



History at Eastern Michigan University



Dept of History & Philosophy

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Military History Thrives at Eastern Michigan University

In 2018, the veteran-run organization Military Friendly ranked Eastern Michigan one of the most military and veteran friendly universities in the nation. Eastern scored 100% in all six categories, including “Welcoming Culture” and assistance with “Graduation and Career.”

It comes as no surprise then, that military history is an important focus in History at Eastern Michigan University. “Military history is one of our real strengths,” said Prof. Jesse Kauffman. “It’s important, it’s interesting, and it’s something we collectively do a very good job of here at Eastern Michigan.”

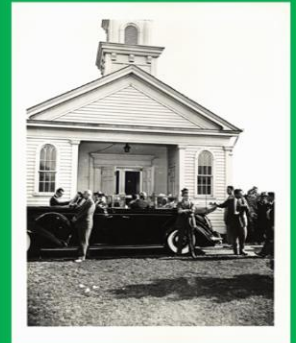
Prof. Kauffman, who received his Ph.D. from Stanford University in 2008, currently teaches popular courses in the Global History of Warfare, World War I, and World War II, among many others. His first book, titled *Elusive Alliance: The German Occupation of Poland in World War I*, was published by Harvard University Press in 2015. He admitted he has always gravitated toward military history, but he considers himself a scholar of war and society instead of purely a military historian. He studies how military institutions are created and sustained and how wars affect culture, in addition to operational history.

“The military is a good place to get at other questions,” observed another Eastern Michigan professor, John G. McCurdy, whose work on the colonial and Revolutionary War eras has led him to explore issues of race, class, and gender. Prof. McCurdy, who received his Ph.D. from Washington University in St. Louis, published his second book with Cornell University Press last year, titled *Quarters: The Accommodation of the British Army and the Coming of the American Revolution*. In it, his use of archival papers written by British military commanders in the eighteenth century led him to larger questions about the place of military personnel within American society up to the present.

“Military history used to be specifically about men,” he noted, “but it hasn’t been that way for fifty years. It’s about the social history of war now, the inner workings, and what life is like for the soldier. All of this connects back to larger social issues.” Prof. McCurdy teaches a popular undergraduate course titled “What is an American?” where students see war through the eyes of diverse Americans, from Frederick Douglass to Mary Paik Lee.

Prof. Steven Ramold likewise teaches a number of classes specifically on military history. His focus is on the Civil War and Reconstruction, but he also offers a class on the history of sports, which he calls, “a different sort of war.” Prof. Ramold earned his Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska in 1999, and has gone on to publish four books on the topic of the Civil War. His work, however, focuses more broadly on the lives of both soldiers and civilians in wartime--their experiences, their opinions, and their role in victories and defeats. *Continued on Page 2...*

Enjoy these historic photographs throughout this edition of the Newsletter provided by the Ypsilanti Historical Society.



Shown above are two photos of the Willow Run Evangelical Lutheran Church during the Second World War. The first photo captures President Roosevelt on a visit.

“Many have the idea that military historians glorify war,” said Ramold, “but no, quite the opposite.” The famous “maxim” he teaches his students is that wars do three things: they kill people, they cost money, and they change everything. “But number one is that they kill people,” he observed. He cautions against ignoring military history as a historical subject because nothing else has so greatly changed the course of human history. “To ignore it as an academic subject is very short sighted,” he warned.

This opinion was echoed by the most published historian in History at Eastern Michigan, Prof. George H. Cassar. Prof. Cassar, who readily calls himself a military historian, is a veritable encyclopedia of knowledge about the First World War. “Of the fourteen books I’ve written, eleven are on the First World War. But the other two are textbooks I co-authored about the war, and the last one was about the period right before the First World War broke out.”

Prof. Cassar, who received his Ph.D. from McGill University in Canada, recently retired after a fifty-year long tenure teaching and writing military history at Eastern Michigan. Yet he can still be found in his office on campus every day, hard at work.

When asked how he grew interested in becoming a military historian in the 1960s, he admitted that it happened accidentally. He came across a little-known set of military documents about World War I while working on his Master’s thesis at the University of New Brunswick. This led him to a Ph.D. dissertation on the Dardanelles campaign, which eventually became his first book: *The French and the Dardanelles: A Study of Failure in the Conduct of War* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1971).

“Wars are a part of history,” said Prof. Cassar. “Some people think that people who teach military history are warmongers, but that’s just the opposite, because we know what war is like, what it does to a society, what it does to the individuals involved.” In the end, however, he has made military history his primary focus for a rather simple reason. “I’m just interested in it,” he said. Based upon the large number of students who regularly enroll in our military history classes, it is apparent that many of them are also interested in it as well.



From left to right – Prof. Jesse Kauffman, Prof. George Cassar,
Prof. Steven Ramold, and Prof. John McCurdy

Mark Jefferson at Versailles: Symposium Honors Eastern Michigan Geographer



Graduate student Alex Logan shows stereoscopic images created by Mark Jefferson to a guest at the symposium reception.

The year 2019 marked the 100th anniversary of the Versailles Peace Conference, where world leaders such as British Prime Minister David Lloyd George and American President Woodrow Wilson met following the end of World War I to set the terms of surrender for the defeated Central Powers. At that historic meeting, the man responsible for redrawing the national boundaries of Europe was Eastern Michigan's own Mark Jefferson, at the time head of the school's Department of Geography.

To commemorate this event and the role that Prof. Jefferson played in it, the Departments of History and Philosophy, Political Science, and Geology and Geography sponsored a symposium at Eastern Michigan on October 17-18. Eastern Michigan University Prof. Mary-Elizabeth Murphy, who co-organized the symposium with History and Philosophy Department Head Jim Egge, spoke enthusiastically about the nature of the event, which "brought together speakers with different perspectives on Mark Jefferson and also different departments." She called the symposium "truly interdisciplinary."

Thursday's pre-symposium sessions were held in the Student Center and featured two guest speakers, Prof. Jeremy Crampton and Prof. Wesley Reisser. Prof. Crampton, who teaches at Newcastle University in England, and whose own research focuses on critical approaches to mapping and geosurveillance, led a discussion on "New Frontiers in Geography." Prof. Reisser, who teaches geography at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., connected the work of Prof. Jefferson to his own work as a Senior Foreign Affairs Officer in the State Department. Prof. Murphy appreciated these conversations with scholars who were able to give insight into the variety of career options open to students of history, geography, and political science.

Thursday's activities concluded with an evening reception at the Ypsilanti Freighthouse, which was attended by the speakers, faculty, students, community members, and six members of Prof. Jefferson's family, all of whom are Eastern Michigan graduates. On display at the Freighthouse were a number of artifacts from Prof. Jefferson's life and his time at the conference, which are held in the university archives. Among the artifacts were a sampling of photographs taken by Prof. Jefferson during his career as he travelled across the globe. These included stereoscopic images, which combine two photographs in a special viewing device to allow the brain to process them in three-dimensional dimensions. Eastern's archivist, Alexis Braun Marks, explained that "Jefferson would use these images to teach his classes, when he couldn't take his students out into the field."

Friday morning's events began with a presentation by Cassie Thayer, who recently received her M.A. in History and Cultural Museum Studies from Eastern Michigan. Her talk examined the difficulties that Prof. Jefferson encountered at the Peace Conference, and his eventual disillusionment with his role as chief cartographer. Joining her in this morning session was Prof. Crampton. In addition to providing interesting biographical information on Prof. Jefferson, his talk examined the controversial topic of drawing national borders based on language and ethnicity, which Jefferson was tasked with doing at the Peace Conference.

The next panel included three speakers: recent alumnus Dustin Elliot, university archivist Alexis Braun Marks, and Prof. Reisser. Dustin Elliot's presentation was a product of his senior seminar with Prof. Murphy, focusing on Jefferson's early work as an astronomer in Argentina and the way this experience influenced his later career as a geographer. Alexis Braun Marks then spoke on "The Mark Jefferson Papers at the EMU Archives," highlighting aspects of the extensive collection held by the university and available to students, researchers, and the public. In addition to information about the conference at Versailles, she said, "We have field notebooks, ledgers of expenditures, and photographs of field research," calling the archive a "comprehensive look at a faculty member redefining how to teach geography." It is worth noting that some of these materials were originally found by Jefferson biographer Geoffrey J. Martin, in a pile of coal in Jefferson's Ypsilanti basement. The panel concluded with a presentation by Prof. Reisser, titled "Maps at The Paris Peace Conference: Mark Jefferson's Lasting Legacy on the World Map." Professor Jesse Kauffman concluded the symposium with remarks on the delegates' failure to create a lasting peace by drawing national borders along ethnic lines."

