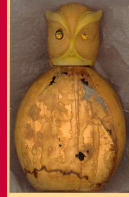




Department of History & Ancient Studies

The Owl



Volume 16 Spring 2025

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Words of Welcome

Welcome to the sixteenth issue of *The Owl*, the annual newsletter of the History & Ancient Studies Department at Wilfrid Laurier University's Waterloo campus.

Land acknowledgement: We acknowledge that we live and work on the traditional territories of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishinaabe, and Haudenosaunee peoples. Wilfrid Laurier University is situated on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, and on the Haldimand Tract, land promised to Six Nations, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

Chair's Update

Dr. Eva Plach recently began a 3-year term as Chair of the History & Ancient Studies Department at Laurier's Waterloo campus. Here is her annual update for readers of The Owl.

Welcome to this summer 2025 edition of *The Owl*! As the Department of History & Ancient Studies embarks on an exciting new chapter in its evolution, I'm delighted to share with you a selection of program highlights and updates that reflect the vitality of our community.

First, the Department's Co-op program is up and running for the 2025-26 academic year. We look forward to hearing about the real-world experiences that the first cohort of students will bring back from their placements!

Second, the Department has just launched a History Teaching Specialization. This unique program is designed for students who want to become high school History teachers. It offers a selection of courses that cover some of the key subjects included in the Ontario high school History curriculum. Related to this, in September 2025 we are launching the History Teaching Residence Learning Community (RLC), which welcomes any incoming student who is considering becoming a History teacher (for more details, see page 11).

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In faculty news we have a lot going on as well. Faculty members remain very active researchers in a variety of fields, and I invite you to read about their recent and ongoing research activities in this issue of *The Owl*. Of particular note are **Dr. Mark Humphries'** delivery of three invited research talks and interview with the NY Times and **Dr. Jeff Grischow** being awarded three major research grants. A number of faculty members have stepped into (or are continuing in) administrative roles. **Dr. Amy Milne-Smith** remains head of the Department's Undergraduate program, and **Dr. Susan Neylan** takes over from **Dr. Mark Humphries** as head of the Department's Graduate program. **Dr. Adam Crerar** begins a three-year term as Director of the Tri-University History Graduate Program (see details on pg. 16). Dr. Crerar succeeds the University of Guelph's **Dr. Peter Goddard** in that role.

I am very happy to announce two promotions: **Dr. Neylan** and **Dr. Kevin Spooner** (History & North American Studies) have both been promoted to Full Professor. Congratulations to your both!

The Department also has a few retirements to announce. **Heather Vogel**, Office Administration Coordinator, will retire at

the end of the summer. Heather has been a vital part of the History Department for many years now, and we will miss her dedicated and professional support. We gratefully wish Heather the very best in the post-Laurier chapter of her life. **Dr. David Monod** (American history) and **Dr. Len Friesen** (Russian & Soviet history) are retiring from their positions as faculty members in our Department (see pgs. 3-4 to read about their remarkable academic careers). Finally, we were all very pleased to learn that two retired colleagues, **Prof. Terry Copp** and **Dr. Cynthia Comacchio**, were recognized this year with major Canadian honours (see pgs. 14-15).

All that's left is for me to introduce myself as the new Chair and to thank the outgoing Chair. I have been in the Department since 2003 and teach modern European history, especially the history of the Holocaust and the history of totalitarian regimes. I am taking over as Chair from **Dr. David Smith**, who has managed the Department very capably these last four years. We are grateful for his superb leadership and innovative spirit, and we wish him a very productive sabbatical for the 2025-26 year.

I'm always happy to hear about the adventures that our alumni are having. If you have anything to share, please send me an email at eplach@wlu.ca.

Exciting New Courses for Next Year!

Laurier's History faculty have never been accused of being "stuck in the past"! We continually renew our curriculum by developing terrific new courses to engage our students' interest in the past and enrich their understanding of history's impact and relevance for the present. We're pleased to announce the following three new courses for 2025-26:

HI262: Witches & Demons, **TBA**, Mon./Wed. 1-2:20, Fall 2025

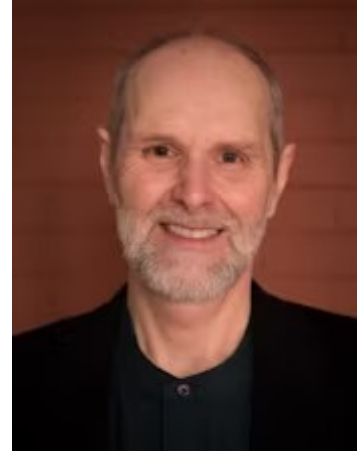
HI274: Information & Power in History, **TBA**, Tues./Thurs. 1-2:20, Winter 2026

DH301: Advanced Generative AI, **Dr. Mark Humphries**, Thurs., 7-9:50pm, Winter 2026

Retirements of Dr. Monod and Dr. Friesen

Outgoing Chair of History & Ancient Studies, Dr. David Smith, wrote the following tributes to our dear retiring colleagues:

Dr. David Monod has been an esteemed member of the Wilfrid Laurier University community since 1988, dedicating over 35 years to the institution as a scholar, educator, and academic leader. A distinguished historian of American modern culture and mass entertainment, Dr. Monod's prolific body of work spans four acclaimed books and numerous influential articles in leading academic journals. His most recent books, *Vaudeville and the Making of Modern Entertainment, 1890-1925* (UNC Press, 2020) and *The Soul of Pleasure: Sentiment and Sensation in Nineteenth-Century American Mass Entertainment* (Cornell UP, 2016) earned national and international recognition, including multiple shortlisting for prestigious book awards. His research was consistently supported by competitive grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, affirming the depth and impact of his scholarship.



