Greetings from the History Department!

Spring semester is well underway, and students and faculty have successfully adjusted to the block schedule (one class at a time for one month) and hybrid learning (a combination of in-person and online attendance) in response to Covid-19.

The Tegeder-Berg Society has adjusted to Covid as well. Last fall, we held a remarkably well attended and timely webinar on monuments and historical memory. Three history faculty—Dr. Brittany Merritt-Nash, Dr. Elieheva Perelman, and Dr. Shannon Smith—spoke on the politics of specific monuments in Great Britain, Japan, and the US, respectively. If you missed the webinar, you can watch a recording on the Tegeder-Berg Society website.

The Society is hosting “Partisan Politics, Insurrection, and the Guillotine: Engaging Students through Role-Play in the 21st Century Classroom” on Wednesday, April 7. This interactive, roleplaying event will bring together students and alums in factions vying to shape the future of revolutionary France. This will be a great opportunity to experience the engaging pedagogy of the current history classroom, relive your student days, and interact with current and prospective students. Only minimal preparation required. More information below.

I hope to see all you at our April event and in person next fall.

Brian Larkin ’92

Partisan Politics, Insurrection, and the Guillotine: Engaging Students through Role-Play in the 21st Century Classroom, Dr. Elisabeth Wengler-Game Master

Wednesday, April 7, 7pm

How has the History classroom changed in the last decades? Join the Tegeder-Berg Society and see for yourself as we recreate the partisanship and politics of revolutionary France. You’ll adopt the persona of an 18th century French legislator or member of the Parisian working class and experience the interactive pedagogy of our History classrooms. In your historical persona and as part of a political faction, you will team up with other alums and prospective and current students to negotiate, scheme, and argue for your vision for the French nation (and win the game) while trying to keep your head! As you play your role, you will learn how this participatory style teaches students not only about the past and how it relates to the present, but also the skills and habits of mind they need for careers and citizenship.

Testimonials:

“ I was able to really understand how people felt and why they acted as they did [by playing a historical character]. It also really hit home how outcomes can just come down to chance sometimes.”  Adam Schwartz, SJU ‘20

“It is incredible how invested students are and by extension how intense the games get. The perspective gained from adopting an historical persona so different from one’s self is unparalleled. Also, nothing is set in stone so even when you think you know how it will turn out, all the nuances of the game will ensure an exciting ending every time!”  Cass Gronning, CSB ’22

“The game has everything: contentious politics, history, blackmail, and if you are lucky, you can save France from crippling debt and preserve its monarchy. Or if you are less lucky you might find yourself before the national razor.”  Cullen White, SJU ‘20

Dr. Wengler is an early modern European historian with an emphasis on religion, gender and French history. She teaches courses on the Italian Renaissance, the European Reformations, and the French Revolution. She relishes her role as “Game Master” in the various role-playing games she uses in her courses.
Brittany Merritt Nash discussed the toppling of Edward Colston's statue in Bristol, England during Black Lives Matter protests in the summer of 2020. While critics of the protestors argued that they “erased history” by taking the statue down, the history of the monument itself reveals a more complicated story. The statue, which was erected over 150 years after Colston's death, portrayed Colston as a benevolent philanthropist while camouflaging his role as a prominent merchant in the transatlantic slave trade. The story of Colston's statue prompts us to consider what stories monuments tell, and whether or not removing a statue “erases” the past or corrects a historical wrong.

In her talk, Dr. Elisheva Perelman analyzed Japan's “history problem” by highlighting the Japanese government’s opposite reactions to memorials like those found at the Yasukuni Shrine complex, particularly the shrine itself (in which the spirits of the war dead, including Class A war criminals, are interred) and Yūshūkan (the military museum honoring Japan's martial exploits), and the “Comfort Women” statuary worldwide. The contrasting response serves as a reminder of how memorials steeped in racism and controversy can not only inhibit intranational progress, but also affect international relations and diplomacy.

Dr. Shannon Smith argued that the debate over Confederate monuments emphasizes the importance of historians to add evidence and broader histories to public conversations. Confederate monuments tell a narrow version of the past and have overshadowed the commemoration of other histories. Communities are attempting to create a more complete story of the past by removing monuments that no longer represent our values, adding explanatory plaques, transforming existing monuments, or creating counter-monuments. These monuments and artworks are challenging that long but narrow tradition of who can and who should be celebrated and how we teach history in public spaces.