The symposium ended with a tour of the Jefferson papers in the Eastern Michigan archive, led by university archivist Braun Marks. Prof. Murphy, who regularly brings her history classes to the archives to conduct research, said an important moment for her during the tour was getting to see the actual documents from the historically significant Versailles Peace Conference, documents that few people realize are housed in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Department head Jim Egge likewise appreciated the tour of the archives, and the way an increasing number of classes at the university are getting access to original primary sources, which he calls the "real work of history."

When asked to reflect upon the value of the symposium, Prof. Egge remarked, "It's great to have an exchange between the disciplines," and to have "our own alumni on that platform, giving impressive, high quality presentations." He also stressed the relevancy of Prof. Mark Jefferson's work, a hundred years after the Versailles Peace Conference: "Nationalism, drawing borders, ethnicity... These are issues we are still talking about today." Prof. Egge also expressed the hope that this event would inspire more interdisciplinary symposiums and opportunities for students at Eastern Michigan University.

More Photos from the Ypsilanti Historical Society



Michigan State
Normal College
Student Group, 1903.

From the Department Head

Dear EMU History Alumni and Friends,

The most rewarding part of serving as Department Head has been to witness not only my own students' successes, but the achievements of my colleagues' students and alumni as well. I'd like to share with you four student and alumni accomplishments that will stand out for me when I look back on 2019-20.



As reported in this newsletter, in October we hosted a two-day celebration of the legacy of Professor Mark Jefferson, centered on a symposium examining Jefferson's role in the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. It gave me great pride to see our alumni Cassie Thayer and Dustin Elliot present their research alongside Jefferson authorities Jeremy Crampton and Wesley Reisser, together with EMU faculty members Alexis Braun Marks and Jesse Kauffman. Cassie and Dustin delivered insightful, knowledgeable talks and answered audience questions with ease.

This year I have had the pleasure of advising student Makoto Takata on their undergraduate Honors project. Makoto not only wrote an excellent thesis about representations of childhood in the *Bhagavata Purana* and in performances of stories from this Hindu scripture in popular Hindi drama, but they also wrote a beautiful play in the traditional style they were studying, and they directed a fantastic staged reading of the play last December. It was wonderful to see a student do something much more creative and entertaining than I would have dared to try in my student days! This month Makoto will become one of the first EMU students to graduate with a major in Religious Studies.

In February I was able to join Professor's Delph's legendary Italy trip. If you have been on that trip you know that every day is packed full of walking around Rome or Florence, seeing amazing sites, hearing informative lectures, and eating delicious food. It was a delight to see EMU students listen intently to lectures, ask thoughtful questions, and make perceptive comments. I enjoyed learning not only from Dr. Delph but also from the brilliant students on the trip, like the anthropology students who identified the bones of saints we saw in a church crypt, and the engineering student who explained to me how the Romans were able to build the Pantheon out of unreinforced concrete.

Finally, any account of 2019-2020 must include the Covid-19 outbreak, which forced us to transition to online instruction for the last six weeks of the semester. All EMU instructors—even those like me who had never taught a fully online class before—quickly moved our classes online, and students rapidly adjusted to the change. I was very pleased with my students' willingness to watch recorded lectures and to participate in text and Zoom discussions. Other instructors reported to me similar success stories, as their students rose to the challenge of keeping learning and community alive in an online environment.

As we move into summer and plan for the fall, we don't know how quickly things will return to normal, but I know that our remarkable faculty, students, and alumni will continue to teach and to learn, and to meet the challenges of these uncertain times.

Sincerely,
Jim Egge

Exploring What It Means to Be an American

Originally created in 2007, the course Hist. 115, “What is An American?”, allows students to explore American history from the perspective of identity, focusing on the personal stories of diverse Americans from the seventeenth century to the present. Prof. John McCurdy and Prof. Mary-Elizabeth Murphy, who regularly teach the course, stressed that it was designed for those who are interested in history as well as for students who may never take another history course again.

The class was initially conceived of to focus on identity shaped by race and class. But when Prof. McCurdy began teaching it, he broadened the scope of the course to include gender, sexuality, and disability, as powerful shapers of identity as well. “I’m trying to get at how these categories change over time,” he explained, “how issues of identity which are very present today have a longer past.”

“What is an American?” is partially taught as a lecture course, but also includes the reading of autobiographies, many written by lesser known Americans. Prof. McCurdy hopes that students who take the course learn about the complexity of identity from these primary sources. “My definition of what an American is should not be the same as my students’ definition,” he said. He hopes that students who take the course learn about who they are and how they fit into society. But he also hopes they learn that American history is the history of people whose identities are different from their own.

Similarly, Prof. Murphy remarked that History 115 is “an opportunity for students to engage with issues of diversity in a serious and sustained way.” Though the class addresses important events such as the Civil War and World War II, its focus is less on the “triumph of the nation” and more “on people you haven’t heard of.” For example, one of her classes dealt with the theme of class and gender in the seventeenth century, and students read the autobiography of Jane Franklin Mecom, Benjamin Franklin’s sister. Like her brother, Jane was born poor, but because she was a woman, she wasn’t given the same opportunities to advance that her brother enjoyed. The study of Jane Franklin Mecom demonstrates “how people’s lives can have different trajectories based on their identity,” observed Murphy.

Both professors stressed that this social approach to history which looks at the lived experience of the past is also a way for students to grapple with ideas of life and citizenship in the 21st century. “Sometimes it’s hard to talk about diversity,” said Prof. Murphy, “because identity is very personal.” For that reason, she hopes that by taking History 115 students will build an intellectual framework to better engage with these issues, both in the past and in their own present lives.

By the end of the semester, students who take this class are able to look back at the personal stories of fifteen diverse Americans and reflect upon the lessons their lives teach. Profs. McCurdy and Murphy both hope that this information will be helpful when students are confronted with issues of diversity in their own lives.

Faculty Focus on Professor Mark Whitters



Prof. Whitters (center) with his students.

Prof. Mark Whitters joined the history faculty at Eastern Michigan twenty years ago, and since that time has taught classes on comparative religion, world history, Western civilization, and the history of Islam, to hundreds of undergraduate students. He is also the liaison at Eastern Michigan for the “Reacting to the Past” method of teaching, in which students actively role play as historical figures in class. When asked about the best part of teaching, he said he enjoys “building community among students.” He prefers that students take responsibility for learning in his classroom, giving them the chance to absorb more deeply and apply the lessons of history to their own lives.

Prof. Whitters’ career has not been linear, and his many exploits illustrate not only his love of history and religion, but also his passion for language, culture, and human rights work. For his undergraduate studies, Prof. Whitters attended Grinnell College in his native state of Iowa, where he majored in classical studies. He then joined a religious community near St. Paul, Minnesota, where he learned business and accounting. Eventually, his interest in religion led him to Washington D.C., where he worked for a policy institute, the co-founder of which encouraged him to return to school and become a teacher.

At that point, Prof. Whitters came to Michigan and earned his M.A. in classics from the University of

Michigan. He then returned to Minnesota and earned another M.A. in Near Eastern studies from the University of Minnesota. He finally earned his Ph.D. in Religious Studies at the Catholic University of America. While working on his dissertation, he traveled throughout the Middle East, which led him to an immersion program in Arabic in Beirut. He also holds a language certificate from Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He says he has been encouraged here at Eastern to teach about his travels, “not just my dissertation topic.”

Encouraged also by faculty member Prof. Mark Higbee, Prof. Whitters began using the role-playing “Reacting” pedagogy, which led him to begin publishing on the topic. Additionally, his work has appeared in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* and *Conversations with the Biblical World*. His most recent book, titled *Memoirs of an Unfinished Tale: A Performance of the Gospel of Luke*, came out with Cascade Books in fall 2019. Currently he is producing a podcast called “Socratic Wanderers,” where his guests “perform their stories on the air.”