Throughout his career, Dr. Monod demonstrated a deep commitment to teaching and mentorship. He developed and offered a wide array of undergraduate and graduate courses in American history, cultural studies, and international relations, while also supervising numerous theses and graduate fields. His contributions to graduate education extended beyond the classroom, including his foundational directorship of the Tri-University Graduate Program in History. His ability to combine rigorous historical analysis with engaging narratives left a lasting impression on generations of students, many of whom have gone on to successful academic and professional careers. Colleagues within the Department of History and Ancient Studies praise Dr. Monod as a wise mentor and creative thinker. Dr. Monod also played a vital leadership role in university governance and faculty leadership. He served in multiple administrative roles, including as chair of the Department of History as well as the Department of Sociology, Associate Dean of Arts, and President of the Wilfrid Laurier University Faculty Association. A highly visible member of the community dedicated to the institution's well-being, Dr. Monod served on Senate and the Board of Governors. As president of WLUFA, Dr. Monod navigated the Association and its membership through an unprecedented period of turbulence. Throughout, Dr. Monod was an unwavering advocate for members, negotiating with the university over issues of profound importance to their well-being and work conditions. Perhaps none of these accomplishments will be as enduring as Dr. Monod's leadership in the reform of the Laurier pension plans. As WLUFA president, Dr. Monod was instrumental in the negotiations to join the University Pension Plan, working tirelessly to secure the long-term financial security of members' pensions. As he enters retirement, the Laurier community honours Dr. Monod's exemplary contributions, his distinguished scholarship, and his steadfast leadership with deep gratitude and admiration.

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Dr. Leonard Friesen has been a cornerstone of Wilfrid Laurier University's Department of History for over a quarter century, shaping generations of students and scholars with his expertise in Russian and European history. A tenured full professor and dedicated member of the graduate faculty, Dr. Friesen joined Laurier in 1994 and steadily rose through the academic ranks, serving not only as an inspiring educator but also as a mentor and advisor. His courses—from sweeping surveys of twentieth-century Europe to focused seminars on Russian revolutionary history and Stalinism—have left a lasting intellectual imprint on the Laurier community. Beyond the classroom, he was known for his engaging mentorship, particularly through his long-standing role as Faculty Mentor for the W. Garfield Weston Scholars (2002-18). Dr. Friesen's scholarly achievements are equally distinguished. With an academic output including three sole-authored and two edited books, several peer-reviewed articles appearing in international journals, he brought recognition to Laurier's History Department. His recent books, *Transcendent Love: Dostoevsky and the Search for a Global Ethic* (Notre Dame Press, 2016) and *Mennonites in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union: Through Much Tribulation* (University of Toronto Press, 2022), underscore his remarkable interdisciplinary reach. He championed global engagement through his leadership in study tours and his role as the Director of the Faculty of Arts Internationalization Initiative, and was a pioneer in the establishment of Laurier's Global Studies program. These accomplishments reflected his well-known love of travel and international experiences. His commitment to service, teaching excellence, and community engagement was recognized through multiple university merit awards and the prestigious Hoffman-Little Award. Dr. Friesen has been a visible, community-engaged figure, teaching Third Age courses and serving his field in many ways: as a former vice-president of the Canadian Association of Slavists and president of the Canadian Consortium of University Programs in International Development Studies, among others. As Dr. Friesen retires, the university community celebrates his profound contributions and lasting legacy with deep appreciation and admiration.



Teaching & Research Symbiosis

We are often asked to explain how our historical research informs our teaching and how our teaching influences our research. This column showcases a member of Laurier's History and Ancient Studies Department whose teaching and research intersect. In several previous issues of *The Owl* (8-10 & 14-15) we have highlighted the teaching and research symbiosis of **Dr. Mark Humphries, Dr. Darren Mulloy, Dr. Judith Fletcher, Dr. David Smith, and Dr. Amy Milne-Smith.**

In Fall 2024 **Dr. Blaine Chiasson** taught a new course entitled "1900: Three Military Interventions," which examined military invasions and occupations in South Africa, the

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Philippines and Qing China. A major theme explored in the course was how these states justified their intervention, as students learned about colonialism, racism, rape, looting, insurgency and counter-insurgency, war crimes, collaboration, and long-term changes that resulted from these occupations. The year 1900 was a pivotal year for global imperialism as a coalition of European countries invaded Qing China, Great Britain went to war with the Boer Republic in the Boer War (1899-1902), and the United States invaded and then mounted a counter insurgency campaign in the Philippines.