Monuments and Memory

~submitted by Brittany, Ellie, and Shannon (History Professors)

Internship News

Ellie Terpstra interned at the Stearns History Museum in Fall 2020. Her job assignment was to add content to files with biographical information from newspapers and primary sources surrounding immigrants and their descendants in the St. Cloud area. She spent many hours researching individuals who were drafted in World War I and II, and posting articles of her research in newsletters and on the museum’s website. The skills she gained from her History and French courses allowed her to search for articles of specific events and interpret/analyze primary or secondary documents with confidence. After completing her internship, Ellie advises current students of history to apply for internships because it allows the intern to work personably with professionals while establishing connections that could be beneficial in the following years.

~submitted by Elise Backer ‘22
Elise Backer ’22 is a junior History and Classical Studies double major. Her interest in history began when she was young; she excelled at the subject naturally and found it more compelling than her other courses. She enjoys making comparisons and finding connections between the past and present. Her favorite History classes thus far include the first she took here with Dr. Schroeder, History 142: Old Regime to EU, which introduced her to the world of academia. In that class, she found her stride in the program. Her other favorite class was Ancient Greece with Dr. Schlude because she loves Ancient history. Elise loves to learn history by reading primary sources (which she admits “sounds nerdy”) because she gets to analyze the documents’ perspectives. Elise really enjoys the History professors, all of whom she says are amazing, knowledgeable and passionate about both their subjects and their students’ success. The variety of the courses the History Department offers allows everyone an opportunity to excel in their niche. The Tegeder-Berg Society events are also intriguing and educational. Elise's favorite to date was the roundtable discussion “Monuments and Memory” hosted last semester. CSB/SJU professors Dr. Brittany Merritt Nash, Dr. Elisheva Perelman and Dr. Shannon Smith discussed the history and impact of Confederate monuments and their reemergence into public interest in the context of their relation to the Black Lives Matter protests in the aftermath of George Floyd’s death in Minneapolis.

A fun fact from Elise. “The word barbarian comes from the ancient Greek word ἐβαρβάρος, which was used to describe anyone who did not speak Greek. The Greeks thought anyone who did not speak their language were continuously saying ‘bar bar bar.’”

Colin Kummer ’21 is a senior History major at CSB/SJU. Though his interest in history has been a long affair, it was the enthusiasm of his 10th grade World History teacher that solidified his regard for the subject. Colin enjoys entertaining contrasting ideas and perspectives, and having his view changed through argument. One of the most appealing aspects of the study of history according to Colin is the relative rarity of a ‘correct’ answer. He explains, “of course there are exceptions, but usually the effectiveness of our answers to questions rely on how well we deliver evidence.” Here at CSB/SJU Colin has particularly enjoyed classes about Far East Asia which made him acutely aware of his own ignorance on the topic, and the lack of coursework on the subject throughout K-12 education. Other favorites include 20th Century America Sports & Society with Dr. Ken Jones and Debating the French Revolution with Dr. Wengler, in part because of their interesting topics, but largely due to professor engagement.

“One thing that stands out about the CSB/SJU history department is the passion and excitement shown by the professors. My history courses at CSB/SJU have been the most engaging classes I have taken. We write, discuss, play role-playing games, and I even had the chance to go rowing on Lake Sag with my class for extra credit once. It’s much easier to learn and develop when teachers are passionate about what they’re teaching, and that has always been the case in my experience at CSB/SJU.”

His favorite history events include the panels of alumni speakers because they demonstrate how the study of history translates into the professional world.

A fun fact from Colin: “Abraham Lincoln is enshrined in the Wrestling Hall of Fame.”

