Nathan & Jeanette Miller Center for Historical Studies

2013-2014

University of Maryland, College Park
College of Arts & Humanities
Nathan and Jeanette Miller Center for Historical Studies

Director
Bernard Cooperman

Administrative Graduate Assistant
Reid Gustafson

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Paula Barriga Sanchez
Jodi Hall
Niya Rafari-Pearson
Catalina Toala
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A Message from the Director

My first year as director of the Nathan and Jeannette Miller Center has been a real delight. I have been able to host distinguished scholars from around the world and to discuss their work and their ideas with them. At the same time, I have had the chance to interact with faculty and students in shaping our program and planning individual events. This year’s theme of “Empire Revisited” proved remarkably suggestive, leading for example to a day-long undergraduate symposium planned in conjunction with two other departments and bringing together students in three campus courses with an internationally known distinguished keynote speaker.

Much of the intellectual life of our campus happens, of course, in the classroom, and the Miller Center puts special effort into providing funds and coordination to help faculty members bring guest speakers into their classes. This lets students meet, and interact directly with, those who were personally involved in great historical events. And the chance to meet and debate with an author helps students better understand and internalize the books they are reading.

If the Center’s first task has been to bring scholars to the College Park campus, I have found that the Center can also make a significant contribution to the educational experience of both graduate and undergraduate students. Thus, we have hosted a regular meeting for Ph.D. candidates facing the rigors of writing a thesis, we have sponsored seminars on teaching and writing, and we have begun to explore how the Center can help improve undergraduate teaching in history under a special grant from the University. Through its prize program for undergraduate papers, the Center has recognized the excellent work done by students in our Department.

The Center aims also to provide an informal meeting place for faculty and students interested in history. For example, we met to discuss a recent documentary movie about immigration into the US and a film about the philosopher Hannah Arendt. The aim always is to encourage communication and discussion of the serious issues that shape the study of history.

I look forward to new initiatives in the 2014-15 academic year, and invite everyone to stop by and make use of the Center’s programs and services.

Bernard D. Cooperman
Director
2013-2014 in Review

Every year the Center focuses on a particular theme. The theme for this year's workshop series was "Rethinking Empire." We invited leading scholars from a broad range of geographic and disciplinary sub-specialties to help us think through current scholarly debates about the concepts of Empire and Imperialism.

Previous Themes
2000-2001: The Nation and Beyond

2001-2002: Political Violence

2002-2003: The Body and The Body Politics

2003-2004: Empire

2004-2005: Historians and the Visual


2006-2007: Power of Belief

2007-2008: Facing Difficult Pasts—History and Memory


2011-2012: Crisis

2012-2013: Constructing Historical Knowledge—Historians Confront Categories of Discourse
Featured Guests

John McNeill


Sanjay Subrahmanyam

October 21; “Early Modern Circulation and the Question of ‘Patriotism’ between India and Central Asia.” Dr. Subrahmanyam is Distinguished Professor of History and Doshi Chair in Indian History at UCLA. His recent book, *Courtly Encounters: Translating Courtliness and Violence in Early Modern Eurasia* (Harvard, 2012) investigates questions of cultural commensurability.

Anthony Pagden

December 5; co-sponsored with the Center for Literary and Comparative Studies, the Miller Center for Historical Studies, and the Graduate Field Committee in Medieval and Early Modern Studies (MEM-UM). Professor Pagden (UCLA) delivered a talk titled “That Peculiar Word ‘Imperium’: Defining Empire from Rome to Washington.” His current research focuses on the political theory of empire.
Peter Perdue


Carla Pestana

Graduate Student Programming

Part of the Miller Center’s mission is to contribute to the educational experience of Maryland’s History graduate-student community. Two groups of students currently working on theses or dissertations met regularly over breakfast or lunch at the Center to discuss their work, share notes, criticize drafts, and restore self-confidence in the face of this grueling challenge. The Center also organizes workshops, lectures and special events aimed at the newest part of our scholarly community.
Workshops and Lectures

Louis Galambos

*October 10,* “The Creative Society—Is the Price Still Right?” Louis Galambos (Johns Hopkins University) researches American creativity and the role professionals have played in enabling the United States to solve (or not to solve) its problems at home and abroad in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Alon Confino


James Gilbert

*April 8,* “Writing History Seminar.” The workshop explored techniques that students can use in their papers, dissertations, grant proposals, and letters of application. Professor James Gilbert moderated the discussion. He is the author, among other works, of *Men in the Middle* (University of Chicago Press, 2005) and *Whose Fair?: Experience, Memory, and the History of the Great St. Louis Exposition* (University of Chicago Press, 2009).