The history of military occupations has been an evolving field, focusing primarily on post-WWII Germany and Japan, but there is growing interest in other eras and locations. Dr. Chiasson's new course was inspired by his ongoing research project, a history of the two-year occupation of the cities of Tientsin and Beijing (1900-02) by the Eight-Nation Alliance. This military force was an international coalition set up to counter the Boxer Rebellion (1898-1900) and consisted of forces from the US, Japan, Germany, France, the UK, Austro-Hungary, Italy and Russia. His research for this project has thus taken him to archives in various world capitals, including Washington DC, London, Paris, Rome, Berlin, Vienna, Moscow, Beijing and Tokyo. In his research on the invasion and occupation of China, Dr. Chiasson frequently saw references in the documents to the ongoing conflicts in South Africa and the Philippines and even exchanges of information on how to pacify and rule a conquered population.

The course examined South Africa first, then the Philippines, and ended with China, examining how the interventions were justified to home countries by claiming that the peoples of the three occupied states 'needed' foreign intervention (in the context of a newly-globalized press and the creation of 'fake news'), as well as the creation of concentration camps, how cultural artefacts were removed, how gender played into the conflicts, the role of international finance, etc. Along with a written paper and seminars examining primary and secondary materials, students engaged in debates over a contentious question for each invasion/occupation, as each team had to conduct research and then present their arguments in class. Dr. Chiasson reports that the course resonated well with his students, who noticed many parallels to current world events.

History Student Associations Reports

Tim Shanz, History Students Association President for 2024-25:

This was another strong year for the HSA, highlighted by some amazing events and strong attendance and support from students and faculty. The HSA's primary goal has and continues to be the fostering of a vibrant, inclusive, and supportive community within the History Department

at Laurier, and we on the HSA executive team were delighted by the level of participation and enthusiasm for club-run events. Many thanks, on behalf of the HSA executive team, to all who showed up this year!

This year, we kicked things off with an orientation for first-year History students,

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which was capped off with our annual scavenger hunt, a fun and dynamic way for faculty and students to get to know one another, and help the first-years familiarize themselves with the History department floor at DAWB. Thanks again to all the professors who agreed to participate in this event! It was an important event which set a positive tone for the HSA moving forward into the year. Following the orientation, the HSA hosted various academic and social events throughout the year. Some of the highlights included a couple of jeopardy-style trivia events at Wilf's, both of which drew a great crowd! In the fall, we hosted an essay-writing help session, which was generously led by Dr. Crerar. This past winter, we also hosted a Meet-the-Pros event at Wilf's. It was a unique opportunity for students and faculty to mingle and socialize together in an informal setting.

The HSA had an excellent executive team this year. Special thanks to my fall-term co-president **Kirstyn Hipkiss**, Vice President of Academics **Aibhlin Janicki-Zeballos**, Vice President of Administration **Emerson Stokes**, Vice President of Finance **Noah Vaive**, and Vice President of Outreach and Social Media **Taylor Harding**. Also, thanks to our terrific First-Year Representatives, **Maddy Clarke** and **Avery Slot**! Finally, many thanks to **Dr. Adam Crerar** for being such a willing, enthusiastic, and insightful supporter of the HSA. We've got a good mix of new and returning HSA executives for next year, and can't wait to build upon this year's successes!

Aly Firth, MA rep for 2024-25:

I am thankful for the opportunity to have served as the MA Representative for the

2024-2025 cohort. I have had a wonderful year in the History MA program learning from my professors as well as my fellow students.

*I would like to thank TUGSA, the History Department, and the LCSC for hosting some great events for the cohort and the history community this year. In addition, Laurier was in charge of putting together the Tri-University Conference this year. It was a pleasure to work with **Dr. Mark Humphries**, **Kess Carpenter**, and **Brian Gibb** to plan the conference in March. It was nice to see so many past and present students from the three universities, as well as some from beyond the Tri-U, come together to share their amazing research!*

*I also want to offer encouragement to everyone working their way through the program and wish you all good luck in finishing up your degree! Thank you to both the professors and administrators for all of your work to create a thriving environment for history students. I would especially like to thank **Dr. Mark Humphries** and **Heather Vogel** for all their efforts in helping us navigate the graduate program with their guidance and administrative assistance.*

Brian Gibb, PhD rep for 2024-25:

*We had a great year this year, with the highlight being Laurier's hosting of the Tri-University Graduate Student History Conference in early March. We received many submissions from around both Ontario and Canada on a variety of subjects. This year's theme was "Voices from the Past: How Archives Speak to Us." We had a full day, with an estimated over 90 attendees. Special thanks to **Kess***

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Carpenter and Aly Firth on the organizing committee, and to our faculty advisor **Dr. Mark Humphries**. A special thanks to **Mary Lou Klassen** for her insight and support in getting the word out and making so many arrangements.