Inviting and encouraging others to perform and share in community is “what I’ve dedicated my life to,” noted Prof. Whitters. In addition to his academic work, Prof. Whitters is also active with an organization known as Youth Works Detroit, which helps young people in Detroit find jobs and develop useful networking skills. He lives in a religious community in Detroit that is part of a monastic movement that works to help communities, particularly youth, throughout the United States and abroad. Prof. Whitters is an unconventional scholar, whose life experience and dedication to building community is an asset to students in History at Eastern Michigan University.

Taking Risks with History Alumni David Behen



David Behen

David Behen's career has led him from bartending to lofty positions in state government and corporate America. He has enjoyed enormous success in his career, but he readily admits that he owes much of his success to his days as a student at Eastern Michigan University. David began his career as an undergraduate at Eastern Michigan University, majoring in History and Soviet Union Studies. According to David, he chose to study history guided by his father's helpful and supportive advice to, "do what you like!" He was especially drawn to Soviet history based on his interest in sports, particularly hockey. Though his interests drew him toward Soviet history, David explained that he "loved all history, but especially U.S. history, the history of religions, and studying periods of wartime history." However, after graduation he faced the same question that many students graduating with a degree in history ponder: "what do I do next?"

Initially, David took a bartending job with a flexible schedule which allowed him to take time off and travel. Reflecting back on that time he mused, "I loved every bit of it." Eventually he returned to Eastern to pursue

his Master's degree in Public Administration. As part of his work for this degree David had the good fortune to do an internship with the Special Olympics International in Washington, D.C. One deciding factor that led him to choose to work with the Special Olympics was his own family dynamics. His younger sister has Down Syndrome, and growing up he saw what amazing opportunities the Special Olympics organization provided for families. After working in this internship for six months, he returned to finish his thesis and look for a job that would bolster his resume in the area of public administration. He landed a position as a planning assistant with McKenna Associates in Detroit where he gained a wonderful mentor, Phil McKenna.

While working at McKenna, David's girlfriend (and now wife) sent him a newspaper clipping from the Kalamazoo Gazette with a job posting for the Village Manager of Mattawan, Michigan. He sought advice from his boss and mentor Phil McKenna who told him this would be a "great first job." David sent in his resume for the position and ended up receiving an interview based on his internship experience. "There were three piles on the desk" he explained "one was a pile of a lot of experience, second was 'go through these there's some experience,' and the third was no experience don't bother." David's resume ended up on top of the third pile. However, the treasurer of Mattawan, who worked for Spartan Foods which was a big sponsor of the Special Olympics, saw the internship with the Special Olympics International on David's resume, and requested an interview with him. Thanks to this opportunity, he ended up landing the job and worked as the Village Manager of Mattawan for three years. This position gave him the opportunity to pioneer the use of the internet as an integral part of city government, and he recalled with pride that under his tenure Mattawan developed one of the first city government websites in the state.

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Following his stint in Mattawan, David moved back to the Ann Arbor area and took a job as Business Analyst for the Washtenaw County government. He quickly rose up the ranks in the county government, and along the way was placed in charge of the county E-Government initiative, which became extremely successful. Eventually David was hired as the IT Director/CIO of Washtenaw County and was also asked to be the Deputy County Administrator.

Having acquired a great deal of expertise in online technology, David decided to return to the private sector. He joined Global Dynamics and International, an IT consulting company in Ann Arbor as Vice President and CIO. Within a few months he helped to create a spin-off known as Info Ready, which is still running. During this period, David came to know Rick Snyder in Ann Arbor, and when Snyder decided to run for the position of governor of Michigan in 2010, he asked David if his company would do some tech and website work for him during his campaign. When Snyder became the governor elect, he tapped Info Ready to conduct the transition for him and asked David to become the CIO of the State of Michigan. David served a total of six and a half years as a cabinet member for Governor Snyder, eventually becoming the Director of the Department of Technology, Management, and Budget, a position he held until 2017. After his stint in state government, David joined the La-Z-Boy company, where he currently serves as Vice President and Chief Information Office.

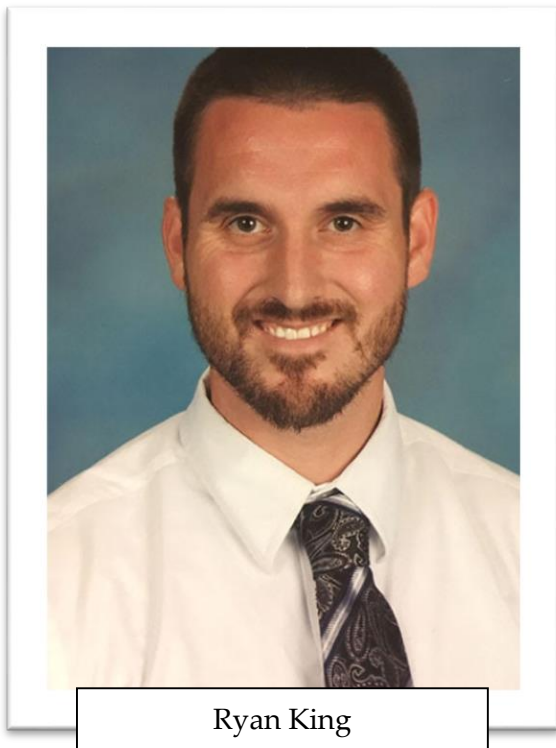
Over the years David has become a highly sought after speaker and consultant, providing information and advice on technology, cybersecurity, data management, and leadership. He credits much of his success to his time at Eastern Michigan University. He readily confessed that “I am where I am thanks to Eastern”. When reflecting on the history professors who stand out to him from his undergraduate days, David fondly remembers Prof. Richard Goff, who served as a mentor for him during his undergraduate studies. He still finds the study of history to be very valuable. “From a leadership perspective. I read a lot of history still to this day,” David explained, “and gain a better understanding of leadership styles, and even mistakes from the past.” His advice to history students is to study what you like, “but if you also take a few business classes along the way, some accounting and marketing, that will make you more well-rounded.” He also offered students a final piece of advice based upon his own career. He urged students not to be afraid to take risk. Like many newly graduated students, David initially felt as if he did not have enough experience to apply for several jobs. But he took the risk and applied for these jobs anyway, and his career path demonstrates what someone can do if he or she will take a few risks.

More Photos from the Ypsilanti Historical Society



Michigan State
Normal College
football team.
Date unknown.

Alumni Spotlight: Ryan King



Ryan King's passion for studying history began with his love of basketball. When he first viewed the movie *Pistol Pete: The Birth of a Legend*, he saw how the two could be related. In the movie, Pete talks with his father about the history of basketball, the integration of sports in America, and his own personal desire to be in the record books. Inspired by this film, Ryan made the choice to attend Eastern Michigan University, because it would give him the opportunity to become both a history teacher and to play basketball on the collegiate level.

Unfortunately, Ryan tore his ACL during his undergraduate career, dashing his hopes to play basketball for Eastern, but this only inspired him to study harder. He pursued a double major in social studies and history, and graduated cum laude in 2007. He credits his success in part to his fraternity Phi Sigma Kappa, which he said was "key to helping me stay positive through ACL surgery and to getting me plugged into campus events." He was eventually elected to the position of Induction Chair in his fraternity, a role that required him to teach the history of Phi Sigma Kappa. He also met his future wife Sara while at Eastern; she was living in a neighboring sorority, Sigma Delta

Tau, and their friendship blossomed into a lasting relationship.

Ryan took the opportunity to participate in multiple study abroad trips during his time at Eastern. In spring of 2006, he went on Prof. Steven Ramold's Civil War Battlefield Tour. He still remembers fondly Prof. Ramold's "great ability to tell stories and make me reflect on what makes someone an effective leader." He also enjoyed a study abroad course in Italy titled "Power, Place, and Image in Florence and Rome" with Prof. Ronald Delph. This experience broadened his horizons and allowed him to "see firsthand what is possible when vision is met with energy, work ethic, and the pursuit of excellence." His wife Sara also went on Prof. Delph's trip the following year, and now they hope to take their three children (Roman 5, Sadie 3, Raymond 2) to Italy when they are older.

