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**MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR:**

I am very pleased and proud to be part of this newsletter highlighting the achievements of the community of scholars who make up the Michigan State University History Department. We are a group of 41 faculty, five staff, 35 doctoral students, and 325 undergraduates. We devote ourselves to the honest consideration and presentation of the past, and we aim in doing so to serve the public interest.

As you will see in this newsletter, history faculty are engaged in research that is transforming academic fields of study and enriching the lives of communities. This includes work led by Professors Dr. Walter Hawthorne and Dr. Dean Rehberger on Enslaved.org, an amazing project of historical reclamation. Ordinary people in general leave precious few traces in the historical record, and this project is gathering and making freely available information about hundreds of thousands of individuals who were involved in the historical slave trade. Enslaved.org is generating and making accessible new knowledge about the past and helping us better understand the dynamics of one of the most important global processes of the past several centuries. Professor Dr. Matt Paul’s scholarship and outreach on Ukraine have done much to promote broader understandings of the ongoing war and its effects on the region. Professors Dr. Edward Murphy and Dr. David Wheat each received prestigious fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities to support their projects on Latin America and the Iberian world, respectively. On a more local level, Associate Professor Dr. Delia Fernández-Jones’s tremendous new book, Making the MexiRican City: Migration, Placemaking, and Activism in Grand Rapids, Michigan, presents a new multiethnic history of an important Michigan community and shows how Mexicans, Tejanos, and Puerto Ricans became part of the history of an important Michigan community and shows how.

In addition to their scholarly work, history faculty are also serving in important institutional roles across campus. Professor Dr. Pero Dogbovse is the associate provost for graduate and postdoctoral studies and dean of the Graduate School; Professor Dr. Mark Largent is vice provost for undergraduate education and dean of undergraduate studies; Professor Dr. Glenn Chambers is the interim dean of the Residential College in the Arts and Humanities; and Professor Dr. Nwando Achebe is the associate dean for diversity, equity, and inclusion, faculty development, and strategic implementation in the College of Social Science. Professors Dr. Kirsten Fermaglich and Dr. Amy Simon play vital roles in The Michael and Elaine Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel.

In 2023, history undergraduates also registered some very impressive accomplishments, including publishing peer-reviewed original scholarship. A significant number of our students are working with the MSU College of Education to prepare to become history teachers themselves. Under the direction of Associate Professor Dr. Emily Corney-Krutz and fixed-term Assistant Professor Dr. Brooks Winfree, the department has vibrant communities in the history scholars program and history club.

MSU is a land-grant institution, and this means that it is committed not only to the abstract advancement of knowledge but also to the practical extension of it to scholars and the public in ever more democratic ways. In their work as researchers, teachers, and mentors, the faculty, staff, and students in the history department continue to exemplify the core commitments of the land grant ethos. I feel privileged to be able to collaborate with them in support of their endeavors.

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**FIRST PLACE** (Cover photo)

**Estela Gonçalves de Souza**

Graduate Student

Local archive

Juiz de Fora, Brazil

**SECOND PLACE** (Featured on page 13)

**Rashad Bates**

Undergraduate Student

Nemea

Ancient site in Greece

**THIRD PLACE** (Tie for third place)

**Dani Willcut**

Graduate Student

Maasai People

Ngorongoro Crater

in Tanzania

**THIRD PLACE** (Tie for third place)

**James Chrislip**

Graduate Student

The Basilica Cistern

Istanbul, Turkey

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In the past year, history graduate students have received fellowships from the Mellon Foundation, the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Harvard University, Fulbright, the Charlotte W. Newcombe Foundation, and the Japan Foundation.

Latino Studies Program, and Professor Dr. Ronen Steinberg is the interim director of MSU’s Peace and Justice Studies Program. History faculty are serving in influential leadership roles at MSU. Across the faculty, one of the most important activities is mentoring and collaborating with doctoral students as they develop the scholarship that will transform their fields in the future. Many of these students are already receiving significant accolades for their work. In the past year, history graduate students have received fellowships from the Mellon Foundation, the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Harvard University, Fulbright, the Charlotte W. Newcombe Foundation, and the Japan Foundation. Last year, four of our students became our faculty colleagues, as Dr. Alamu Dilliwhunt-Holloway is now an assistant professor at North Carolina State University. Abdouille Jabang is an assistant professor at Texas Christian University. Dr. Eric Kesse is an assistant professor at Clark University, and Dr. Alik Cornelius is a visiting assistant professor at Kalamaoo College. In 2023, history undergraduates also registered some very impressive accomplishments, including publishing peer-reviewed original scholarship. A significant number of our students are working with the MSU College of Education to prepare to become history teachers themselves. Under the direction of Associate Professor Dr. Emily Corney-Krutz and fixed-term Assistant Professor Dr. Brooks Winfree, the department has vibrant communities in the history scholars program and history club.