Our PhD students and candidates have

also represented Laurier at many conferences throughout the year, and I'm so happy to see everyone's work being celebrated! I was also a representative as the graduate student rep. on the History Department's Events Committee. We had some excellent and timely presentations from scholars both within the Laurier community and from other institutions.

History Student Research Essay Awards (2021-25)

We are very pleased to report that both of the Laurier Library's 2024 Undergraduate Research Awards in the senior category (years 3-4) were won by History students!

First prize (\$350): **Elizabeth Spence**, "The Canadian Arctic Resources Committee National Workshops on People, Resources and the Environment North of '60: The Role of the 'Honest Broker' in Northern Development and Canadian Environmentalism, 1972-1983" (HI480: Research Seminar on Canada in the 20th Century, **Dr. Susan Neylan**).

Second prize (\$150): **Isabella G. Murray**, "Freezing Palace, Thawing Dreams: The Education of Middle and Upper Class Girls in Victorian England" (HI432: Seminar on British History, **Dr. Amy Milne-Smith**).

In recent years three other History majors have also been recipients of the Laurier Library's Undergraduate Research Awards, all in the senior category:

2023 First Prize: **Sophia Starkey**, "Dead or Alive: Nuns and Convent Life in Renaissance Italy" (HI450: Love, Sex and Death in the Italian Renaissance, **Dr. Chris Nighman**)

2021 Second Prize (tied): **Stephanie Braund**, "Canada and the Cold War: Analysis of the Globe and Mail, 1950-1980" (HI346: Cold War Canada, **Dr. Tarah Brookfield**)

2021 Second Prize (tied): **Quinn Downton**, "Asserting Papal Authority: Humanism, Patronage and Lasting Influence in Pope Nicholas V's Italy" (HI310: The Italian Renaissance, **Dr. Chris Nighman**)

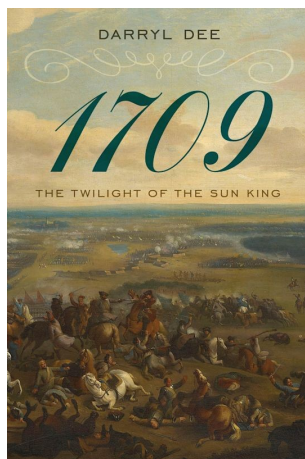
Centennial of the Faculty of Arts (and History)

Throughout 2024-25 Laurier's Faculty of Arts has been celebrating its 100 year anniversary, under the leadership of **Dr. Patricia Goff** (Prof. of Political Science & Associate Dean of Arts: Outreach) and with the support of our fellow historian and Dean of Arts, **Dr. Sofie Lachapelle**. In 1924 the Waterloo College of Arts began to offer arts degrees, including the BA in History. Ironically, it isn't clear exactly when the History Department was founded, but it was well established before the institution was renamed first as Waterloo Lutheran University in 1960, and then as Wilfrid Laurier University in 1974.

Faculty Publications, Research Grants & Invited Talks

Dr. Darryl Dee

1709: The Twilight of the Sun King, Rowman & Littlefield, 2025.



The Battle of Nagashino, Great Battles in History podcast, 26 February 2026 (<https://open.spotify.com/episode/1rjuhSU3rJvOGkFwHN0ENT>)

Dr. Leonard Friesen, “Living on Borrowed Time? The Settlement of Mennonites in Imperial Russia after 1789,” and “More than Victims: Soviet Mennonites from Stalin to Gorbachev,” Conrad Grebel University College, University of Waterloo, 20-21 March 2025.

Dr. Jeff Grischow

“A Convergence of Forces: Disability Rights and the Founding Moment of the Ghana Society for the Physically Disabled, 1980-81,” *Journal Of the Canadian Historical Association*, 2025 (forthcoming), with M. Mfoafo-M’Carthy & A. Naami.

Co-producer with M. Mfoafo-M’Carthy & M. Terry of four short films that premiered in Accra, Ghana in February 2024:

- Etonnam Ahiator, *Tides and Threads*.
- Martinson Assafuah-Chemel, *Let There Be Sun: The Rise of Solar Energy in Urban Ghana*.

- Caroline Dari, *The Sustainable Spark*.

- Manacy Sarfo & Miracle Damgare Wisdom, *Clothes without Borders*.

Principal Investigator on three (!) research grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada:

- Insight Grant: “A History of Deafness in Ghana” (with M. Mfoafo-M’Carthy & W. Mprah)

- Partnership Engage Grant: “Disability, Agriculture & Disability in Ghana” (with M. Mfoafo-M’Carthy & W. Mprah)

- Connection Grant: “Climate Change, Agriculture & Disability in Ghana: A Documentary Film Premiere and Workshop”

Dr. Mark Humphries

“Unlocking the Archives: Using Large Language Models to Transcribe Handwritten Historical Documents,” *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative & Interdisciplinary History* (2025), 1-19, with L.C. Leddy, Q. Downton, M. Legace, J. McConnell, I. Murray, & E. Spence (<https://doi.org/10.1080/01615440.2025.2500309>).

Interview for the NY Times (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/16/magazine/ai-history-historians-scholarship.html>).