In addition to learning and travel, during his time at Eastern Ryan worked for G.E.A.R. U.P. (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs), as a tutor and mentor for 7th -- 11th grade students in Ypsilanti Public Schools. He also participated as a site-coordinator for Eastern's 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program at Willow Run Community Schools. In this role he managed an afterschool program and summer camp for middle school students. One of the highlights of his academic career at Eastern was his participation in the Undergraduate Symposium in the spring of 2007, where he presented a paper titled "An Analysis of Oppressive Practices and Bias in Multicultural Education."

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Ryan's enthusiasm for learning and helping students has flourished in the twelve years since he has graduated from Eastern. Currently, Ryan serves as interim executive principal at The Academies of Bryan Station High School in Lexington, Ky, which has over 1,600 students. At the age of 35 he is also the youngest high school head principal in Fayette County, Kentucky. Ryan observed, "We are one of the most diverse schools in the state and proud of a thriving Spanish Immersion Program, an award-winning Station Arts Department, and Air Force JROTC." He is also proud of his school's recent transition into a "Career Academies School," where students have the ability to join learning communities that give them the one-on-one help and real-world experience they need to succeed. "We've seen an 8% increase in our graduation rate, better attendance, fewer behavior issues, and a massive increase in students graduating with valid industry certifications," he said proudly.

Ryan believes that his history degree from Eastern not only has helped him to teach Ancient Civilizations for seven years, it has also equipped him "with the skills necessary to be an instructional leader and educational researcher." Much of his current work deals with data analysis and researching evidence-based ways to improve education, which he then presents to stakeholders in order to advance their school mission. His job today could not align better with his passion for education and history, which he developed at Eastern Michigan while studying history.

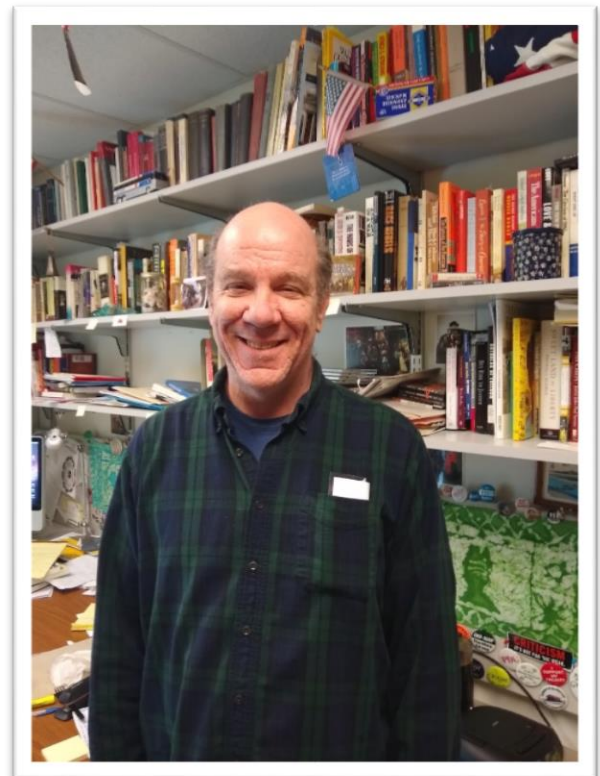
Faculty Reads: Prof. Mark Higbee

We recently caught up with Prof. Mark Higbee to talk about what books he has been reading. Prof. Higbee has been at Eastern Michigan for twenty-five years, or from "the beginning of modern time," in his words. His academic focus is on African American freedom struggles in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but he reads widely in history and enjoys novels as well.

One work that captured his attention is *There, There* by Tommy Orange. Prof. Higbee explained that it is a "powerful, compelling story" about the experiences of the Native American community in Oakland, California. Though it is a novel, it is also rooted in history and includes flashbacks of the Alcatraz Occupation by the Indians of All Tribes (IAT), from 1969 to 1971. "It's told from the point of view of at least a dozen different characters, which converge at a very dramatic point," he says, highly recommending it.

Another book he is working on is *The Second Founding: How the Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution*, by his former graduate adviser at Columbia University, Eric Foner. This "concise, beautifully written" new history has the central argument that the Constitution was transformed by the experience of the Civil War and the amendments that followed. Prof. Higbee said he enjoyed how Foner added depth to his earlier work on the subject, particularly by focusing on the thirteenth amendment, which banned slavery "except as punishment for a crime."

Finally, Prof. Higbee is working through a book of essays edited by Sven Beckert and Christine Desan, titled *American Capitalism: New Histories*. "The last ten years there has been a whole new history of capitalism in the United States, including many big, dense books," he said, so he is enjoying how this collection presents findings by key scholars in the field in a way that is more accessible. One essay he particularly enjoyed is "Negro Cloth: Mastering the Market for Slave Clothing in Antebellum America" by Seth Rockman, which illuminated the way northern manufacturers struggled to dominate southern slave owning markets for "negro cloth." We appreciate Prof. Higbee sharing his current reading list with us.



Prof. Mark Higbee displaying his office library.

For Josh Giles the Past Unfolds Outside the Classroom

Josh Giles has been interested in military history for as long as he can remember. After serving four years in the U.S. armed forces, he decided to pursue his interest in history at Eastern Michigan University, where he is currently majoring in both history and secondary education. He has taken full advantage of the multiple opportunities afforded him by the domestic travel and study abroad courses created by the History section's professors. As a traveler both domestically and internationally, he has visited multiple locations to study the history that has unfolded there.

His participation in History sponsored travel courses has included two of Prof. Ramold's programs, "Civil War: Combat, Culture and Place," which Josh enrolled in during the winter term of 2018, and "Operation Overlord: D-Day and Beyond," which he did in the winter of 2019.

Josh said there were two highlights to the first trip, during which the class visited Washington D.C., Gettysburg, and other Civil War sites. First, he spoke of learning about the Battle of Antietam while on the actual battlefield in Maryland. At a site where thousands of Union soldiers lost their lives, he remembered most of all a tree, still standing, which also appears in a photograph they saw, taken during the historic battle in 1862. "Seeing where things actually happened makes you understand it in a way you can't get just talking about it in a classroom," he remarked.

He also appreciated doing research in the Library of Congress on that first trip, where he was able to read an archived letter written by a Union soldier. "I was able to see what he really experienced," Josh recalled. "I remember he was in fear of his life a lot of the time, but he was also bored in camp a lot." Josh said he values the experience of getting to see how the war affected average people.

His participation in "Operation Overlord: D-Day and Beyond" brought him to Omaha Beach, in Normandy, France. "It blew my mind," he said, "seeing how far out they actually landed, and how far they had to go with people shooting at them." Again, he valued being able to experience history in person, which gave him a perspective he could never have gotten by sitting in a class or reading a book. As a future teacher, he hopes to be able to bring this personal experience into his classroom, to inspire his students in the way Prof. Ramold has inspired him.



Josh encourages history students to participate in these courses that unfold beyond the classroom. "I was really excited [before I left] because I knew I was going to see things I couldn't imagine," he vouched. He also enjoyed the group atmosphere, and the way the programs encouraged him to meet people who shared his interests. "It's a perfect setup," he said. "You're with other people the whole time. You're not going to get lost." As a final piece of advice, Josh also recommends students take advantage of the many study abroad scholarships available to students in history at Eastern Michigan.

Josh Giles poses with classmates on Prof. Ramold's Civil War & Reconstruction domestic study course.

Opperman Fellow: Rachael Schnurr

Each year an incoming graduate student is chosen to become an Opperman Fellow in the graduate program in History at Eastern Michigan University. The purpose of the Opperman Fellow Scholarship is to provide financial support for the fellows while allowing them to pursue their Master's degree in history. In addition to receiving a generous stipend, fellows hold a graduate assistantship for two years, and develop a close working relationship with the faculty member in their area of historical specialization. This year's Opperman Fellow is Rachael Schnurr, who began her graduate studies in history in the Winter of 2019.

Rachael was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and grew up in a suburb called Oconomowoc. In 2009 she graduated with a B.A. in history from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Following graduation Rachael worked with Teach for America as a history and English teacher in Oklahoma, later relocating to Michigan. Prior to coming to Eastern for her graduate studies, she taught both subjects for eight years.



Rachael Schnurr

So, what brought Rachael to Ypsilanti? She explained that her partner had accepted a job at St. Joseph Mercy hospital, which gave them the opportunity to move to a new city. Though she was working as a teacher, Rachael knew that she wanted to continue her education with a master's degree and eventually a Ph.D., so she began looking at history programs in southeastern Michigan. While exploring Eastern's graduate program in history, she acknowledged that she was "surprised by the quality of the program and the support of the faculty." In addition to the superb quality of the program, she also appreciated the night classes and affordability of the university. Finding the program highly attractive, she decided to begin her studies in history on the graduate level at Eastern.