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The development of a series of hydroelectric projects in Chile.

At the same time, the book develops how the urban poor are now asserting sovereign forms of power,” Murphy’s grant proposal states. “The research says a lot about how people living in cities get access to resources. I think another element of that research is just to think about how marginalized communities have scratched and clawed to get access to some resources that a lot of people take for granted,” Murphy said.

Now that Murphy has returned from his research trip, he is focused on writing a few research articles related to his book project and plans on submitting a book manuscript to a publisher.

Edward Murphy. Photo credit: Jackie Belden Hawthorne

To learn more about Murphy and his research, visit: history.msu.edu/people/faculty/edward-murphy

Associate Professor of History Dr. David Wheat received a $60,000 NEH grant for the fall 2023 and spring 2024 semesters to work on his second book project, The Atlantic itineraries of Afro-Caribbean Entrepreneur Catalina de los Santos, c.1590-1660.

He started working on the grant in August of last year and is currently living in Spain and working in archives in Seville and the Canary Islands.

Dr. Wheat’s first book, Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean, 1570-1640 (University of North Carolina Press, 2016), reconstituted the Spanish Caribbean as an extension of the Luso-African Atlantic world from the late 16th to the mid-17th centuries, when the union of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns facilitated a surge in the transatlantic slave trade.

As a historian of slavery, cross-cultural exchange, and transregional connections in the early modern Iberian world, Wheat’s interest in some documents he happened to find while on a previous sabbatical and research trip several years ago led to the idea for his second book project, which reconstructs the travels, social ties, and commercial contacts of an Afro-Caribbean businessman and shipowner named Catalina de los Santos during the 1590s.

“My research then retraces De los Santos’s travels after combing through more documents mentioning Catalina and the details of her life. Preliminary work on the book project was facilitated by an MSU Humanities & Arts Research Program award in fall 2022.

Wheat said he’s grateful for the NEH grant because it gives him the ability to conduct further research and hopefully complete an initial draft of his book.

“[It is a fantastic opportunity to be able to focus on research and writing for an entire year],” Wheat said. “Being in Spain is also great because I can learn a lot from other historians who are skilled in working with the type of sources I’m currently using.”

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Wheat wrote a short article for a journal about De los Santos, and he decided that he wanted to expand his research into a book project after combing through more documents mentioning Catalina and the details of her life. Preliminary work on the book project was facilitated by an MSU Humanities & Arts Research Program award in fall 2022.

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David Wheat has been spending time conducting research for his upcoming book project. This archive is from a notarial record in Seville.

To learn more about Wheat and his research, visit: history.msu.edu/people/faculty/david-wheat
“It has been a blur of activity, but it has been wonderful getting to know the campus, faculty, staff, and students,” he said. “I also loved the fall here on campus. It was gorgeous.”

Rajani is a historian of early modern South Asia. South Asia has often been studied as a mosaic of groups and communities, castes, and religions. His research focuses on the lesser-known history of the individual in South Asia. He is also interested in questions about gender and sexuality.

“Looking at a period when many of the hallmarks of modernity started to emerge around the world,” he said, “I am interested in seeing how those hallmarks manifest in the Indian context.”

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Dr. Delia Fernández-Jones
Associate Professor of History

By Patti McDonald

Dr. Delia Fernández-Jones had a busy 2023. Before the start of the fall semester, her book was awarded a tenured position within the Department of History at Michigan State University. “I’ve worked really hard for this accomplishment,” Dr. Fernández-Jones said. “It opens up opportunities that I really look forward to.”

Earlier last year, she was awarded the Michigan State University Faculty of the Year (Plantando Samitas Award) at the Cicarés Chavez and Dolores Huerta celebration. This award is given to an individual who has proven to be a pillar of light and knowledge in our MSU community, stands for inclusion and equity in education in building and transforming knowledge, and is focused on developing tomorrow’s leaders.

“Recognition from this community is really, really huge,” she said. “That my colleagues and the Latinx community at MSU see me as worthy of this is really affirming. Someone sees my work and it makes a difference.”

In addition to her award and promotion, Delia also penned her first book in 2023. Making the Mexican City: Mexican and Puerto Rican Migration, Activism, and Placemaking in Grand Rapids, Michigan (University of Illinois Press, 2023) details how disparate Latino communities came together to respond to social, racial, and economic challenges and simultaneously transformed Grand Rapids and the Midwest from the 1920s to the 1970s. Her book was named a Choice Outstanding Academic Title for 2023. This prestigious list reflects the best scholarly titles currently being published, editors working with Choice Reviews, a publishing unit of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL).