“Building AI Research Tools for the Social Sciences & Humanities,” Center for Digital Scholarship, Brown Univ., 18 Nov. 2024.

“AI for Archival History,” Digital Humanities Workshop, Johns Hopkins University, 17 April 2025.

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“The Last Generation of Historians? Generative AI & the Future of Historical Research,” Department of History, Univ. of Colorado, Denver, 25 April 2025.

Dr. Lianne Leddy

Transcription Pearl and Archive Studio (with M. Humphries): an Open Source AI tool for transcribing & generating metadata from archival documents (https://github.com/mhumphries2323/Transcription_Pearl).

“Serpent River Resurgence: Confronting Uranium Mining at Elliot Lake,” Annual Melville-Nelles-Hoffman Lecture, York University, 14 November 2024.

“On Staples and Invasions: Mining as Colonialism in Canada,” Keynote for the conference Historicizing Mining on Indigenous Lands, Australian National University, Canberra, 3 December 2024.

Dr. Amy Milne-Smith

“Lunacy, Soldiering, and the Abrogation of Care in Nineteenth-Century Britain,” *Journal of Military History* 88.3 (2024): 642-59.

Dr. Darren Mulloy

Years of Rage: White Supremacy in the United States from the Klan to the Alt-Right, Rowman & Littlefield, 2021; released in paperback in 2024.

Dr. Chris Nighman

“The Reception of *Manipulus florum* in Two Distinct Works by Johannes von Dambach OP: *Consolatio theologiae* & *Consolatorium theologicum*,” *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, n.s. 9 (forthcoming).

“Giovanni da Legnano’s Reception of Thomas of Ireland’s *Manipulus florum* (1306) in the Prohemium to *Somnium* (1372),” *Journal of Medieval Latin* 36 (forthcoming).

The *Manipulus/Consolatorium* Project (<https://consolatorium-project.wlu.ca>)

“The Digital Burgundio Project,” SSHRC Insight Grant (2025-8), J. Ginther (PI), C. Nighman & R. Macchioro (Co-Applicants).

“Digital addenda/corrigenda for printed critical editions of Latin texts: Auxiliary resources for the Electronic *Manipulus florum* Project”: Convivium Seminar Series, Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto, 7 February 2025.

Dr. Eva Plach

Relief on the Hoof: The Seagoing Cowboys, the Heifer Project, and UNRRA in Poland, NIU Series in Slavic, East European & Eurasian Studies, Cornell Univ. Press, 2025 (forthcoming).

Dr. David Smith

“James VI and I: A Corrupt Reign or the Reign of Anticorruption?” in *King James VI and I: Kingship, Government and Religion*, eds. A. Courtney & M. Questier, (Routledge, 2025), 93-120.

“Creative Friction, Legal Pluralism & the 18th-Century Smuggling Economy in the Channel Islands,” in *Navigating Legalities: Legal Histories of Empire*, eds. S. Dorsett & L. Campbell (Routledge, 2024), 213-39.

As Visiting Fellow of the Kajima Foundation, presented a series of lectures on how entrepreneurs imagined new forms of business that combined profit-making with social purpose, Faculty of Economics, University of Tokyo, May-June 2025.

In Memoriam: Dr. Doug Lorimer (1942-2025)

*The History & Ancient Studies Department recently lost a dear friend and former colleague, when **Dr. Doug Lorimer** passed away in March. The following tribute was written by **Dr. David Monod**:*

Doug Lorimer, a towering presence at Wilfrid Laurier University for almost 40 years, passed away on 19 March 2025. Doug was an individual of exceptional vision, principle and persistence, and he worked in an era when those who loved the university – and Doug was utterly committed to Laurier – could battle collegially over the shape and character of higher education. Doug, together with a group of activist faculty, including Joyce, his wife, fellow historian and soulmate (see **photo on page 11**), spearheaded the certification of the Wilfrid Laurier Faculty Association (WLUFA) in 1988. He was chief negotiator for the first contract, and for several subsequent contracts, and he was so highly respected as a negotiator that he was also named chief negotiator for the first two Contract Academic Staff and Librarians contracts. Doug was the moral center of the faculty unionism at WLU; older faculty and staff will vividly recall him gravely, deliberately, powerfully contesting points at Senate or electrifying a WLUFA meeting when calling for a strike vote. Doug was committed to the idea that process was as important as result. Goals had to be pursued transparently, made tangible in language and codified in rules. That message was communicated nationally through his service to the union movement. As Chair of both the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) and the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) Collective Bargaining Committees, he

helped educate a generation of union negotiators; in recognition of their contributions, OCUFA established its Collective Bargaining Award in Doug and Joyce's names. Doug obtained his PhD from the University of British Columbia in 1972. During his doctoral studies he taught as an instructor at the University of Liverpool, and it was there that he found his two lifelong loves: Joyce and the Everton Football Club.