~submitted by Cassandra Gronning ’22
Yasin Williams was drawn towards the study of history due to his dedication to discovering significant events and the lessons it teaches us. Yasin was especially drawn to African American history from taking Dr. Nash’s course, *Slavery in the Atlantic World*, which inspired his senior thesis on *The Invisible Church*, a secret worship group among African slaves in the United States. He utilizes essential, professional lessons he obtained from studying history in his daily life and current position as Associate Director of Annual Giving at St. John’s. Thinking critically, communicating, writing cohesively, and developing research skills prepared Yasin for a professional career. Even though he did not go into the field of history post-graduation, Yasin credits to where he is now to the easily applicable degree of history into the professional world.

~submitted by Elise Backer

Christine Quinones, CSB ’15, decided to major in history because of her fascination for stories and storytelling. Everything in life has a narrative, and she was always intrigued how events and information were communicated based on different perspectives. She knew she wanted to study the things she was passionate about at CSB/SJU, but wasn’t sure if it would be possible. Her professors helped her focus her studies in both History and Chemistry and supported her in developing and combining history-centric and science-centric perspectives into one holistic, adaptable mindset that allowed her to explore further opportunities in cancer research.

The History major allowed Christine to develop a skillset that focused on taking lots of information from many different sources, identifying the most important pieces, and combining them to create a succinct narrative. As a clinical researcher at a cancer research hospital, she uses this skillset every day. An important aspect of her job is to coordinate a set of research studies and clinical trials—that involves everything from analyzing and presenting data, to assisting in writing articles and protocols, to speaking with patients and explaining complicated science in a way they can easily understand. Her history background continues to be crucial in helping form meaningful connections with others, and she claims she would not be where she is today without the guidance from her professors.

In high school, her AP European History teacher told her, “if you only focus on the lone tree, you’re missing out on the entire forest.” Attaining a degree in History does not limit you to a particular niche of career opportunities; rather, it opens doors to many possible future paths for you after graduation.

Dan Beirne, SJU ’15, has always had a fascination for History. His family raised him to know and appreciate his own family history. He grew up in Richmond, Virginia, so historical landmarks were around every corner and visiting them was a favorite pastime. When he moved to CSB/SJU, he had this continued drive to learn more about this wonderful subject that makes you see connections with our past and present, as well as allowing one to see different perspectives on how things have been or could be interpreted.

“Obtaining a History major allows you to be flexible in many positions you can take on after your college years,” according to Dan. As a procurement agent for The Boeing Company, his degree in History has provided crucial skills that allow him to be a proficient researcher and effective problem solver. His position requires him to dive deep into multiple applications to find answers to current problems and, in doing so, develop creative solutions.

“Going into the workforce after college can be a daunting and even scary task,” Dan said. “By gaining a History degree you have multiple avenues to explore for employment. Just remember the first job you do after college does not need to be your career.”

Christine and Dan met their freshman year at CSB/SJU, will be getting married this November, and currently live in California!

~submitted by Norma Koetter
Meet Dr. Jonathan Merritt Nash, an Associate Professor of History here at CSB/SJU. Dr. Merritt Nash teaches several in-depth history courses such as *Historiography and Methods (Interpreting the American Revolution)* and *History Colloquium (A Struggle for Freedom)*. When he's not teaching, Dr. Merritt Nash enjoys watching films, listening to music, and spending time with his family. Dr. Merritt Nash is also quite the chef having an affinity for baking bread and pastries in his free time.

Dr. Merritt Nash is extremely passionate about history because it allows him to learn about places and people that he'll never get to visit. History also explains why the world is the way it is and gives context to the changes, and lack of changes, in our lives. Some of his favorite historical subjects include North American history prior to the formation of the United States, the American Revolution, the histories of slavery and resistance to enslavement in the Americas and Caribbean, and the crime and incarceration system of the United States.

Dr. Merritt Nash has published a number of articles on a variety of subjects including the history of the Eastern State Penitentiary, Benedictine values and inclusive pedagogy, and food insecurity among college students. Currently, Dr. Merritt Nash is working on a study about incarceration in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century United States and two additional articles on food insecurity among college students. If you'd like to check out some of Dr. Merritt Nash's work, you can find his journal article “The Prison Has Failed”: The New York State Prison, In the City of New York, 1797–1828 on DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU right now.

