



Department of History

# THE OWL



Volume 9 Spring 2018

## Inside this Issue:

*History Alumni Career Event, 1-2*

*Congratulations, 2*

*Career Prospects for History Graduates, 3*

*New Course Offerings in 2017/18, 3*

*History Travel Courses, 4-5*

*Teaching & Research Symbiosis, 5*

*New Special Topics Courses in 2018/19, 6*

*History Students' Association, 6-7*

*Student Research Assistants in History, 7*

*Current Full-time Faculty List, 8*

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## Words of Welcome

Welcome to the ninth issue of *The Owl*, the annual newsletter of the History Department at Wilfrid Laurier University's Waterloo campus. Thanks to all who have contacted us in response to previous issues; please keep those letters and e-mails coming in. We especially love to hear from our former students.

Owl Trivia #9: Did you know that the eyes of an owl are not true "eyeballs"? Their eyes are tube-shaped and completely immobile, but provide binocular vision which enhances depth perception and their ability focus on prey.

## History Alumni Career Panel

As part of our focus on students' career development and networking, on February 27th the History Department hosted our first "Alumni Career Panel", an event aimed at History majors and other students and staff that featured three of our Alumni who have gone on to have successful careers outside of the fields of education, museums, libraries, journalism, and other areas that one might expect to be the career outcome for History graduates.

The panelists gave presentations regarding their insights on the relevance of their studies as History majors for their career development, highlighting how the highly transferable skills of critical thinking, research, persuasive writing and public speaking that Laurier's History majors acquire through their studies are greatly valued throughout the economy and much sought-after by employers in a variety of fields.

The students and staff in attendance were then able to follow up on those presentations to offer comments and ask questions of the panelists, and it was clear that the audience and panelists regarded the event as a great success.

We are very grateful to the alumni panelists — **Caitlin Mulroney, Sam Marshall, and Devyn Coady** — for generously taking the time to participate in this event, and for going to all the effort of preparing their presentations.

Details on their experiences at Laurier and in their respective careers are provided on page 2 of this issue of *The Owl*.

The Department thanks **Dr Darren Mulloy** for organizing this event, and **Dr Amy Milne-Smith** and **Heather Vogel**, the History Department's Administrative Assistant, and the **History Students' Association**, for their assistance is making it such a success.

(cont. on pg. 2)

## 2018 History Alumni Career Panelists



**Caitlin Mulroney** completed both her BA and her Masters of Arts in History at Wilfrid Laurier University and was an active member of the undergraduate History Students' Association from 2011 to 2015.

She started working at Thalmic Labs as a Talent Acquisition Coordinator in the autumn of 2016 and is now a Campus & Talent Operations Specialist responsible for Thalmic's campus recruitment program and recruitment technology.

Caitlin also sits on a committee which delivers diversity and inclusion initiatives company-wide. She loves her job and the fact that she still lives in the region.

**Devyn Coady** grew up in Waterloo and graduated from Wilfrid Laurier University in 2009 with a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in History and English.

She went on to obtain her Juris Doctor from the University of Windsor, Faculty of Law in 2013 and was called in the bar of Ontario in June 2014.

Devyn began her legal career with a mid-size firm in Kitchener and has continued her career as a litigation associate with the firm of Sorbara, Schumacher, McCann LLP in Waterloo.

Her practice focuses on commercial litigation, shareholder disputes, and construction law.



**Sam Marshall** graduated from Wilfrid Laurier University in April 2006 as an Honours History major.

After graduation Sam worked as a political campaign manager for Brian Turnbull's campaign to become Mayor of the City of Waterloo.

In January 2007 Sam started his career in the financial services sector, joining TD Canada Trust where he worked as a Financial Service Representative and Financial Advisor until April 2015 when he joined RBC Royal Bank.

Sam is currently the Branch Manager at the RBC branch at Highland and Ira Needles in Kitchener.