As a historian, Rachael is interested in "early American women, particularly the way women participated in, resisted, and culturally adapted to colonialism in the Eastern Woodlands/Great Lakes Region." Within this broader context, she focuses on women's agricultural labor. Before becoming a teacher, she was mainly interested in medieval European history, but found that she needed to make history interesting, diverse, and representative for her eighth graders. This meant bypassing the traditional "white, male, nationalist narrative," and really digging deep into history. By doing so, she found herself blown away. Rachael recalled learning "about the important social and cultural history research that has blossomed in the field since the 1980s."

Before coming to Eastern, she was inspired by historians and authors such as "Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, Kathleen Brown, and Susan Sleeper-Smith, whose work is a far cry from the old 'George Washington Crossed the Delaware' nationalist narrative we usually get while studying early America." Being a teacher also motivated her to look deeper into her own region and identity. Finally, her experience as a woman inspired Rachael to expand beyond the traditional practice of "adding women to the existing narrative of early American history."

When asked about the best parts of studying history in the graduate program at Eastern, Rachael says, "definitely the high-quality professors." She cites Prof. John McCurdy as an excellent mentor, and expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to study alongside an expert in the field in which she is interested." Rachael also mentioned Prof. Ronald Delph, who she said appears as a "tough cookie, but scratch the surface and you can tell he really, really cares about his students."

When Rachael is not studying history, she enjoys hiking with her partner, cooking healthy meals with historical recipes and ingredients, and taking care of her indoor plant collection. She has also volunteered on organic farms in the summer for a number of years, which is a fascinating reflection of her interest in women's agricultural history.

JoEllen Vinyard Essay Prize



Maxwell Harrison



Lacey Opdycke

The JoEllen Vinyard Essay Prize honors the work of students in history who have produced outstanding pieces of scholarly writing. The recipient of the 2019 award was undergraduate Maxwell Harrison for his paper “Blazing a Trail: Michigan State Normal College, Local Collaboration, and the Transformation of Rural Education.” Max’s research drew from the historical records of local, rural communities to analyze the way Michigan State Normal College, now Eastern Michigan University, worked to modernize rural schools in the area as part of the Country Life Movement in the early twentieth century. His analysis led him to the conclusion that Prof. Marvin Pittman of the Normal College and his department were able to “affect substantial reforms in rural education and teaching by working directly with rural communities to achieve it.” Max said he was honored to receive the award, and credited the “tremendous undergraduate education” he received from the history faculty at Eastern Michigan for his achievements. Max is currently continuing his education at Iowa State University, where he is pursuing a Ph.D. in Rural, Agricultural, Technological, and Environmental History.

The runner-up for this award was Lacey Opdycke, for her essay “‘The School of Hard Knocks:’ How Jacqueline Cochran Lobbied for Female Pilots in the Second World War.” Cochran was instrumental in carving out a role for female pilots to aid in the war effort during the Second World War. Lacey’s research explored how Cochran’s own childhood experience as a foster child growing up impoverished in rural Florida later affected her political activity. Cochran overcame a rugged childhood to become a successful pilot, and working through a series of fortuitous personal contacts she made along the way, was able to “launch her ambitious ideas into action” and advocate for female pilots in the war. Her advocacy resulted in the creation of the Women Airforce Service Pilots program which was launched in 1943. Having written this paper as her undergraduate capstone project, Lacey is now enrolled in the Master’s program in History at Eastern, where she is exploring the topic in more detail for her M.A. thesis. She said she was honored to receive the Vinyard Award because because “there are so many wonderful up and coming scholars within EMU’s History Section,” and valued the experience because it was the first time she had the opportunity to “delve into primary sources and work hand in hand with archivists to find what I needed.”

Taylor Vacca Receives the Father Bernard J. O'Connor Endowed Scholarship in Civic Engagement



Taylor Vacca hard at work at the Henry Ford Museum

Taylor Vacca, a native of Canton, Michigan, was recently awarded the Father Bernard J. O'Connor Endowed Scholarship in Civic Engagement at Eastern Michigan University. Taylor, who is currently finishing her senior year as an undergraduate in the Department of History and Philosophy, heard about the opportunity from Prof. John G. McCurdy. Prof. McCurdy knew of her commitment to both the study of history and to its “application as a form of civic engagement” and suggested she apply.

Taylor, whose other interests include playing percussion for the Eastern Michigan marching band, did not begin her academic career as a history major. Her first years at Eastern were spent studying nursing, which she found did not satisfy her. “Then I decided to take a semester to study abroad on the European Cultural History Tour,” she said, and that experience “changed everything.”

While on this semester long program Taylor visited fourteen different European cities, which made her realize that she wanted to rethink the trajectory of her life. “Staring at the Colosseum in Rome, I realized I wanted to make people care about history” she said. Upon her return home, she “threw herself into taking history courses.” She

particularly appreciated the way she was welcomed by faculty in history. “I feel forever indebted to the professors here,” she noted, “They immediately began pouring information into me.”

Father Bernard J. O'Connor, a Catholic priest and former Assistant Dean at Eastern Michigan, passed away in 2015. The scholarship funded in his honor seeks to support budding scholars in the fields of political science, law, history, and philosophy, who also demonstrate a commitment to civic engagement. Taylor's work at Greenfield Village as part of the Henry Ford Museum is deeply connected to her belief in “incorporating history into our own identities.” She works regularly as a docent at the Village in period costume, to explain to visitors why the daily lives and seemingly small innovations of women farmers in the eighteenth century matter to us today.

“Most of our ancestors came from a farming background,” she observed, an existence in which “everyone had a role to fill.” As a docent and educator, she wants visitors to leave not with fun facts, but with “a real and tangible connection to their identity.”

As for her next steps, Taylor is in the process of applying for a number of fellowships in material studies for the summer. She wants to take time to see colonial American sites and small museums before she returns to Eastern Michigan as a graduate student. She plans to study Historic Preservation and Museum Studies, in order to realize her dream of “bringing living history to a bigger scale.” When asked what inspired her love of living history, she cited her own family's background as farmers in southern Italy. “My job is to help people understand where we've come from, to have a better picture of where we're going.”

Graduating Senior Joseph Aninos Reflects on his time at Eastern Michigan



Joseph Aninos

Joseph Aninos' love of history began in an English class. In high school, he appreciated how one particular teacher would blend history and literature, in a way he described as "charismatic." "You forgot you were even in a class," he said. From that point forward, Joe knew he wanted to study history. He began as a freshman at Eastern Michigan in the fall of 2016 and graduated with a bachelor's degree in history and a minor in art history this past fall. He fondly noted that his time here at Eastern has been punctuated with more great educators, who went out of their way to help him during his time in college. In particular, he recognizes the contributions of Profs. Jesse Kauffman, Ronald Delph, and James Holoka. "Take any class you can with these professors," he urged, lighting up

at the opportunity to endorse them. He wants students to know that whether they have a lot of background in a topic or not, as long as they attend class they will "come out knowing something important."

A highlight of Joe's experience at Eastern came during the summer of 2019, when he had the opportunity to travel abroad to Vienna, Austria, with Prof. Kauffman. The purpose of the trip was to enable him to research his senior honors thesis on the Catholic Church in the late Austro-Hungarian Empire. "I was able to go beyond the archives, to also tour churches and museums and see history first-hand," he said, describing the trip as a major turning point in his life. He stressed that being able to travel and see up close what he was studying made the history come alive for him in a way that just didn't happen when reading about it in books. For Joe this opportunity to do research abroad was more than a fun experience. "It was my first time on a plane, my first time out of the country," he confessed. For that reason, he is especially grateful to Prof. Kauffman not only for traveling with him, but also for helping him secure funding for his travels. Joe received generous support from the History Section through the Opperman History Research Fund, and from the Honors College, to help subsidize his research abroad. He noted that similar funding opportunities are available for other students who wish to travel and do research abroad as well.