Justin Jacobs

*April 16,* “Publishing and the Field of Transnational History.” Professor Jacobs (American University), a specialist in modern Chinese history, published the lead article in the *American Historical Review* in 2010, while he was a graduate student. He provided tips on publishing as a graduate student and the audience discussed the growing field of transnational history.
Barry Gilder

November 19, “South Africa from Revolution to Democracy: An Insider’s Story.” In his new memoir, Songs and Secrets: South Africa from Liberation to Governance (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2012), Mr. Gilder recounts his experiences as student songwriter, guerilla insurgent, and government official in South Africa.

Rebecca Kobrin

February 6, “Creative Destruction: Sender Jarmulowsky, Financial Failure and the Reshaping of American Banking, 1873-1914.” Professor Kobrin (Columbia University) is currently investigating the relationship between Jews and money in twentieth-century America.

Annette Gordon-Reed

**Camille Robcis**

*February 28, co-sponsored with LGBT Studies, “Colloquium.”* Among other topics, Professor Robcis (Cornell University) is currently researching how the French right is intellectually and rhetorically responding to the LGBT rights movement.

**Colleen Ho**

*March 5, “The Mongols in Matthew Paris’ *Chronica Majorca*: A Mirror of Medieval Europe.”* Professor Ho (University of Maryland) examines why medieval Europeans saw the Mongols as both threat and ally, allowing ecclesiastics and kings to condemn the Mongols to Hell while courting an alliance with them against mutual enemies.

**Idesbald Goddeeris**

*March 27, “The Efficiency of Secret Services: Critical Reflections based on Polish Archives.”* Idesbald Goddeeris’ (University of Leuven) *Spioneren voor het communism: Belgische prominenten en Poolse geheim agentsen [Spying for Communism: Polish Secret Agents and Belgian Important Personalities]* (Lannoo Campus, 2013) reveals tales of the Polish secret services’ inefficiency and even absurdity.
Gideon Avni

March 31, “The Byzantine-Islamic Transition in Palestine: An Archaeological Approach.” Dr. Avni is Head of the Archaeological Division in the Israel Antiquities Authority and a lecturer at the Institute of Archaeology, in the Hebrew University. His branch of the Antiquities Authority supervises the work of all the archaeological excavations in Israel.

Claire Judde

March 31 & May 1, Professor Claire Judde presented “Who Were the Venetian People?” and “The Inhabitants of Murano and Venice: Political Actions, Reactions, & Revolts.” Professor Judde (Université de Toulouse) is the author of Naviguer, commencer, gouverner. Économie maritime et pouvoirs à Venise, XVé-XVIe siècles (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), a study of public and private commercial navigation in relation to the evolution of forms and functions of the State.

Japanese Americans and World War II

April 11, Mary Tamaki Murakami and Terry Shima. Mary Tamaki Murakami was imprisoned at the Topaz, Utah Internment Camp. Terry Shima served in the Army’s 442nd Regimental Combat Team, a segregated unit composed of Japanese Americans that became one of the most decorated units of its size in American history. Organized by Professor Jon Sumida.
Michele Lamprakos


Olivier Wieviorka

April 24, “The French Memory of WW II.” Professor Olivier Wieviorka (Ecole normale supérieure at Cachan) writes on WWII. Among his books are Orphans of the Republic (Harvard, 2009); Surviving Hitler and Mussolini (Bloomsbury, 2006); Normandy: The Landings to the Liberation of Paris (Harvard, 2008); and Divided Memory: French Recollection of World War II from the Liberation to the Present (Stanford, 2012).

Aaron O’Connell


Millington Bergeson-Lockwood

Special Events and Film Series

The Center’s programming aims at bringing the insights and methods of historical study to a range of contemporary issues.

