, while she was there Abigail also took advantage of the opportunity to visit some of Europe's other most famous cities!

Abigail realized her love for history after she was placed in Professor Tom Barton's "Atlantic World" class in the first semester of her freshman year at USD. Finding herself fascinated by the material and consistently eager to attend class, Abigail decided to become a History major and has been taking classes ever since. The chance to experience Europe's rich history and culture in person

drew her to Vienna, where her favorite course focused on the Hapsburg Empire from the Middle Ages to the 19th century. She writes: "One of my highlights was visiting the military museum with my history class. I was able to see the car in which Franz Ferdinand was shot, thereby setting in motion the start to WWI. The stories from the Viennese past were everywhere. I remember walking to the grocery store and finding an old flak tower from WWII that was converted into a park monument. The streets of Vienna were replete with these sorts of historical stories."

This spring, Abigail is excited to be interning at the MCRD (Marine Corps Recruit Depot) Museum. This internship will allow her to learn more about curatorial and archival work in a museum, as well as the history of San Diego. Abigail is excited that job will give her hands-on experience working in public history and help round out her appreciation for professional historical work. Passionate about history and the lessons it can teach us, she hopes to pursue a career in research and teaching after graduating USD.

Alumni Spotlight: Ryan Lee and Danny Wiborg

by Professor Molly McClain

After graduating in 2008, history majors Ryan Lee and Danny Wiborg renovated an old school bus and headed to Mexico. The bus broke down near Acapulco but Ryan and Danny kept going, traveling through Central and South America. Ryan now works for a hedge fund manager in Buenos Aires, Argentina, having finished his master's degree in international economics. Danny now works for the U.S. Forest Service as a Smokejumper in Tacoma, Washington. We asked them to tell us about their experiences.



Q&A Ryan Lee

After graduating in 2008, history majors Ryan Lee and Danny Wiborg renovated an old school bus and headed to Mexico. The bus broke down near Acapulco but Ryan and Danny kept going, traveling through Central and South America. Ryan now works for a hedge fund manager in Buenos Aires, Argentina, having finished his master's degree in international economics. We asked him to tell us about his experiences.

Q: You have backpacked throughout Latin America. What are some of your favorite places and/or experiences?

A: Mexico and Colombia hold special places in my wanderlust heart. After having spent many months in Mexico on multiple occasions the food, culture and spirit of the county is always calling me back. I could say the same about Colombia. Other than the bus adventure with Danny, my favorite experience was probably an overland tour from Bogota to Buenos Aires.

Q: How did you finance your travels?

A: I worked seasonally as a landscape contractor in the California Sierra Nevada mountains, taking winters off to travel. The Aleut Foundation in Alaska awarded me a scholarship for the master's program. And of course I was very frugal and slept in some rather "undesirable" locations on occasion.

Q: How did you end up in an international economics program in Buenos Aires?

A: After a few jaunts in region I decided that I wanted to continue my education with a focus on Latin America. I started out in a program at Sacramento State which offered courses in Buenos Aires. I loved it so much and felt that the experience here was more beneficial than the program in Sacramento so I decided to complete the whole master's program here.

Q: What is it like to live and work in Argentina?

A: Fortunately the fund I work with is rather unconventional so I am isolated from a typical Argentine work experience. The previous government had strict financial controls so it made working in the financial services industry very



insightful as to the inner-workings of the international financial system. The current government is far more "market friendly," so it is just as insightful to watch the pendulum swing back the other way. Hopefully the structural reforms are able to kick-start the economy as things are looking grim these days. Living here has been a great experience and learning another language is a great challenge.

Q: How do the skills that you learned in the History Major help you to succeed at a job in financial sector?

A: Research. As a History Major I researched past events looking to prove a hypothesis. My job in the financial sector is similar in that we create hypothesis based on market patterns and then research and test the patterns using algorithms to historically back-test the hypothesis with the goal of predicting future market movements based on past occurrences.

