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A Brief History of World History

Starting in the fall semester of 2006, the Department of History and Anthropology offered a new specialization — World History, which has replaced the Industrial History track. It had been in the developmental stages since mid 2005. Dr. Christopher DeRosa, one department leader helping to launch the program, feels that offering World History is a “good way to deliver the faculty’s strengths to students, and to help those students with their careers.”

The Monmouth Department of History and Anthropology is set up perfectly for this program. As world history has been described as a place where history meets the social sciences, it helps that the department already contains aspects of history, anthropology and geography.

World History is a unique discipline. Its lineage can be traced to the 1950s, and it is offered by a limited number of schools such as Temple, Perdue, U.C. Santa Cruz and the University of Hawaii at Manoa, which puts Monmouth at the forefront in this field.

Many teachers, of both high school and college level history, are being asked to move away from the Euro-centric model of instruction. The direction is toward a scenario that views history outside the relationship between nation-states and their rise and fall. Monmouth is answering the call and providing instruction to these teachers who are entering the field.

The objective of our World History Department is to study the past without borders, through an observation of transnational occurrences—the interconnectedness between cultures, regions and nations.

What is germane to historians in a world program? Topics range from something as small as village life or patterns of everyday living, to events on a much larger scale, such as global environmental or medical upheaval. World system theory, represented today by globalization, and finding its roots in the European world economy created in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, will be an important part of the Monmouth program as well.

The proliferation of capitalism through globalization and the rise of the internet, both of which cause the globe to appear a bit smaller, have made world history relevant to modern society. It needs to be analyzed and understood now more than ever. Not only does the World History program cross borders, it crosses the centuries.

Studying World History at Monmouth University brings students the knowledge of, and the ability to understand, subjects as diverse as trade, immigration, emigration, colonization, decolonization and tourism.

Topics like invasion and war will be studied in the World History program, but they will be approached demographically. For instance, when observing armed conflict, students will focus on the patterns, like trade or colonization, that changed as a result of it.

Professors will lead classes according to their varying areas of expertise. Dr. Karen Schmelekopf for instance, will instruct on maps and tourism; Dr. Kenneth Stunkel on China and Japan; Dr. William Mitchell on the formation of the global system; Dr. Julius Adekunle on the decolonization of Africa; Dr. Katherine Parkin on the comparative history of the family. This is just the tip of the iceberg. There are far too many to mention here. Dr. Fred McKitrick has said, echoing the sentiments of the faculty, that “this is a program that fits a need, but also plays to the strengths of our department.”

The new program has been lauded by the students, and interest in world history is definitely there. Several of this reporter’s colleagues have already joined the program, and they love the classes. Graduate student Rick Pacheco joined the program, and they love the classes. Graduate student Rick Pacheco has made a valuable contribution to the Monmouth program.

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Association of Graduate Students of History

During the Spring semester of 2006, Dr. Mustafa Aksakal and graduate student David Beales decided to start an association for graduate history students. Meetings started that same Fall and the club has come to be known by its acronym, AGSH, which stands for the Association of Graduate Students of History.

The launch occurred this fall after the submission of the club’s constitution to Monmouth University leadership. The central tenets of its charter according to Beales, are “to increase communication socially and academically amongst history students.” They hope to eventually include performing some community service as part of membership as well.

To date, the AGSH has been responsible for, or participated in, several campus events, including the welcome party, a talk on what goes into writing a thesis led by Dr. Chris DeRosa and a weekly meeting on Wednesdays from 5 to 6 pm in the student center.

As of the time this article was written, the club boasted a membership of roughly fifty people, with their rise and fall. Monmouth is among the forefront, hopes to meet shortly with the executive board, with Beales serving in any capacity to the field of history.

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Co-Founder of the AGSH, David Beales.
MU Students, Professor Present at Conference

Three of our number in the Department of History and Anthropology were offered the opportunity to present their respective papers at Marist College’s 15th annual Women and Society Conference in November of 2006. The attendees included two graduate students, Evie Rodriguez and Melissa Ziobro, and one professor, Dr. Katherine Parkin.

All three Monmouth delegates appeared on the same panel, called Balancing Women: Race, Gender and Identity. Their papers, while similar in theme, were diverse and interesting. They gave the proceedings a universal appeal, and all three presentations met with praise from an enthusiastic audience who were not shy about asking questions afterward.