Many thanks again to these wonderful Laurier alumni who took the time from their busy (and successful) lives to return to the History Department to share their insights and experiences with our current students! If you are one of our alumni and would like to follow their lead, we'd love to hear from you!

## Congratulations

Members of the History Department and staff at the Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies (LCMSD) extend their congratulations to **Dr Mary Chaktsiris**, an expert on the impact of World War One on the city of Toronto who taught a number of courses in the History Department in 2016/17 and Fall 2017 as the LCMSD's first Cleghorn Fellow in War and Society. Mary, who holds an MA from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education as well as a PhD in History from Queen's University, has accepted a position as Instructional Developer at Ryerson University in Toronto. She will be greatly missed by her appreciative students and colleagues here at Laurier. Best wishes, Mary!

## Bright Job Prospects for History Graduates!

Over the past few years the History Department has hosted a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/LaurierHistoryDepartment/>), managed by **Dr Amy Milne-Smith** and **Dr Dana Weiner**, where we provide information of interest aimed especially at our History majors and alumni.

For example, we recently posted a blog from the Canadian Historical Association on the diverse career outcomes for History graduates: <https://historydegreediplomehistoire.blog/>.

Another recent post on our Facebook page is Paul B. Sturtevant's excellent 2017 article "History is not a useless major: fighting myths with data," from the American Historical Association's news magazine: *Perspectives on History*.

Here are some excerpts:

*"Over the past 20 years, warnings from a variety of sources—from career counselors to administrators to government officials—have convinced many prospective college students (and their parents) that the only safe path to a well-paying job is through a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) major. [Yet] members of the academy—including STEM faculty themselves—have repeatedly challenged assertions that majoring in the humanities is useless...."*

*In advising students, talking to parents, and listening to the priorities articulated by state legislatures, we continue to encounter widespread myths about the lives of people who graduate with history BAs.*

*These myths are largely based on misinformation about the prospective lives of those who major in history. They paint life with a degree in history as a wasteland of unemployment and underemployment.... A potent way to combat these myths is with concrete data. Thankfully, a massive repository of data, the American Community Survey (ACS), tells us much about the lives of history majors.... The ACS data suggest that the picture for history majors is far brighter than critics of the humanities would have you believe...."*

Here is the URL for the full article, which provides the data to back up these conclusions: <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/april-2017/history-is-not-a-useless-major-fighting-myths-with-data>.

## New Course Offerings in 2017/18

*Although we are all fascinated by the past, Laurier's History faculty are hardly "stuck" in it. We continually re-evaluate and seek to enhance our teaching.*

*Here are just a few of the exciting new courses we launched in 2017/18:*

**- Dr Amy Milne-Smith's** "History of Alcohol" (HI110): "Alcohol has been an important part of human history for thousands of years. It has been everything from a necessary part of the diet, to a sacred element of religious rites, to a celebratory beverage. However, it has also long been seen as a problem in terms of health, crime, and deviant behaviour. Its radically

different uses and understandings had important consequences for both regulation and consumption. In this course, we will explore world history through the lens of alcohol."

**- Dr Dana Weiner's** "Civil War and Reconstruction: America in Turmoil" (HI254): "The U.S. had earned its independence from Great Britain—and established its federal republic—less than a century before the nation fractured along sectional lines and began America's most deadly war. By the time the firing ended, the nation had both eradicated legal slavery and lost over 600,000 soldiers. In this course we will examine three linked subjects in detail: the

causes of the Civil War; the dynamics of the war and emancipation; and the outcomes of the war and Reconstruction."

**- Dr Cindy Comacchio's** "Saints and Scoundrels: Canadian Biography as History" (HI346): "This course uses the biographies of select women, men, and children to approach the social, political and cultural history of Canada from contact to recent times. We will discuss the life-stories of people who are famous, not-so-famous, and infamous, with a view to understanding how their lives were shaped by the historical moment they lived in, and how, in turn, they shaped the history of their times."



# History Travel Courses

In recent years a growing number of Laurier History students have had many diverse opportunities to enhance their study of the past through experiential learning in travel courses.