60s Radicalism in Black & White

*March 26*, co-sponsored with Dept. of African American Studies. Organized by Professor Art Eckstein. There has been much study of black radicalism in the 1960s, and much study of white radicalism in the 1960s. Three distinguished scholars (Nathan Connolly, Johns Hopkins University; Thai Jones, Columbia University; and Mark Naison, Fordham University) explored these two fundamental components of the 1960s Far Left, looking at intellectual relationships, close political interactions, and perhaps conflicts between the two.

Ukrainian Unrest Panel

*March 4*, “What is a Maidan, and Why are People Protesting and Getting Shot There? Today's Ukrainian Unrest in Historical Perspective.” Organized by Professor Piotr Kosicki. This panel brought together top experts on Ukraine and Eastern European revolution, with the goal of explaining to a broad audience what's going on.
Hannah Arendt

*February 26*, remarks by Professor Jeffrey Herf. Starring Barbara Sukowa and directed by Margarethe von Trotta, “Hannah Arendt” examines the life of German-Jewish philosopher and political theorist Hannah Arendt (1906-1975). As a journalist, Arendt covered the 1961 trial of Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann and famously used the term “banality of evil” to describe how many Germans, including leaders within the Jewish community, allowed totalitarianism to develop in Nazi Germany.

Crossing Arizona

*April 23*, remarks by Professor Chantel Rodriguez. *Crossing Arizona* is a thought-provoking and insightful examination of the hotly debated issues of border security and illegal immigration. Heightened security along the U.S./Mexico border has funneled undocumented migrants through the brutal deserts of Arizona and claimed thousands of lives. Through the eyes of frustrated ranchers, border patrol agents, local politicians, farmers dependent on an illegal workforce, humanitarian activists, desperate immigrants, and the Minutemen, this powerful documentary unveils the surprising political stances people take when immigration policy fails everyone.
Awards

Undergraduate

Each semester the Center sponsors cash awards for the best research papers written by undergraduates in the History Department’s capstone course (408). Papers are nominated by faculty in each section. Awards are presented at the Department’s annual award luncheon for graduating seniors.

Ben Kramer
“Fractured Beyond Repair: Organized Labor and the Civil Rights Movement’s Divergent Approaches to the Revised Philadelphia Plan”
(HIST408B with Professor Robyn Muncy)

Matthew Cipollone
“Dignitatis Humanae and Catholic Tradition: A Development of Doctrine at the Second Vatican Council”
(HIST408P with Professor Piotr Kosicki)
Graduate

In May, the Miller Center announced the winners of the History Department’s Best MA Paper Award for 2013. Papers are nominated by the faculty. In 2013, the award went to

Justin Devris

“Thucydides and the Stasis at Corcyra: An Examination of Stasis in Classical Greece”
(HIST 619 with Professor Ken Hollum)

Prange Collection/20th Century Japan Research Award

This year three Twentieth Century Japan Research Awards were given out by the Miller Center and the University of Maryland Libraries. Researchers use the stipend to conduct research in UMD’s Gordon Prange Collection. The winners were:

Professor Julia Bullock (Emory University)-- “Coeducation in Japan under Allied Occupation”

Professor Deokyho Choi (University of Cambridge)-- “Crucible of the Post-Empire: Decolonization, Race, and Cold War Politics in U.S.-Japan-Korea Relations, 1945-1952”

Emer O’Dwyer (Oberlin College)-- “Searching for 'Truth' in Occupation-Era Magazines”
Moving Forward

The theme for 2014-2015 is “Defining Boundaries.” In her original proposal, Professor Chantel Rodríguez pointed out the upsurge in recent scholarly interest in border crossing, border identities and border culture as foci for research and scholarly discussion. Special issues of journals, NEH-sponsored conferences, and a flurry of books and articles have explained issues related to sovereignty, citizenship, group interactions, human rights, and many related topics. Among guest speakers for the coming year are Professor Katherine Unterman of Texas A&M University (“Detectives without Borders: The Supreme Court and the International Pursuit of Criminals”), Joan Scott of the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study (“Secularism and Gender Equality Between East and West”), and Geoffrey Parker of Ohio State University ("Incest, Blind Faith, and Conquest: defining boundaries the Habsburg way, 1500-1700").

For further information, please consult the Center’s website at http://history.umd.edu/historicalstudies
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