There was an extensive Q&A following the panel and the Monmouth delegates each answered several inquiries about their work. Evie Rodriguez, who was presenting for the first time, was quoted as saying that the audience’s questions were “insightful and thought provoking,” and that she received valuable suggestions on approaches she had not considered for her paper. Overall, Rodriguez felt “pleased with the audience’s interest in the subject matter.”

In an interview with Dr. Parkin about the students who went with her to Marist, she stated that the delegates “represented Monmouth well. They were professional and generated intense interest with their research.” Congrats all!

Melissa Ziobro Live in Conference at SLC

Melissa Ziobro was selected by Sarah Lawrence College to present her paper, “Polynesian Pantheres: An Analysis of the Coping Mechanisms Employed by Women Integrating into the U.S. Army during World War II,” at the Ninth Annual Women’s History Conference this past March.

The conference was entitled Women at War: Soldiers, Sisters, Survivors. Ziobro’s field of study and the paper she presented fit flawlessly into the conference’s overall theme.

She captivated those present in the rustic environs of Sarah Lawrence College. The event was informative and a great deal of fun. We hope you can join us in the next issue for another Seafarers road trip.

2 AM & Feel Like Talking History? Try eCampus Online Discussion Forum!

With the formation of the Association of Graduate Students of History (AGSH) in the fall of 2006, came the eCampus forum - an online discussion group with the same mission as the club. The eCampus venue was founded by David Beales (pictured on page 1), and was a product of the same meeting with Dr. Mustafa Akasikal that spawned the AGSH.

While the association has weekly meetings, many of its members work and cannot get to campus by the scheduled time, so an electronic forum is necessary. “This should keep everyone involved in the community. It’s important to have access to input and a free exchange of ideas. What’s great about eCampus is that it no longer matters where you are or what time it is when you feel like getting involved,” said Beales during our interview.

Graduate students are automatically enrolled in the eCampus network, so anyone, regardless of their membership in the AGSH, can log on, post or just read. There are a wide variety of topics represented in the discussion threads, from SGA elections to the executive committee of the AGSH itself, and from research questions or points of interest to debates on what can be done to improve the school or department.

Beales hopes that the online arm of the AGSH will be used for posting works in progress so that they can be subjected to valuable peer review and critique, or to plan social gatherings like a proposed ski trip.

“eCampus is easier to follow than your email, as the discussion threads are visible and organized automatically according to the writer. While many of the postings are serious and meant to generate interest or serious debate, there are also amusing anecdotes about history or about classes. It is easy to use and a lot of fun to read,” Beales said that the online forum is “picking up steam and building a base of regular contributors. It is a great way to develop social and academic relationships despite our hectic 21st Century lives.” It is a remarkable addition to the AGSH, and it is hoped to get more successful as the community grows.

This online discussion venue, along with the Association of Graduate Students of History, are two fantastic contributions by David Beales for the benefit of graduate students in the Department of History and Anthropology. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to get involved in a lively discussion, either at an AGSH meeting, or online whenever you want.

Monmouth delegates to the 15th annual Women and Society Conference at Marist College, November ’06. L. to R: Melissa Ziobro, Dr. Katherine Parkin and Evelyn Rodriguez.
In the Field and on the Move

In March of 2006, the Fire Island News hired Jeffrey Salzberger, a graduate student in American history at Monmouth University. Boating a pass-along readership of 35,000, the Fire Island News is a seasonal weekly paper out of Long Island, NY.

His official job title at the newspaper is historian, but the tasks assigned to him include archive management and preservation, as well as the writing or reproduction of historical articles. The paper is only published between May and September, but Salzberger is busy during this off season trying to secure a grant which may facilitate the digitizing of the archives.

He is also laying the groundwork for several fundraisers and an archival show at the Ocean Beach Historical Society, which will take place during the summer of 2007. The show will feature many of the photos, objects and ephemera which Salzberger has found and identified. He was quoted as saying, "Some of these objects haven’t been handled since the paper’s founding 50 years ago, and the sea water has been brutal. It’s easier for me to identify things and put them into an historical context, than to preserve them, but I'm learning as I go. This stuff needs to be saved, and I think I can help accomplish that goal. Also, all my colleagues at Monmouth have been quite helpful."

He also said that the job has been rewarding, and that it has helped him to "write accessible history for a wider public." He hopes to continue the work for at least a few more seasons.

Salzberger has also recently been accepted to present a paper on some of his Fire Island finds at a conference entitled Things That Move: The Material Worlds of Tourism and Travel. The conference will take place this summer at Leeds Metropolitan University in the United Kingdom.