For well over a decade, hundreds of History students and alumni have gone to France and Belgium on War and Memory Battlefield Tours hosted by the Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies (LCMSDS), led by **Prof Terry Copp** (retired), **Dr Roger Sarty**, and **Dr Mark Humphries**, as well as affiliated faculty from the University of Waterloo, the Royal Military College, and elsewhere.

We have also offered a number of summer travel courses for credit. For example, in 2011 **Dr Len Friesen** took 15 students in his senior seminar (HI411) to Russia, in 2014 **Dr Blaine Chiasson** led 10 students in his third-year course (HI399) to China and Taiwan, and in 2016 **Dr Gavin Brockett** took 12 students to Israel/Palestine as part of a second-year course. Dr Brockett led a similar but shorter travel course to Israel/Palestine in February 2018, during the university's Reading Week.

Last year, **Dr Eva Plach** took 10 students to Poland for the last two weeks of May as part of HI 388: "Into that Darkness: Poland, WWII and the Holocaust." The Laurier history students were joined by ten students and a professor from Nipissing University in North Bay. They spent a week in Krakow before moving on to the Lublin region and Warsaw. Dr Plach is planning to offer this travel course again in Spring 2019.

Another mode of student travel courses is connected to Laurier's



Dr. Grischow's 2017 Puerto Rico travel course, including mostly students from the History Department's 2016/17 Residence Learning Community: "Pirates' Hall".

This photo is from their visit to Playa Caracas, on the island of Vieques.

**Residence Learning Community (RLC) program** in which up to 25 first-year students live and study together in the King Street Residence, take a common first-year History course, and have the option of taking a related travel course the following Spring.

Our first RLC, "Vimy Hall", was in 2014/15 and was followed by a travel course to France and Belgium led by **Dr Mark Humphries**. The next two years our RLC was on the subject of the history of piracy, and the RLC students in "Pirates Hall" all took HI127: "Pirates! A World History" with **Dr Jeff Grischow** in Winter term. Then Dr. Grischow and **Dr Dana Weiner** co-taught a second-year travel course (HI299) to Puerto Rico focusing on the history of piracy and slavery in the Caribbean.

In recognition of his teaching and mentoring role for the "Pirates Hall" RLC students, Dr Grischow was presented with a Residence Life Faculty Award in 2016. The Pirates' Hall RLC and Puerto Rico travel course proved to be so successful that Dr

Grischow repeated them in 2016/17.

For 2017/18 the History Department's Ancient Studies program joined with Laurier's Medieval & Medievalism Studies program to host a new RLC entitled "Camelot Hall", which attracted 17 students who all took HI121: "Ancient History in a Global Context", taught in the Fall term by **Professor Alicia McKenzie**. Some of the Camelot Hall students, together with a number of senior students, have enrolled in McKenzie's travel course this Spring, AF288c: "Roman *Britannia* and 'Dark Ages' *Engelonde*", which will culminate in a 9-day trip to England in early June to visit Roman sites such as Bath and Hadrian's Wall, and Anglo-Saxon sites such as Lindesfarne and Jarrow, as well as London's British Museum, Oxford's Ashmolean Museum, and several regional museums with excellent collections for Roman Britain and the early Anglo-Saxons and Vikings in England.

(cont. on p.5)

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The History Department's Residence Learning Community for 2018/2019 will be "Great Battles Hall", directed by **Dr Darryl Dee**. Up to 25 resident-students will all take his course HI123 "Great Battles in History" in the Fall term. In addition, throughout the academic year, they will be able to take part in various social and academic activities and field trips. Dr Dee is currently in the early planning stages for the RLC travel course for Spring 2019, which will include a trip to France and Belgium to visit battlefields, museums and memorials for major battles, dating from Classical Antiquity to the Second World War. Possible sites to be visited will include Alesia, Agincourt, Waterloo, and Vimy Ridge.