When pressed to talk about his other interests, Joe said that history is both his field of study and his hobby. "It's pretty much history, history, history for me," he admitted. He said he enjoys historical films as well as books, particularly those of the Irish historian Eamon Duffy. In fact, his lifelong ambition is to become a historian himself. Following graduation, however, he is considering pursuing a career in business, at least for a while. "I want to find something where I get to work with people," he said. Ultimately, his travels as a student at Eastern Michigan have inspired him to continue looking for opportunities to visit historical places, whether professionally or as a lifelong hobby.

Speaker Series in History Continues to be Popular

This year the History Section's Speaker Series featured talks by a wide variety of historians. Students and faculty heard presentations on subjects ranging from Detroit's rich architectural history to the network of Afro-Latinx people living in nineteenth-century New York, who conspired to overthrow their colonial governments abroad. The crowded auditoriums speak to how popular this series continues to be, and those who attended were once again exposed to cutting edge research and new trends in history.

Jeff Morrison, an Eastern Michigan alumnus and author of *Guardians of Detroit: Architectural Sculpture in the Motor City*, kicked off the series in September with a talk co-sponsored by the School of Art and Design. This lecture focused on the history of ornamental architecture in Detroit from 1850-1930, a period of explosive growth when many "people of towering ambition... sought to leave their mark on the city." Most notably, Morrison discussed his photographs of the many gargoyles and grotesques that "watch over the city from high above," aerial creatures that those passing by down below often fail to notice.

In October, Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof, Professor of History at the University of Michigan, gave a talk on his recently published book, *Racial Migrations: New York City and the Revolutionary Politics of the Spanish Caribbean*. Prof. Hoffnung-Garskof showed those in attendance the rich collection of networked data he has collected and organized, illustrating the complex connections between groups of Afro-Latinx immigrants in their adopted city in the late nineteenth century. This valuable contribution to the digital humanities has allowed Prof. Hoffnung-Garskof to demonstrate that these cigar makers, writers, day laborers, and midwives "built a political network and articulated an ideal of revolutionary nationalism centered on the projects of racial and social justice." Fired by these ideas, members of this Afro-Latinx community significantly contributed to the toppling of colonial governments in the Caribbean.

In January, Eastern Michigan Professor John McCurdy discussed his new book *Quarters: The Accommodation of the British Army and the Coming of the American Revolution*, which won the 2019 Book of the Year Award from the *Journal of the American Revolution*. McCurdy's research shed light on the myth that the British forced colonists to house troops in their homes on the eve of the American Revolution. Prof. McCurdy argued that the lessons learned about housing troops "outlasted the Revolutionary War" and still continue to influence American ideas of domestic privacy today.

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More Photos from the Ypsilanti Historical Society



Huron Street after the
tornado of April 12, 1893.

Amy Shell-Gellasch, Professor in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at Eastern Michigan University, also delivered a talk in January titled “Scientific Devices at the Smithsonian: An Insider’s View.” This presentation by an historian of mathematics showcased the collection of rare artifacts held at the Smithsonian, which Prof. Shell-Gellasch has had the opportunity to use for research. Her talk revealed a distinctive methodology for working with objects rarely considered by historians.

Finally, in March, Alexandra Lindgren-Gibson, an Assistant Professor in History at the University of Mississippi, came to discuss her current research project titled “Working-Class Raj: Making a British Imperial Nonelite.” Her talk, which “reframes British working-class history as a part of global history,” focused on the question, “What happened when the social worlds of working-class British men and women were upended by ideas of race in India?” Most interestingly, Prof. Lindgren-Gibson talked about her rich source materials, namely private letters and diaries written by men and women who felt conflict over their new position in the imperial social hierarchy.

Prof. Ashley Johnson Bavery, faculty coordinator for the History Speaker Series, said she was pleased with the success of this year’s events. Eager to make sure that the presentations continue to be “appealing to undergraduate and graduate students, as well as to faculty,” she is already looking forward to next year, in which all the talks will center on the theme of the history of Detroit.

Faculty Reads: Prof. Ashley Johnson Bavery

We stopped by Prof. Ashley Johnson Bavery’s office to ask her about the books she has been reading lately. Prof. Johnson Bavery has been teaching U.S. History at Eastern for three years now, and she specializes in twentieth-century U.S. immigration history. She just completed her own book on immigration in Detroit, titled *Destination Detroit: Immigration Politics on America’s Northern Borderland*, which will be published by the University of Pennsylvania Press. For that reason, much of Prof. Bavery’s reading deals with the topic of immigration.

The first read she shared with us was *Between the Ottomans and the Entente: The First World War in the Syrian and Lebanese Diaspora* by Stacy D. Fahrenthold. Prof. Johnson Bavery explained that this is a book she assigned for her graduate class on U.S. foreign policy. It’s about the Syrian diaspora in the U.S. and Brazil during the First World War, and specifically how those Syrian communities influenced geopolitics. “It’s a good example of international history,” she said. “A lot of history is state focused, but this is looking at people. These people don’t really have a state, but they are working together, which is kind of cool.”

She also said that she has been looking forward to reading *They Should Stay There: The Story of Mexican Migration and Repatriation during the Great Depression*, by Fernando Saúl Alanís Enciso. Prof. Johnson Bavery explained that this is a history of Mexican repatriation during the Great Depression from the perspective of the Mexican government. “It really shows how this event fit into the context of the Mexican Revolution and Mexican politics,” she noted.

Prof. Johnson Bavery also admitted that she has a love for reading novels, particularly historical fiction. Recently she finished the National Book Award finalist *Pachinko*, by Min Jin Lee, about seven generations of a Korean family that migrated to Japan before World War II. She enjoyed reading Min Jin Lee’s work for its treatment of families during wartime, and also because it was on a topic that was not familiar to her. Reflecting upon what drives her to choose a particular book to read, she acknowledged that “I tend to be drawn to histories that are actually the stories of people, where there are actors coming out of the archives.”



Prof. Ashley Johnson Bavery

Jesse Yaeger: Graduate Research Conference “Best Abstract Award” Winner



Jesse Yaeger poses with her favorite historical figure, Dwight D. Eisenhower, in France.

History graduate student Jesse Yaeger was one of nine students awarded the 2019 Graduate Research Conference’s “Best Abstract Award” for her project titled *Arsenal of Domesticity: Women, Relationships, and Gender Roles at Home During World War II*. Jesse, who grew up in Ann Arbor, is interested in researching the 1930s and 40s. She finds “researching the ways people experienced life during the Great Depression and the Second World War particularly interesting.” Her grandfather, whom she credits for inspiring her research interests, was with the 70th Infantry Division fighting in the European Theater of Operations and served under General Eisenhower in Frankfurt after VE day. She became interested in learning about her grandfather’s experiences during the Second World War, and soon began to wonder about how the war affected both those overseas and on the home front. For Prof. McCurdy’s Historical Methods course, she decided to explore this interest in more detail, and wrote a paper on the experience of women in the Second World War, specifically focusing “on how their personal relationships affected gender roles.”

When thinking about her experience at the Graduate Research Conference, Jesse recalled the abstract writing process. After the difficulty of condensing her twenty-five-page research paper into a ten-minute presentation, she found writing her abstract equally daunting. “The first draft of my abstract was 100 words short,” she explained, but “with help from Prof. McCurdy, I learned that the most important thing to focus on in the abstract was what made the research unique and interesting.” Reflecting upon the uniqueness of her study, she explained, “I spent a lot of time in the archives at the University of Michigan’s Clements Library, accessing letters women sent to their friends, families, and lovers during the war.” She used these letters to illustrate “how women’s relationships affected their roles at home and in their personal lives, as both men and women tended to stress the importance of adhering to stereotypical feminine roles within the home, their relationships, and even at work.” Jesse noted that this aspect of women’s lives during the Second World War was still very much an understudied topic, because most studies focus more on the public portrayal of gender roles in propaganda and magazine advertisements. Jesse’s diligence in the archives and in exploring the roles of these women as they appeared in their war-time letters resulted in an original piece of research that was singled out for distinction at last year’s Graduate Research Conference.

Graduate Student Spenser Stevenson Reflects on his Study Abroad Experience



(bottom row, fourth person from the left)

Spenser Stevenson visits a museum with classmates on Prof. Ramold's D-Day and Beyond study abroad course in France.