Q: Do you recommend taking an unconventional path after graduation?

A: Absolutely! I was fortunate not to have a student debt burden so it made buying a school bus and turning on, tuning in and dropping out much easier (mentioning the bus requires a Kesey quote). Danny and I really benefited from our experience and we are now both satisfied professionally with a world of experience under our belts.

Q&A Danny Wiborg

After graduating in 2008, history majors Danny Wiborg and Ryan Lee renovated an old school bus and headed to Mexico. The bus broke down near Acapulco but Danny and Ryan kept going, traveling through Central and South America. Danny now works for the U.S. Forest Service as a Smokejumper in Tacoma, Washington. We asked him to tell us about his experiences.

Q: You backpacked throughout Latin America. What were some of your favorite places and/or experiences?

A: Throughout my travels, I've met amazing people, from desperately poor locals to wealthy travelers. I've shared laughs with folks from all over the world and tried to learn something from every one of them. My favorite places have always seemed to be somewhere I didn't plan on going. For me, travel is not about looking in guide books and making an itinerary. I find it more fun and adventurous to just choose a starting point and talk with locals and other travelers once I'm there. My best stories and greatest learning experiences all come from circumstances that were not planned... some people might even say things went "wrong." Getting detained by Mexican Immigrations, mugged in Buenos Aires, lost in Patagonia, or having the bus break down were all things I didn't plan on, and perhaps would even have tried to avoid. Accepting the challenge of unplanned events is something I pride myself on, and the lessons I've learned while overcoming adversity in my travels have helped me be successful in many other areas of my life.

Q: How did you come to work for the U.S. Forest Service?

A: Before college I had one goal: to be rich. And I'm not talking about the biblical "rich in spirit" kind of rich. Luckily as I matured and got to know myself in college, those dreams of dollar signs were replaced by a need to be true to myself and the realization that I was never cut out for the suit-and-tie lifestyle. I also rediscovered my passion for the outdoors and was looking for a job that would allow me to have fun while working for the greater good in some way. It wasn't until a couple years after graduation that I began looking into firefighting. I spent my first couple of fire seasons working for the Department of Natural Resources in my home state of Washington. It was during this time that I first got exposed to Smokejumpers and I knew almost immediately that it was something I was interested in. I then spent a few seasons working on a Hotshot crew in southern Utah, followed by a year on a Heli-Rappel crew before I was finally hired for my current position as a Smokejumper working out of Central Oregon.

Q: What do you do as a Smokejumper?



A: Smokejumpers specialize in rapid personnel delivery to remote emerging wildfire incidents so, first and foremost, we are wildland firefighters. Basically, when we get dispatched to a smoke report, we suit up in under two minutes, load the plane, fly to the

coordinates we are given, size up the fire, identify a jump spot (opening in the forest we can safely parachute into as close to the fire as possible), parachute in, wait for cargo (food, water, sleeping bags, tools), then get to work putting out the fire. Most fires take only a few days to fully extinguish but we are capable of staying out for weeks at a time if we are able to facilitate resupply missions via plane, helicopter, or even mule teams. “Jump fires,” as we call them, are our primary function but most Smokejumpers carry a wide range of qualifications that allow them to serve almost any function on any wildfire incident and many other types of incidents. Smokejumpers have been known to work in various disaster relief efforts and have even parachuted into remote plane crash sites. While not out on assignments, we do a lot of fire preparations, gear maintenance, training, and work with forests around the country to help with projects ranging from forest management and prescribed fire operations to tree climbing work and all kinds of other stuff. For example, Smokejumpers from Idaho were instrumental in selecting and harvesting the U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree for Washington D.C. this year. We also sent some guys on a trip to help harvest seed cones for the Millennium Seed Bank. It’s a very awesome job.

Q: What do you do during the winter in Tacoma, Washington?