Kenneth Foulks is currently a graduate student at Monmouth University where he focuses on American history. Aside from his academic pursuits, Foulks has been with the U.S. military for almost 18 years, and currently holds the rank of Major in the reserves.

Part of his work in this capacity has led him to attend the Command and General Staff College, where he is enrolled in a three phase, web based curriculum. The CGSC stresses education and leadership for a division level and higher, and the classes vary in subject matter. Some topics that Foulks is covering include history, leadership, military strategy and homeland defense. He is currently working on a paper which deals with the training, deployment and outcome of the American Expeditionary Force during WWI. Foulks, who enjoys his endeavors with the CGSC says "It's the road to self improvement."

After graduating from the CGSC in about two years, Foulks will be able to attain the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, and hopes to attend the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Perhaps most importantly with respect to his work, Foulks has stated that "when it's something you like to do it's really not work."

Kristina Maravegias is currently obtaining her Master of Arts in History at Monmouth University. She holds a graduate assistantship in the History and Anthropology Department and does work with several professors, including some interesting archaeological studies with Dr. Richard Veit.

To satisfy her love of archaeology, Maravegias travels to Bamburgh in the United Kingdom during the summer to work on a dig at what she has described as "one of the finest sites in England." The excavations take place at a castle, its associated burial grounds and environs. She has been at work on this independently run research project for the past two years and will continue this season. In the past she has worked as an intern in the Finds Department, processing artifacts and notifying the proper expert corresponding to each item. (Continued on p. 4)

Yvette Florio Lane (M.A., 2006) of Keyport, NJ, entered the Rutgers University Ph.D. history program as a Graduate Fellow in the fall of 2006. Lane was awarded four years of financial support by the Rutgers Graduate School and is completing coursework in the Modern European and Women and Gender concentrations. Last spring, she defended her Monmouth master's thesis, "The Golden of Rayon': Artificial Silk, Gender, and Class in the Construction of Modernity in Germany's Golden Twenties." The thesis is an analysis of the ways in which the development and use of synthetic fabrics challenged gender and class roles in interwar Germany. Lane's research drew upon a wealth of primary sources, including contemporary magazines, newspapers, and popular fiction. She facilitated this research by taking German language courses concurrently with her history courses. This summer she will travel overseas to conduct research and to further develop her German skills.

While at Monmouth, Lane was a recipient of the Monmouth Graduate Scholars Fellowship award and also assisted numerous faculty members with their research projects. She served as the president of the Phi Alpha Theta honors society, and was awarded a graduate assistantship in the Department of History and Anthropology by the Graduate School. In 2006, she was named the Department of History and Anthropology's Outstanding Graduate Scholar and won the Phi Alpha Theta Service Award.

Just as active off campus, she has published essays in the Encyclopedia of the Home Front (ABC-CLIO, 2006) as well as in several other forthcoming publications, and has presented papers at Brown University, University of Illinois, Temple University, and Rutgers University graduate conferences.

Kathleen Shapiro is currently in the process of obtaining her Master of Arts in United States history at Monmouth University, where she also did her undergraduate work in history and anthropology.

Shapiro has held a graduate assistantship in the History and Anthropology department for the past two years and a half year, and has had a wide variety of research experience with various professors. She has done a great deal of primary research, created photo archives, and built databases for members of the department.

Her own work has gotten her published on a number of occasions. As an undergraduate, Shapiro’s senior thesis was awarded a monetary prize and published in a journal by The New Jersey Project on Inclusive Scholarship, Curriculum and Teaching. It was one of nine winning entries.

Recently, Shapiro has had some experience with peer review, providing her critique of Sherry B. Ortner’s, New Jersey Dreaming: Capital, Culture, and the Class of ’58. Her review, published on H-net, is entitled “Beyond Poodle Skirts and Rock ‘n Roll.”

We at The Sextant asked Kathy how she manages all this work plus her thesis which requires a great deal of travel and field time, and she said that “We have an extremely supportive department … everyone is very approachable and helpful.”

Overall, Shapiro has had and continues to have a very rewarding experience at Monmouth University. She feels that the program is “arduous but rewarding.”

It should be noted that Kathleen Shapiro was also on the Student Committee for the Global Understanding Project, and she was a Student Representative to the Human Relations Advisory Council.

Look for more student and alumni highlights coming in the next Sextant! Interviews are going on now. If you have some news to share, drop us a line at 917-699-8088.