During his time as a graduate student working on his Master's degree in History at Eastern Michigan, Spenser Stevenson has taken full advantage of the opportunity to learn about European history by traveling to Europe and visiting the places where much history has unfolded. In 2017 he participated in Prof. Kauffman's study abroad class, "Nazi Germany: History and Memory," which allowed him to study in several cities in Germany. In 2018 he enrolled in Prof. Ramold's class "Operation Overlord: D-Day and Beyond.," which enabled him to travel to Paris and Normandy Beach in northern France. Reflecting upon these experiences, Spenser readily admitted that while he enjoys studying history from books and documentaries, nothing compares to being able to see the places where important historic events took place in person.

Spenser's graduate studies focus on German history and the Holocaust, and he also has a strong interest in military history as well. Thus part of what made the learning so valuable on both of these trips was being able to stand in the places where major historical events connected to German history, the Holocaust, and military history played out., and to evaluate them with his own eyes. Seeing how key places physically looked was important. For example, he found several sites that the Nazis called "mega" to be, in fact, rather small to his eyes. This made him realize how important it is for the historian to have first-hand knowledge of places when writing about history.

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Spenser also enjoyed seeing the layers of history in the urban landscape of Berlin while studying there with Prof. Kauffman. “You can go from Bismarck to the Cold War, just by going around the block,” he said. He also described a moment when he walked by a monument and realized that it was where an important rally took place before World War I. Similarly, on a tour led by Prof. Kauffman he saw what had been a security office for the Nazi government, and two blocks over was where Checkpoint Charlie had been, a critical location during the Cold War division of Berlin. He remarked that there’s nothing quite like “coming out of the subway right into an important historical location.” When asked to describe his experience traveling to Germany in 2017, he gushed that it was “one of the golden moments of my life.”

The following year, in 2018, Spenser enrolled in Prof. Ramold’s class “Operation Overlord: D-Day and Beyond,” which focused on the Allied landing at Normandy beach in June of 1944, and the ensuing campaign. One thing he appreciated about this study abroad trip was how Prof. Ramold was able to teach from the German perspective, because he knew Spenser was interested in the German experience. “I was able to see the challenges the Allies faced coming up onto the beaches, but also what the Germans were trying to accomplish,” he said. He emphasized Prof. Ramold’s incredible knowledge and expressed the hope that someday he too could inspire students the way that Prof. Ramold does.

As he is finishing up his degree, Spenser has begun to apply to Ph.D. programs in history, and he noted that his study abroad experiences have been very formative in the process. His ultimate goal is to teach at the university level and to lead study abroad programs himself someday. He also remarked that he would like to return to Europe to do more research while working on his Ph.D. “I could stay there for months and barely scratch the surface,” he mused. “Standing in those places is just totally otherworldly.”

Faculty Reads: Prof. James Egge

We recently caught up with Prof. Jim Egge to talk about what books were currently on his reading list. Prof. Egge has been on the history faculty at Eastern for seventeen years, and for the past three years he has been the Head of the Department of History and Philosophy. Prof. Egge is a scholar of religion, and his focus is on Theravada Buddhism. He teaches courses on comparative religion, Hinduism and Buddhism, as well as the history of India. Currently, he is working his way through three very different books. The first is *Philology: The Forgotten Origins of The Modern Humanities* by James Turner; the second is a Hindu text known as the *Bhagavata Purana*; and the third is titled *The Dawn of Detroit: A Chronicle of Slavery and Freedom in the City of the Straits*, by Tiya Miles.

Philology by James Turner traces the history of philology from antiquity into the nineteenth century. Prof. Egge explained that philology is the study of texts, including the words in a text, its authorship, its history and meaning, as well as its literary value. He acknowledged that this book really changed his perspective when he learned how many modern academic disciplines took shape from the study of philology, including history, literature, classics, linguistics, social and cultural anthropology, art history, and comparative religion. “It’s a fascinating account that made me think differently about cultural history,” he said. Prof. Egge “highly recommended” Turner’s book, in part because he plans to teach his course on the methods and theories of religion differently in the future because of what he learned in this book.

The *Bhagavata Purana* is a medieval Sanskrit text that Prof. Egge is also reading, in order to assist student his student Makoto Takata with their senior capstone project in religious studies. This Sanskrit text is the main source for stories of Krishna’s childhood and youth. Prof. Egge’s student is using this text to work on the topics of childhood and aesthetic response theory, which deals with the act of reading and how a reader connects a text to his or her own experiences. In addition to enjoying reading the *Bhagavata Purana*, Prof. Egge expressed his delight in working with his student as well, helping them bring together their interests in religion and dramatic performance.

On a completely different topic, *The Dawn of Detroit* by Tiya Miles is a book that Prof. Egge has just begun reading. “It tells the history of Detroit with a focus on Native American and African American slaves, so it’s something I knew nothing about,” he admitted. “I never thought about slavery in Michigan.” Prof. Egge thought that he was really going to enjoy reading Miles’ study because it is a fascinating approach to the topic of local history. Based on Prof. Egge’s reading list, we can see his passion for religious studies, for his students, and for thinking beyond his academic focus to learn about new topics in history.

History Graduate Writing Workshop

The History Graduate Writing Workshop provides a friendly venue where graduate students can gather to share their work and get valuable feedback and encouragement on their current writing projects. In addition to receiving support and advice on writing, graduate students who participate in this association make valuable contacts and share advice on navigating graduate school. Group members also offer one another insights into the next steps to take after completing the M.A. degree. The current president of the writers' group is second year graduate student Lacey Opdycke, and the Vice President is Goral Bhatt.

This year, the workshop held several meetings which allowed members to set attainable goals, relieve some stress, practice presenting their research, and receive help preparing for their M.A. exams. In January, members met to discuss the upcoming semester and talk about some things they hoped to achieve throughout the semester. Rachel Maschke, a second year graduate student, explained that she enjoys attending meetings because they “allow you to talk to people that may study different areas, so their perspective and types of sources they use could help you expand beyond the way you view things or go about your own research.”

In February, members met to hold their annual “Practice Your Presentation” meeting where students came together before the conference season began. This meeting allowed students to present their research to peers in a comfortable setting, and enabled them to receive feedback on their research papers and presentation style. This run-through is very helpful to first time presenters who may feel nervous or unsure of how to present their work. For the 2019/2020 school year the group had three students scheduled to present their findings at conferences: Rachel Maschke, Lacey Opdycke, and Rachael Schnurr.

Due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus, the March meeting was held virtually via Zoom. Students who were able met for a short time to discuss the adjustment to online classes in the midst of the Coronavirus crisis, in addition to checking in on one another during a stressful and unprecedented time. Although there were some glitches arranging this meeting, it demonstrated the resilience of the members and their dedication to one another. While this year's meetings have ended, the members of the History Graduate Writing Workshop are looking forward to starting off next year as strong as ever. If you are interested in joining the writing workshop, please email Lacey Opdycke or Goral Bhatt for more information.

2020 Phi Alpha Theta Inductees

Undergraduates:

Zacory Manteuffel

John Milkovich

John Paquette

Graduates:

Lacey Opdycke

Rachael Schnurr

Jesse Yaeger



Alumni Spotlight: Amie Van Horn Gabel



Amie Van Horn Gabel

Amie Van Horn Gabel graduated from Eastern Michigan University with degrees in history and English in 1997, but the lessons she learned at Eastern continue to motivate her in her career as an educator more than twenty years later. Amie, who has worked as both an English and history teacher with the Livonia School District since graduating from Eastern, spoke enthusiastically about her love of language, culture, and the past, which were fostered here at Eastern Michigan by a number of outstanding professors. Most of all, she credits the study abroad course "Power, Place and Image in Florence and Rome," taught by Prof. Ronald Delph and still offered to students today, with inspiring her love of travel and dedication to incorporating it in her own classroom.

Amazed by the power of learning on location, since 2000 she has served as the Travel Director for Educational Tours for her school district. This role has included the development of customized itineraries for her students in places as wide-ranging as Australia and the South

Pacific, Greece and Turkey, England and France, and China. Twenty-two separate trips are currently listed on her C.V. "I once feared and even dreaded change," said Amie, "but now the spirit of adventurous exploration is a drug, and I am an addict."

Amie is often asked what country is her favorite one to visit. Though she is passionate about learning French in France, about eating Italian cuisine, and about soaking up the beauty of the Grecian Islands, one experience in particular stands out for her on her travels.