A historian of ideas, Doug's scholarship focused on Victorian and Edwardian thought, science and language. His two scholarly monographs and numerous articles show the evolution of his thinking about race and racism as he immersed himself in discourse, post-structural and anti-colonial theory. In his first book, Doug studied the dependence of racialization on class status in Britain and he saw their entanglement decades before "intersectionality" was given a name and a theory. But Doug came to see the language of race as even more fluid and contested in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Britain than he had previously suggested. In his incisive second book, Doug urges us to reject the notion that the Victorians originated biological racism and to focus instead on their invention of a language of race relations, a discursive area where ideas were nuanced and conflicted and where space was provided for resistance to race-thinking. Doug was a scholar and activist of singular importance. He was also kind, thoughtful and a steadfast friend. Throughout his life he fought against injustice and inequality, for the Humanities, for the university, and for his colleagues. He will be missed by all who loved and learned from him.

D. Monod

Dr. Joyce Lorimer & Dr. Doug Lorimer (ca. 2010)



New History Teaching Specialization

This year the Department launched its new History Teaching Specialization (HTS), which is intended to prepare students for Teachers' College and teaching history at the high school level. Completion of the specialization will result in a "History Teaching Specialization" designation on student transcripts. The Specialization is only available to Single and Combined Honours History Majors graduating with a minimum of 8.00 (B) GPA in the major.

The History Teaching Specialization consists of 2.5 credits, comprising 0.5 credit from each of the following five areas:

- 1) History Foundation Courses
- 2) Canadian History Courses
- 3) Indigenous History Courses
- 4) Historical Methods Course
- 5) Practicum Courses

All courses required for the HTS are from Laurier's History program, except for the practicum courses: ML402 and AF399.

To inaugurate this exciting new opportunity for Laurier History students, the Department is hosting a Residence Learning Community for first-year students who are interested in pursuing a teaching career in History. Our Chair, **Dr. Eva Plach**, will be the Faculty Advisor to the History Teaching RLC.

Of related interest, on 17 November 2025 the Department will host its annual History Teachers' Conference, which is expected to attract over 100 high school teachers from Waterloo Region and beyond, many of whom are returning alumni of Laurier's History program. Laurier speakers scheduled for this event include **Dr. Amy Milne-Smith**, **Dr. Ehaab Abdou** (Global Studies), and **Darren Thomas** (Associate Vice-President: Indigenous Initiatives, Associate Professor of Indigenous Studies).

Promotions of Dr. Susan Neylan & Dr. Kevin Spooner!

On 6 March 2025 the Appointments and Promotions Committee of Laurier's History & Ancient Studies Department unanimously recommended **Dr. Susan Neylan** for promotion from Associate Professor to full Professor. After reviewing Dr. Neylan's impressive record in teaching, research and service, the Senate Appointments and Promotions Committee at Laurier likewise approved her application for promotion in May, and these recommendations were confirmed and the promotion granted in June by **Dr. Deborah MacLatchy**, President and Vice-Chancellor of Wilfrid Laurier University.

As the author or editor of two books, eight journal articles, and five book chapters, Dr. Neylan is widely recognized as a major scholar in the fields of Canadian and Indigenous history. Her first book, *'The Heavens are Changing': Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity*, challenged the assumption that the adoption of Christianity was a straightforward "conversion" of the Ts'msyen peoples (formerly Tsimshian), offering instead a nuanced and sophisticated history of religious convergence and syncretism, as different religious and cultural worldviews merged.

The recipient of multiple research grants from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), as well as a prestigious Fulbright Fellowship, her scholarly efforts have often involved student research assistants, including Indigenous peoples, who have benefited greatly from her mentorship.

Her current book project, *Two Roads Inside: 20th-Century Indigenous-Church Relations*

and Indigenous-Christian Identities on BC's North Coast, demonstrates Neylan's ongoing research momentum as she expands upon her previous work on Indigenous-Christian history in British Columbia.

Dr. Neylan's teaching record is likewise very strong. A very popular instructor of various undergraduate Canadian history courses at all levels of instruction, in 2020 she received the Donald F. Morgenson Award for Sustained Excellence in Teaching. She is also one of the most active members of the History Department at the graduate level, participating in dozens of MA and PhD committees in the Tri-University History Program, and supervising fifteen MA students and six doctoral students, three of whom have gone on to become tenured professors.

Dr. Neylan's strong commitment to the History Department's graduate program is also reflected in her service as Graduate Officer for the History Department for two 3-year terms and as organizer of several of the Tri-University program's graduate conferences. Her service to the university has included being the equity representative on the Senate Promotions Committee and a member of the Women and Gender Studies Program committee, among other roles. Her external service to scholarly journals as a reviewer and editorial board member and to SSHRC are further testimony to the esteem she has earned from her colleagues throughout North America.

The Department of History & Ancient Studies warmly congratulates Dr. Susan Neylan on her well-deserved promotion to full Professor!