A: My job keeps me away for much of the year so I really enjoy getting some time around the holidays to visit friends and family. I also know I won’t be able to keep up the fire gig forever so I try to keep myself sharp and explore secondary career options. Another huge passion of mine is skiing. During my Hotshot years I was lucky enough to be a ski bum in Jackson Hole for some really good snow years with some excellent ski partners. Lately I’ve been taking some of the big mountain ski lessons I learned in Wyoming and putting them to good use on the slopes of Mt. Rainier, the Olympics, the North Cascades, and some of the amazing ski resorts up here. Did I say passion? Maybe I meant addiction.

Q: How do the skills that you learned in the History Major help you succeed at your job with the U.S. Forest Service?

A: Communication is absolutely paramount in what I do. Whether it's fire information, safety hazards, navigational concerns, supply issues, weather changes, or even things like interagency policy/legal variations, the ability to rapidly organize information, process it, and then effectively communicate it to potentially diverse audiences is a daily requirement. There are a lot of big personalities in my chosen profession, so the extensive practice I got at USD formulating arguments based on information has been highly useful. In my opinion, having an appreciation for history, and being able to understand why things are the way they are based on how past events and circumstances unfolded, can and should be beneficial to pretty much anyone doing anything. It's also very cool to be part of a historic American tradition like the Smokejumpers. I don't want to bore anyone with the shared history between the early Smokejumpers and the early Paratroopers during WWII, but Smokejumper history is fascinating and I encourage anyone who's interested to do a Google search and see what you can find. Lastly, at the end of the day, I'm just another government employee, and I definitely have to give credit to USD and the History Department for giving me an advantage with the seemingly limitless paperwork that is part of my job.

Q: Do you recommend taking an unconventional path after graduation?

A: Yes and no. I wouldn't recommend to anyone on a distinct career path to suddenly go crazy and do something wacky just because it sounds romantic and different. The challenges and uncertainty that go into an unconventional career path can be extremely stressful and I don't want to imagine where I would be now if things hadn't worked out for me. That being said, I wouldn't trade where I am now for the multi-million dollar career I hoped for myself when I first went to college or for anything else. I often tell people that the value in what I do is not in the paychecks but in the experiences I get to have and the people I get to have them with; I can say with 100% certainty that no amount of money can buy any of that. My only advice to anyone who finds themselves somewhere they didn't expect to be is: embrace it, make the most of it, learn as much as you can, and just keep going. It's funny how unconventional paths go, because somehow I knew that driving to Mexico in a school bus after college was the right thing to do, but I never had a clue where it would ultimately lead and I still don't. All I know is that it has been a great journey so far and I'm looking forward to whatever might happen next.

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

Class Spotlight: History 125D Race and Ethnicity in United States History

By [Professor David Miller](#)



HIST 125D is an introductory-level course that explores the relationship between constructions of race and broader themes in United States history. The underlying assertion is that understanding the history of race in the United States gives us perspective to think critically

about the whole of the American historical experience. Contextualizing U.S. history through the lens of race also opens windows of perspective onto many contemporary debates.

HIST 125D is, by design, intended to transform students' perspectives about this country, themselves, and questions of race today. We achieve this experience in three interconnected exercises. First, students receive a thorough history of race in the United States through lecture and secondary reading, focusing on questions of citizenship, advantage/disadvantage, identity, and intersections with labor and gender. Second, examination of documents and the lived experience of Americans of many races illuminate this extensive narrative history while developing students' reading, writing, discussion, and critical thinking skills. Students analyze primary sources and produce 10 (brief) critical response papers to the documents. Not only does this illustrate course themes and bring life to the material, it is my hope that it teaches the discipline of thinking and the art of discourse. Third, the course bridges the gap between the past and present by engaging students in a "historical connections" exercise. HIST 125 requires that students consider and analyze contemporary issues within an historical context, especially with regards to race and ethnicity. They choose between a community engagement project facilitated by the Mulvaney Center or a book review. Community engagement connects students to local Linda Vista organizations, Somali Family Services of San Diego, or Juvenile Hall and involves a minimum of 10 hours at a community partner site, a written journal, two reflection meetings, and a final essay connecting their experience to the historical themes of the course. The other option is to read Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo's *Domestica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence* (UNC Press, 2007). After a guided reading of the book including two reflection sessions, students write an essay exploring the parallels between the issues of race, labor, and gender today with those we studied in the history of the United States.