## Teaching & Research Symbiosis

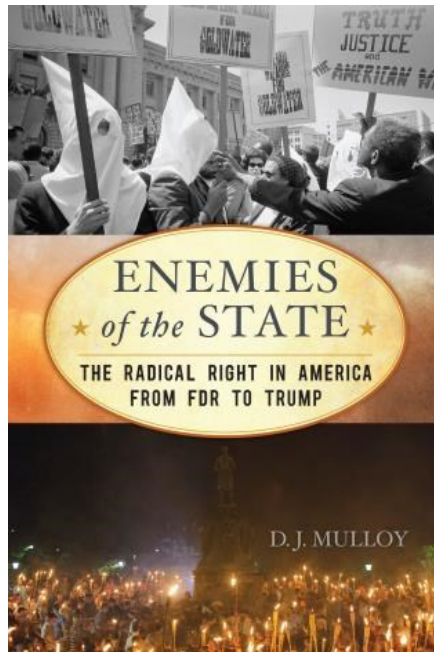
*We are often asked to explain how our historical research informs our teaching and how our teaching influences our research. In this column we showcase one of the many examples from Laurier's History Department where our teaching and research intersect.*

**Dr Darren Mulloy** is currently the chair of the History Department, and teaches courses on American history at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

A leading expert on radical political movements of the late 20th-century US, Dr. Mulloy's teaching is often informed by his research interests. For example, in HI114: "Problems in US History" his students learn about McCarthyism, the civil rights movement, and the Reagan era, among other topics. The Cold War is a major theme in his course on American Foreign Relations (HI332), and is the core subject of his graduate seminar.

Like most of Laurier's History faculty, Dr Mulloy's fourth-year seminars (HI411/491) very closely align with his research field: "The History of American Extremism".

The author of several books in this area, Dr. Mulloy's newest



contribution to this field will be released in July. Here is the publisher's description of *Enemies of the State* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018):

*"The rise of the alt-right alongside Donald Trump's candidacy may be seem unprecedented events in the history of the United States, but D. J. Mulloy shows us that the radical right has been a long and active part of American politics during the twentieth century. From the German-American Bund to the modern militia movement, Mulloy provides a guide for anyone interested in examining the roots of the radical right in the U.S.—in all its many varied*

*forms—going back to the days of the Great Depression, the New Deal and the extraordinary political achievements of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Enemies of the State offers an informative and highly readable introduction to some of the key developments and events of recent American history including: the fear of the Communist subversion of American society in the aftermath of the Second World War; the rise of the civil rights movement and the "white backlash" this elicited; the apparent decline of liberalism and the ascendancy of conservatism during the economic malaise of the 1970s; Ronald Reagan's triumphant presidential victory in 1980; and the Great Recession of 2007-8 and subsequent election of President Obama."*



**Dr Darren Mulloy**



## New Special Topics Courses for 2018/19

The History Department offers Special Topics courses which enable faculty to teach a course on a trial basis, and then decide whether to make it a regular course for future offerings.

For example, in Winter 2019 we will have two such courses:

- **Dr Adam Crerar's** "Sport in the Modern World" (HI299g): *"In the joy of a great play — made or watched — sport can seem outside of time and history. But as an aspect of culture, sport can act as a powerful lens through which to study various times, people, and places in the past. Through an examination of major sports and sports movements in the*

*19th and 20th centuries (such as hockey, baseball, football, boxing and the Olympics), this course explores major themes and topics that have been central to the modern world, including nationalism and international relations; youth and education; violence; colonialism and post colonialism; gender and sexuality; the pursuit of civil and Indigenous rights; the growth of cities; the advent and spread of mass communication; and work and leisure."*

- **Dr Dana Weiner's** "U.S. Rebels and Scandals: Sex, Politics and Dissent, 1600-1900" (HI347a): *"Conflict was rampant in the first three*