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As a cross-appointed Professor of North American Studies and Canadian History, Dr. Kevin Spooner applied for promotion to full Professor through his home Department of Political Science. On 25 April 2025 that department's tenure and promotion committee unanimously voted to support his promotion application. Subsequently, this assessment was unanimously upheld by the Senate's promotion committee and Dr. MacLachy then confirmed his promotion to full Professor. What follows are excerpts from the letter of support written by Dr. Chris Anderson, Chair of Political Science:

[Dr. Spooner's] single-authored book, *Canada, the Congo Crisis, and UN Peacekeeping, 1960-64* (UBC Press), received strong reviews from academics and practitioners and was awarded the prestigious C.P. Stacey Prize for the best book published in Canadian military history in 2009.... Kevin's research on peacekeeping, decolonization, and race – appearing in book chapters..., journal articles, invited talks, and other presentations, and his current monograph project on Canada's relations with English-speaking Africa early in the Cold War – constitutes important and original contributions to the field of Canadian international history, where Africa has less frequently been the focus of sustained study.... Kevin has acquired funding and established important experiential learning opportunities for students, creating some 30 (to date) research assistant opportunities for undergraduates.

Soon after he arrived at Laurier, the strategic decision was made to relocate Canadian Studies within a new North American Studies Program (NASP), one that remains

unique in Canada. As one of two faculty members appointed to North American Studies, Kevin has...continually provided the NASP with extensive and exceptional academic and administrative leadership and stewardship. He has led the program's interdisciplinary curriculum design and development, established its program-level learning outcomes, and co-authored its two cyclical reviews.... Kevin has also ensured that the program supports internationalization at Laurier (e.g., helping to secure more than \$200,000 for student exchange/visiting opportunities with American and Mexican universities and working with Laurier International to help international students understand Canada/North America) and Laurier's commitments to Reconciliation (e.g., establishing "Indigenous Peoples" as one of the NASP's four core curricular program themes).

Teaching has always been central to Kevin's identity as a scholar (indeed, he earned a B.Ed. from Queen's University in 1992).... Evidence of Kevin's effectiveness as a teacher is abundant in his file, not least of which in the strong letters of support from students and others. Alongside consistently high course evaluations, regardless of level taught, as a past Undergraduate Advisor and now Chair I can attest to the popularity of his classes and teaching. One final indicator of Kevin's success as an innovative and impactful teacher is found in the teaching awards he has received – the 2016 Faculty of Arts Teaching Scholar Award and the 2022 Donald F. Morgenson Award for Sustained Teaching Excellence – and his selection as Laurier's institutional nomination for the Brightspace Innovation Award in 2015.

Congratulations to Dr. Kevin Spooner on his well-earned promotion to full Professor, from your colleagues in History!

Terry Copp Awarded the Order of Canada

Terry Copp, professor emeritus in Wilfrid Laurier University's Department of History, has been appointed as a member of the Order of Canada. Copp, founder and director emeritus of the Laurier Centre for the Study of Canada, was honoured for his work to help restore Canada's place in the history of the Second World War.

"Terry Copp's contributions to the study of Canadian history have placed him at the top of his field and provided Canadians a better understanding of the country's role in significant historic events," said Laurier President and Vice-Chancellor Deborah MacLatchy.

"The Order of Canada is certainly a well-deserved honour. Terry's work has been critical in providing a deeper context for our history."



The Order of Canada is one of Canada's highest civilian honours, recognizing outstanding achievement, dedication to community, and service to the nation. Appointments are made by the governor general on the recommendation of the Advisory Council for the Order of Canada. Copp is a leading scholar of Canada's military role in the Second World War and an influential advocate for military history. In his more than five-decade career he has earned a national and international reputation as a scholar, advocate, public historian and teacher.

Copp began his career as a labour historian but shifted into military history during the 1980s at the suggestion of his friend and mentor Robert Vogel of McGill University. As a child, Vogel escaped Nazi Germany with his family on the eve of the Second World War. Together, Copp and Vogel published the groundbreaking *Maple Leaf Route* series which argued against the official, largely critical assessment of the Canadian Army in northwest Europe during the Second World War. Their method became a hallmark of Copp's approach to military history: careful rereading of primary sources, interviews with veterans, and in-person study on the ground, conducted during many trips to historic battlefields with his wife, Linda.

In 1991, Copp opened the Laurier Centre for Military, Strategic and Disarmament Studies (now the Laurier Centre for the Study of Canada) with Professor Marc Kilgour as a place for academics to explore the Canadian military and peacekeeping. Second World War veterans eager to find a voice and understand their place in the wider war were early contributors to the centre's journal, *Canadian Military History*. As part of his work, Copp was also instrumental in the creation of the Canadian Battlefields Foundation's Study Tour Program, which has taken hundreds of Canadian university students on historian-guided tours in Europe. In addition to many other academic accomplishments, Copp is the author of nearly two dozen articles and book chapters, editor or co-author of 25 books, and author of more than half a dozen titles. His most recent work is *Montreal at War, 1914-18*.