The material is challenging. Some conversations are hard. And there is a lot of writing. But students come away with a fresh perspective that echoes Martin Luther King Jr.'s call for educational "creative maladjustment." I welcome all members of the History Department, majors, minors, and alumni to pay us a visit and sit in one day. We meet Tues/Thurs at 5:30p and again at 7:00p in Camino 112.

Distinguished Professor Iris Engstrand to Retire

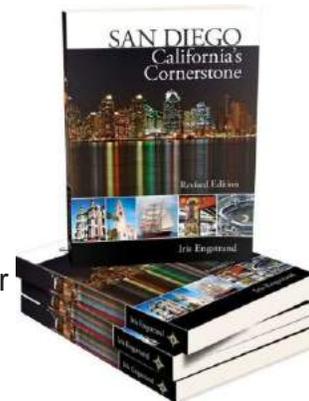


Distinguished and longtime Professor Iris Engstrand will be retiring at the end of this academic year, after nearly 50 years at USD.

In a recent article with USD magazine, Engstrand said, "I don't think anyone takes a job and thinks, 'this is where I'll be for the next five decades,' but it worked out that way. I've been privileged to see USD develop from the tiny colleges for women and men into a truly great university. It's been such a blessing." Read the rest of the article [here](#).

Engstrand is the author of over 25 books

including her most recent publication *San Diego: California's Cornerstone, Revised Edition* (2016). She has received numerous awards including the University of San Diego's distinguished University Professorship, the Davies Award for Faculty Achievement, and the prestigious medal of the Order of Isabel la Católica (Isabel the Catholic -- ruler of Spain in 1492) by Juan Carlos, King of Spain, for outstanding contributions to the history of Spain in the Americas.



Dr. Engstrand spoke about her five-decade career in the Department of History at the University of San Diego in an interview with Kenneth P. Serbin, Ph.D., on September 6, 2016. She commented on the highlights of her career and the evolution of both USD and the city of San Diego over the years. [Watch the video here](#).

We will miss you Dr. Engstrand!

Eminent UCLA historian, Teofilo (Teo) Ruiz, visiting USD as Knapp Chair



The History Department is very pleased and excited to welcome Teofilo “Teo” Ruiz to campus as the Knapp Chair in the Liberal Arts from February 13th through February 24th. Teo serves as Distinguished Professor of History and Spanish and Portuguese at the University of California at Los Angeles and is a

renowned expert on medieval and early modern Iberian history. It is difficult to imagine a scholar better suited to promote the arts and humanities as a Knapp chair at the University of San Diego. In addition to having an incredible life story during which he overcame many different forms of adversity to become one of the most celebrated and respected historians working in the United States today, Ruiz has also long been an outspoken advocate for the humanities within both university settings and public forums. Teo will be very active on campus and within the department during time in residence. In addition to participating in a number of departmental student-focused events, he will be meeting periodically with a select group of undergraduates (designated as Knapp Fellows) majoring in History as well as other disciplines related to Teo’s teaching and research interests. He will also make a series of public presentations, including a catered “lunch and learn” for the History Department, culminating in his keynote Knapp chair lecture, “1492 Revisited,” at 6pm on February 24th in the KIPJ Theater (followed by a reception). This lecture will draw on the work of Walter Benjamin to scrutinize the monumental events of that year from the perspective of the defeated and from those who were exiled or enslaved.

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