*centuries of US history. Controversy after controversy arose, tempers flared, and people passionately debated social roles, power, and morality. Americans from activists to reactionaries roiled their society, and this course focuses on key case studies of their tumultuous times. Topics may include colonial power struggle over such issues as slavery and witchcraft; midwives and doctors battling to control childbirth; social life in the new cities; class conflict and sexuality; clashes over abolitionism and labour rights; immigration and nativism; secession and dissent against the Civil War; and race, sex and the vote during Reconstruction."*

## The History Students' Association (HSA)

*Report from the 2017/18 President of the HSA, **Cameron Baer**:*

I am pleased to report that this year has proven to be an eventful and rewarding one for the History Students' Association. Benefitting from an eager and experienced executive team, the HSA upheld many traditional events while successfully hosting its most ambitious event yet.

With a year's experience, our executive team proved all the more effective in bringing the student body opportunities to engage with faculty and materials. These included the ever-popular "Meet the Profs" events hosted once in the Fall and again in the Winter semester, and a lecture on Arthurian traditions on film by **Prof Alicia McKenzie**,



followed by a showing of the undeniably unique "King Arthur: Legend of the Sword."

One of my goals for this year was to facilitate academic skills development for students. This we accomplished with a writing workshop graciously hosted by the History Department's Undergraduate Advisor for this year, **Dr Amy Milne-Smith**. In the realm of career development,

the HSA helped to facilitate a Laurier alumni panel devised by the department. By far the most exciting event of the year was the HSA's first formal dance, "A Dance With Dragons," in partnership with the Medieval Students' Society, the English Students' Association, and Laurier's Ancient Music Society. The teamwork on display in its planning and execution embodied a spirit of collaboration I hope to see continue between clubs, and the enthusiastic response from the student body without doubt made this the most gratifying HSA event of the year, one we are sure to repeat in the coming year.

For next year, my goal is to enhance student engagement with the History Students' Association. To this end I hope to

*(cont. on pg.7)*

(cont. from pg.6)

implement general meetings of some kind, with the possibility of opening up executive meetings to the general membership who wish to attend.

I would be lying if I said I was not unsure about taking on the position of president for the 2017-2018 year. However, the year's experience has waylaid these fears entirely, and I have

my executive team to thank for this; their enthusiasm and professionalism have made this experience an absolute pleasure.

The 2017/18 HSA Executive:

VP Academic: **Braeden Suggitt**

VP Social: **Stephanie Plante**

VP Administration: **Angela James**

VP Fundraising: **Katelyn Leece**

VP Finance: **Matthew Morden**

Senior Year reps.: **Michael Tepper & James Baker**

Junior Year reps.: **Duncan McKendrick & Thiranga Wijedasa**

This year's success belongs to them, and I look forward to working with the incoming team to bring the HSA another successful year in 2018/19.

## History Student RAs Contribute to Faculty Research Projects

Qualified History students at Laurier can gain valuable work experience while earning income as a Research Assistant (RA) on a faculty member's funded research project.

Currently, several such projects are underway, or were recently completed, with the help of History student RAs and more are sure to follow as the History Department is one of the more successful units in the Faculty of Arts when it comes to obtaining major research funding.

Last year **Dr Jeff Grischow** received a 5-year Insight Grant (\$246,266) from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) to support his project "A history of disability rights in Ghana: transition, adaptation and lived experience." He is currently employing 5 History majors as research assistants, including **Anthony Phu** and **Rebekah Timm**, who are reading through a Ghanaian newspaper on microfilm looking for references to disability, and **Heather Smith**, **Cameron Baer** and **Katelyn Leece** who are searching for references to disability in colonial records from Ghana.

In 2016 **Dr Chris Nighman** was awarded a 2-year SSHRC Insight Development grant (\$38,372) for the "*Chrysostomus Latinus in Iohannem* Online (CLIO) Project," for which he hired **Heather Smith** and **Katelyn Leece** as RAs to transcribe Latin texts from books published in 1470 and 1728 for publication on the CLIO Project website (<http://hucodev.srv.ualberta.ca/cockcrof/clio/index.html>). The purpose of this project is to provide three different Latin translations — from the 12th, 15th and 18th centuries — of a Greek patristic text in a digital format as an aid to philological research and teaching.