"When visiting China, where over 90% of the population is the same ethnic group, I am acutely aware of being different," she said. She has also experienced this "awareness of physical self" in Morocco and Turkey, and has found that it has made her a better teacher, and more able to relate to her teenage students. Due to the insights that she has gained in traveling to these lands, she better understands the difficulty her own students have in expressing themselves, the "overwhelming pressure they feel to fit in with the crowd," and the overall awkwardness that is adolescence. Of course experiencing these countries first hand also has enriched her own ability to teach world culture and history.

In addition to her work as a travel educator, Amie has remained part of the Eastern Michigan community throughout the years. Currently, she serves as an instructional coach for the Department of World Languages on campus, working with TESOL (Teaching English as a Second Language) teachers and students. She also spoke enthusiastically about her role as a teacher consultant with the Eastern Michigan Writing Project, at a summer teen writing camp dubbed "Inkstains." Even in the summer months, Amie has remained dedicated to helping students grow. Recently, she also participated in the elite Fulbright Teachers for Global Classrooms Project, a year-long professional development opportunity that equips teachers to prepare students for life in a competitive global economy.

Despite all her achievements, Amie remains excited about growing and innovating as a teacher in the future. To that end, she recently accepted a new position after twenty years in her classroom. Now, she focuses primarily on teaching English language learners of all ages within the Livonia school district. When asked about the difficulty that comes with change, she responds with a quote by explorer Richard Branson, which she has clearly taken to heart: "Be curious. Be willing. Embrace risk. Innovate."

2019 Undergraduate Symposium Presenters

Understanding Shari'ah: Islamic Law in its Historical Context

Sister Maria Benedicta Bete

What Impact did the Detroit Riot of 1967 Have on the Kerner Commission's Report of 1968?

Joshua Campeau

Dodging the Bullet: African American Draft Resistance in Canada During the Vietnam War

Mia Colavito

West Africans and the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis, 1935-1936

Jimmy Davis

Fish Lake: A History of Restoration

Sarah Fisher

"You Have to Be Careful of the After-clap:" Changing Attitudes to Rural School Modernization

Maxwell Harrison

Environmental Mismanagement and the Development in the Tunica, Mississippi Delta Floodplains, 1850-2010

Emily Marcil

Cold and Crude: American Oil During the Suez Crisis

Rebecca Murphy

Religious Studies and New Testament Textual Criticism: A Summary of How We Get Our Bibles Today

Sam Nesbitt

"Leaders of Today:" Local Queer History and Student Groups in the Modern Gay Rights Movement

Zephyr Osbourne

An Introduction to the Science of Hadith

Ali Qazwini

Female Nationalist Archivists, Askari, and Guerilla Girls of Kenya and Zimbabwe

Collin Rafferty

La Convivencia: An Unusual Definition of Tolerance

Alexander Schwehofer

Keep Calm and Carry the Empire: Colonial Propaganda in WWII-Africa

Josh Sheppard

Marital Affection in Two Poems by Ashvaghosha

Makoto Takata

Ancient Magic and Wisdom of Italian Renaissance Magi: Hermeticism and Cabalism of Christian Humanists

Blake Trinske

The Growing Pains of Revolution: The Turbulent Decade of 1960's Cuba

Isaac Vanderwal

Womyn and Other Contested Identities: Attendance Policies at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival

Catherine Waldecker

The Unsteady Transition: South Africa From Apartheid to Democracy, 1989-1994

Jasmyn Williams

Julius Nyerere on Socialism, Unity, and Development: Parallels with Kwanza

Artero Wilson

The Genocide of the Highlanders: The Jacobite Rebellion of 1745

Leigh Young

2019 Graduate Research Conference Presenters

The American Phantasmagoria: The Rise of Spiritualism within Antebellum America

Daniel Bowlin Jr.

Proxy Marriages and Sake Marriages: U.S. Law and the Japanese Marriage Cases, 1950-1956

Scott Bullock

African Women and UN Conferences on Women's Rights

Maha Casey

A Smart Match
Joyce Goik

Liberia: Creation of a Failed State
Isaac Lee Klooster

Negritude: An Intellectual Dynamic In Francophone African Colonial Experience
Alex Logan

Glorified Glamour Girls: Militarization of the Women Airforce Service Pilots of World War II

Lacey Opdycke

Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498): The Fashioning of a Prophet in Fifteenth-Century Florence

Ann Remp

Political Activities of Manhattan Project Physicists, 1930-1945

Sara Schultz

Arsenal of Domesticity: Women, Relationships, and Gender Roles at Home During World War II

Jesse Yaeger

Graduates in History 2019

Congratulations Graduates

Keli Boyd

*M.A.in History
Summer 2019*

Scott Bullock

*M.A.in History
Summer 2019*

Tabitha Keller

*M.A.in History
Summer 2019*

Marvin Miller

*M.A. in Social Science
Summer 2019*

Taylor Styes

*M.A.in History
Summer 2019*

Daniel Bowlin

*M.A. in History
Winter 2019*

Trace Brusco

*M.A.in History
Winter 2019*

Briana Hodges

*M.A.in History
Winter 2019*

Loren Romain

*M.A.in History
Winter 2019*

Undergraduate Scholarships 2019-2020

**Elizabeth S. Adams Memorial
Endowed Scholarship**
Isaac Vanderwaal

**Gavin Clabaugh and Margaret
Engle Travel Award**
Zachary Goins

**Fred J. Ericson Memorial
Endowed Scholarship**
Joseph Aninos
Alexandria Miller

**George R. York Endowed
Scholarship**
Hannah Miller
Amanda Miotke

**Neil McLarty Merit Award
Endowed Scholarship**
Joseph Aninos

**Elizabeth Warren Endowed
Scholarship**
Olivia Stuck

Esther Walker Barnard Scholarship
Troy Masserant

**Pamela Graves Scholarship for
Study in the United Kingdom and
Ireland**
Olivia Stuck

**Friends of History & Philosophy
Scholarship**
Rebecca Clarke

Opperman History Research Fund
Joseph Aninos

Graduate Scholarships 2019-2020

**Richard Henry “Hank” Abbott
Memorial Endowed Scholarship**
Rachel Maschke

**Richard Davis Goff Endowed
Scholarship**
Philip Kotwick

Opperman Fellowship in History
Rachael Schnurr
Alex Logan

**Marilyn R. Hill Endowed
Scholarship**
Maha Casey

**Opperman Fellowship Thesis
Prospectus Summer Support Grant**
Alex Logan

Opperman History Travel Fund
Maha Casey

**Reinhart and Bert Wittke
International Study Endowed
Scholarship**
Holden Morter

History Faculty Publications 2019-2020

Prof. George Cassar (emeritus)

Reluctant Partner. The Complete Story of the French Participation in the Dardanelles Expedition of 1915. Helion and Company, 2019.

Profs. Mark Higbee and James Stewart

Frederick Douglass, Slavery, and the Constitution, 1845. W.W. Norton, 2019.

Prof. John McCurdy

Quarters: The Accommodation of the British Army and the Coming of the American Revolution. Cornell University Press, 2019.

(This work received the Book-of-the-Year-Award from the *Journal of the American Revolution* in 2020.)

History Faculty Publications 2019-2020 Cont...

Prof. Steven Ramold

Obstinate Heroism: The Confederate Surrenders after Appomattox. University of North Texas Press, 2020.

Prof. Phil Schmitz

“Egadi Ram No. 3: Proposed Punic Text and Translation.” In *The Site of the Battle of the Aegates Islands at the End of the First Punic War: Fieldwork, Analyses and Perspectives, 2005-2015.* Edited by Jeffrey G. Royal and Sebastiano Tusa. L’Erma di Bretschneider, 2019.

Prof. Mark Whitters

Memoirs of How It All Began: A Performance Interpretation of the Gospel of Luke. Cascade Books, 2019.

Stay in Touch!!

You can follow current news and events in History at Eastern by visiting the EMU History website at www.emich.edu/history

You can also follow us on:

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We would love to hear from you!! If you have news that you would like to share with us about what you have been doing since graduating, send it to the editor of our newsletter, Ron Delph at rdelph@emich.edu with the subject heading “Newsletter.”

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For More Information:

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and Philosophy
701 Pray Harrold
Eastern Michigan University
Phone: 734-438-1018
jegge@emich.edu

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