Meet Our Senior History Majors:

**Brennen Baldwin**
Theis topic: “The Importance of the Flower Wars to the Aztec Religion before the Spanish Conquest”

**Alec Boedigheimer**
Theis topic: “Uncovering the Effects of the Teton Dam Collapse on the Bureau of Reclamation in the Last Decades of the 20th Century”

**Anthony Buckingham**
Theis topic: “East and West German Unification”

**Kaleb Carlson**
Theis topic: “Black Patriots in the American Revolutionary War”

**Kieyarrah Dennis**
Theis topic: “Racism’s Incorporation and Effects on Healthcare and Housing in the 20th and 21st Centuries”

**Dextan Hodge**
Theis topic: TBA

**Colin Kummer**
Theis topic: TBA

**Michael Olson**

**Lukas Otte**
Theis topic: “Reintegration of Japanese American’s into American Society Following Internment During World War 2”

**Hayden Stensgard**
Theis topic: “United States Engagement and Disengagement with Cambodia between 1968 and 1979”

**Ellie Terpstra**
Theis topic: “Human Rights for Those of African Descent in French Society During the French Revolution”
America for Americans: A History of Xenophobia in the US, Erika Lee

Dr. Lee, who is the director of the Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota, provides a sweeping examination of the causes and consequences of xenophobia from Benjamin Franklin's opposition to German immigrants to our recent concern about our southern border and the consequences of Islamophobia. She shows that xenophobia is not just about immigration, but also about the more fundamental question of “who has the power to define what it means to be American, and who gets to enjoy the privileges of American citizenship.” It is a very accessible narrative, and even more familiar stories like the relocation of Japanese Americans during World War II provide fascinating new insights.

A Most Beautiful Thing, Arshay Cooper

The subtitle of this short memoir is “The True Story of America's First All-Black High School Rowing Team.” It has all the strengths of a classic sports story and much more as a bunch of Black students from a gang infested area of Chicago build a life none of them had imagined. The narrative sucks you in, helping you see the power of racism and low expectations, as well as how exceptional mentors and a vision worth fighting for can transform lives.

“One Night in Miami,” streaming on Amazon Prime.

It creates an imagined conversation that might have happened if Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali, Jim Brown, and Sam Cooke had met in February 1964 right after Ali won the heavyweight title. It is a very interesting look at how each of the four responds to the meaning and responsibility of fame for a Black leader in a racist world.

~above titles submitted by Dr. Ken Jones

Eradication: Ridding the World of Diseases Forever? by Nancy Leys Stepan.

This timely book will plunge you into both historical and contemporary debates over the best policies to manage global health and the spread of disease. Stepan's book analyzes historical attempts to eradicate diseases like smallpox, malaria, and polio. While eradication of disease might seem like an overall good, Stepan demonstrates that some attempts to completely eradicate diseases might lead to more drawbacks than it is worth.

~submitted by Dr. Brittany Merritt Nash

Senior History Majors, cont’d.

Regina Thercihek
Thesis topic: “The Relationship between Traditional MN Wild Rice Harvesting Areas and Natural Resource Extraction in Indigenous Communities”

Sheamus Westermann
Thesis topic: “Nazi or Post-WWII Germany”

Abbegayle Witham
Thesis topic: “Fees Must Fall/Decolonization of Education Movement in South Africa”

Summer Fellows

Congratulations to McKenna Kirchberg ’22 on receiving the Flieschhacker Center for Ethical Leadership in Action fellowship.

Congratulations to Kayla O’Leary ’22 on receiving the Flieschhacker Center for Ethical Leadership in Action fellowship.

Summer Study Program

Congratulations to Cassandra Gronning ’22 on being accepted into the Washington DC Summer Study program.

Clio’s Corner

Clio continues to quarantine with her family, causing pandemonium throughout the pandemic at home, but she misses her home away from home in the department, with all of her historian friends and colleagues. It just isn’t as fun over Zoom, but she does appreciate it when people use the cat filters for meetings, because it makes her feel less isolated. Sure, she has Dio, and the new hairless cat friend (Editor’s note: that’s a human infant), but they don’t give the same kind of cuddles. Until then, though, be sure to check out our Tegeder-Berg events and talks for a chance to catch Clio onscreen. Chances are, it will probably be her butt. The end of history, indeed. Stay safe everyone!

~submitted by Dr. Ellie Perelman