**Dr Amy Milne-Smith** was awarded a SSHRC Insight Development Grant (\$64,752) in 2015 for her research project "Ripper's Whitechapel: the Digital Humanities and Perceptions of Space in late-Victorian England." Over the 3-year period of her grant she employed 5 History Laurier students as RAs to compile data on crime, poverty, and prostitution from Victorian newspapers. In summer 2017 **Katelyn Leece** and **Matthew Hargreaves** worked as RAs on this project.

The History Department's long-standing relationship with the **Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies (LCMSDS)** not only provides many opportunities for History majors to work at the Centre in helping to run its daily operations and special events, but also to participate in the Centre's research activities. **Dr Mark Humphries**, Director of the LCMSDS and member of the History Department, has employed many History majors as RAs since he came to Laurier in 2013. His SSHRC-funded project focused on Canadian veterans' medical records and pension files, and numerous History students have worked on his project by scanning documents, entering information into searchable databases, and conducting other research tasks.

Last Fall Dr Humphries applied for a 5-year SSHRC Insight Grant to carry this research work forward, and **Dr David Smith** applied to the same program to support his research on the History of Business. Both are now awaiting the results of this year's competition.

Good luck Mark and David!

## Current Full-Time Faculty

*The History Department at the Waterloo campus currently has 22 active tenured professors, including three who are cross-appointed to other departments or programs:*

**Dr Gavin Brockett**, Associate Professor & Associate Dean of Arts for Student Affairs (cross-appointed to Religion & Culture): Middle East & Islamic History, Modern Turkey

**Dr Blaine Chiasson**, Associate Professor: Modern China, Sino-Russian relations

**Dr Cynthia Comacchio**, Professor: Canadian History; Gender, Family & Class; Health Care

**Dr Adam Crerar**, Associate Professor & Director of the Tri-University Graduate Program: 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

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

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

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

**Dr Mark Humphries**, Associate Professor & Director of the LCMSDS: Canadian Military History, Epidemics

**Dr Amy Milne-Smith**, Associate Professor & History Undergraduate Advisor: 19th-century British Cultural History, Medical History

**Dr David Monod**, Professor, Modern American Cultural & Social History

**Dr Darren Mulloy**, Professor & Chair of History: Post-1945 U.S. history, Political Extremism

**Dr Susan Neylan**, Associate Professor & Graduate Officer: Canadian Indigenous Peoples, Cultural History

**Dr Chris L. Nighman**, Associate Professor: Medieval & Renaissance Europe, Digital Humanities



The Tri-University Graduate Program in History combines the faculty and resources of three of Canada's premier universities: Laurier, the University of Guelph, and the University of Waterloo. Since 1994 our program has been educating students in innovative ways while providing them with a solid grounding in traditional historical methods.

The Tri-University program integrates the scholarship and experience of over seventy graduate faculty, making it one of the biggest graduate history programs in the country. Some 130 History graduate students are currently enrolled in the program and each year we accept up to 20 new Doctoral students and 60 new Master's students. Because of its impressive size and scope and because of student mobility among the three campuses, we are able to provide courses and supervise research in the widest possible range of areas.

For more information, please visit our website: <http://www.triuhistory.ca>

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

**Dr Roger Sarty**, Professor: Canadian Naval History, Canadian Military History

**Dr Michael Sibalís**, Professor: Modern Europe, French Revolution & Napoleon, History of Sexuality

**Dr David Smith**, Associate Professor & Co-ordinator of Medieval & Medievalism Studies: Early Modern Britain, Law & Society, Europe & the New World; Business History

**Dr Kevin Spooner**, Associate Professor (cross-appointed to North American Studies): 20th-century Canadian Foreign Policy

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

**Dr Suzanne Zeller**, Professor: Canadian History, Science in Victorian Culture & Society

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