Reproduced from the announcement published on the website of the Laurier Centre for the Study of Canada, 27 June 2024 (<https://studyofcanada.ca/terry-copp-awarded-the-order-of-canada>)

Cynthia Comacchio Elected to the Royal Society of Canada

Cynthia Comacchio, professor emerita in Wilfrid Laurier University's Department of History, has been elected to the Fellowship of the Royal Society of Canada (RSC), the highest honour a scholar can achieve in the arts, sciences and social sciences. Comacchio taught at Laurier from 1993 to 2022 and won two teaching awards during her tenure. Her research focuses on childhood, youth and social welfare. Comacchio examines how race, class, gender and age are important variables in both identity and social formation, mapping how the culture of



childhood has changed across decades. "In essence, it is the history of our country, starting from its very youngest citizens," says Comacchio. "Age matters. It has always mattered and always will in positioning people in society. Societies tend to project their ideals and aspirations onto young people, so what a child 'should be' at any given time says a lot not just about the present, but about what we want Canada to be in the future." In her latest book, *Ring Around the Maple: A Sociocultural History of Children and Childhoods in Canada, 19th & 20th Centuries*, Comacchio and her co-author and mentor Neil Sutherland trace the condition of children in Canada from roughly 1850 to 2000, a time when modernity increasingly disrupted traditional norms. Notable shifts included the growing importance of media and more solitary, indoor play. "There's a propensity to think of the 1950s as a golden age of childhood," says Comacchio. "One thing I can say for certain is that historians are not nostalgic. We know only too well that there never was a golden age of childhood or anything else. There were good things back then, there were bad things back then, and the same is true now." Much of Comacchio's research involves looking "beneath the surface" at how class, racial, regional and religious differences impact the experience of childhood. "The experience isn't the same for every child," says Comacchio. "That's where history, as opposed to nostalgia, provides a much clearer picture. We need to know about the oppression of Indigenous children because that's a problem that persists. It is generational and we need to do better. We can only do that by knowing the past as it was, not as we would like it to have been."

Ring Around the Maple is the fourth book in Comacchio's prolific career, which also includes three edited collections and 31 articles. Her earlier books include 2008's *The Dominion of Youth: Adolescence & the Making of Modern Canada, 1920 to 1950*, which won a Founders Prize from the Canadian History of Education Association; 1999's *The Infinite Bonds of Family: Domesticity in Canada, 1850-1940*; and 1993's *Nations are Built of Babies: Saving Ontario's Mothers & Children, 1900-1940*. She is currently writing about the long-term impacts of war on veterans' wives and children. "Cynthia's election into the Royal Society of Canada is a remarkable recognition of her contributions to the study of the history of children and childhood," says Deborah MacLatchy, Laurier president and vice-chancellor. "I am immensely proud to see a Laurier scholar receive this prestigious honour, which reflects the excellence in research and teaching at our university."

Reproduced from Laurier Hub News, 28 October 2024 (<https://www.wlu.ca/news/spotlights/2024/oct/longtime-laurier-faculty-member-cynthia-comacchio-elected-as-fellow-of-the-royal-society-of-canada.html>)

Full-Time Faculty, 2024-25

The History & Ancient Studies Department at Laurier's Waterloo campus comprises 20 tenured professors, including two who are cross-appointed to other departments:

Dr. Gavin Brockett, Associate Professor & Vice-Dean of Arts (cross-appointed to Religion & Culture and Global Studies): Middle East & Islamic History, Modern Turkey

Dr. Blaine Chiasson, Associate Professor : Modern China, Sino-Russian Relations

Dr. Adam Crerar, Associate Professor: 20th-Century Canada, Rural Ontario

Dr. Darryl Dee, Associate Professor: Early Modern France, Early Modern Europe

Dr. Judith Fletcher, Professor: Ancient Greece & Rome; Gender, Law & Culture; Representations of the Ancient World in Modern Culture

Dr. Leonard Friesen, Professor: Russia & the Soviet Union, Global Ethics

Dr. Karljürgen Feuerherm, Associate Professor: Ancient Near East, Digital Humanities

Dr. Jeff Grischow, Professor: Africa (especially Ghana), World History, Comparative Development

Dr. Mark Humphries, Professor & Graduate Advisor: Canadian Military History, Epidemics

Dr. Sofie Lachapelle, Professor & Dean of the Faculty of Arts: History of Science

Dr. Lianne Leddy, Associate Professor: Canadian First Nations

Dr. Amy Milne-Smith, Professor & Undergraduate Advisor: 19th-century British Social History, Crime in Victorian England

Dr. David Monod, Professor: Modern American Cultural & Social History

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Dr. Darren Mulloy, Professor: Post-1945 U.S. History, Political Extremism

Dr. Susan Neylan, Associate Professor: Canadian Indigenous Peoples, Cultural History

Dr. Chris Nighman, Professor & Co-ordinator of Medieval & Medievalism Studies: Medieval & Renaissance Europe, Digital Humanities

Dr. Eva Plach, Associate Professor: Modern Europe, Poland, Women's History

Dr. David Smith, Associate Professor & Chair of History: Early Modern Britain, Law & Society, Commerce in Europe & the New World

Dr. Kevin Spooner, Associate Professor (cross-appointed to Political Science & North American Studies) & Director of the Laurier Centre for the Study of Canada: 20th-century Canadian Foreign Policy

Dr. Dana Weiner, Associate Professor: Pre-1877 US; Women's, Gender & African-American History

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