Fernández-Jones, a Mexican Latina and first-generation college student who earned her B.A. in History at Grand Valley State University and her M.A. and Ph.D. in History from Ohio State University, wrote the book based on extensive primary source research and drew from her own lived experiences in the region.

“This is also an opportunity to engage in communities outside of academia,” Fernández-Jones said. “My book is based in Grand Rapids, and since the book’s publication, I was able to spend more time there working with the Michigan History Center. The MHC was funded grants from the Institute for Libraries and Museums and the Sites of Conscience to address a lack Latinx representation in the museum.

“This project was prompted by discussions with the director of the museum and the museum has done a self-assessment; they know that the museum has a problem,” she said. “To just not include Mexican-American narratives in Michigan history is impactful and I wanted my students to see that firsthand because the MHC is a very powerful institution, and this impacts the way people perceive our state’s history.”

As part of an ongoing partnership with the MHC and Chicano/Latino Studies Program at MSU, Fernández-Jones created an assignment in one of her classes where she had her students assess the museum for information about Latinos.

“I wanted my students to be involved with this because I have students from many different backgrounds. I have students who are Latino, who are Mexican American, and who are neither. I wanted them to just reflect on what it means to have your story included or not included in a museum.”

Not finding much information, students in Fernández-Jones’s Mexican American history course (HST 327) created projects to help the public and the museum document the histories of Mexican Americans in the U.S. and Michigan. Students created infographics, essays, videos, and presentations to teach people about various aspects of Mexican-American history from the early 1900s to the 1970s.

For the class’s final exam, students presented their projects to MHC docents via Zoom. The projects can be accessed by anyone who wants to learn more about Mexican-American history.

Fernández-Jones hopes to increase the visibility and awareness of Latinos in Michigan. That is one of the goals she has as she serves on the Michigan Historical Commission, which oversees the Michigan Historical Marker Commission and has other responsibilities. When she started, only two of 13,800 historical markers in the state dealt with Latinx history. She is working on the Latinx Historical Marker Project, which she is organizing with another historian from Grand Valley State University and community organizers. This project seeks to collaboratively apply for Historical Markers from the Michigan Historical Marker Program, to commemorate historical places and events that helped shape Latinx Grand Rapids today, especially considering the fight to stop Latinx displacement occurring in the area due to gentrification.

“I am completely honored to be able to contribute something to those fights as a historian. I have history and I have research. That’s what I can offer, that and my time.”

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“I believe that history itself is very important and impactful because not only does it kind of help educate us about today’s world and kind of just you know, what actions you can take to avoid stuff that’s happened in the past. It’s also important to look back at where we came from and what’s happened in our history and learn from that.”

To learn more about Fernández-Jones and her research, visit history.msu.edu/people/faculty/delia_fernandez

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT:

Dr. Delia Fernández-Jones
Associate Professor of History

By Patti McDonald

Justin Crouch, a senior majoring in Psychology (with a minor in History) was recently awarded the Henderson Family Award, making him the first-ever recipient of the award.

The endowed award is given annually and is open to sophomores, juniors, and seniors from all majors within Michigan State University’s College of Social Science. It includes $2,000 plus up to $3,000 in expenses if the research requires travel to a destination (archive, library, historical site, etc.).

The endowed scholarship was established in 2022 by Harold and Francine Henderson. Harold Henderson is a 1972 graduate of MSU’s College of Social Science. While at MSU, he funded his education by working as a campus police officer becoming the first African American to hold such a job at the university. After his time at MSU, Henderson graduated from Harvard Law School, which led him to be one of the first African Americans to work at a major law firm in Washington, D.C. Additionally, Henderson served for 16 years as the Executive Vice President for Labor Relations and Chairman of the Management Council Executive Committee in the National Football League. Henderson was at one time the highest-ranking African American ever in professional sports administration. He is currently the President of the NFL Player Care Foundation.

Henderson said he owns experience and upbringing led him to establish the endowed scholarship. He wanted to provide students with financial assistance for research, internships and study abroad and education away from home.

“Growing up, our family’s income level was pretty low, and our standard of living was extremely low,” Henderson said. “There are so many kids who because of their background and lack of experiences and resources, can’t achieve the things that they want to, and I felt compelled to try to improve that prospect for at least a few kids.”

Before receiving the Henderson Family Award, Crouch worked closely with the College of Social Science’s Scholars and was introduced to Professor of History Dr. Walter Hawthorne through Associate Professor of History Dr. John Waller.

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Psychology and History student Justin Crouch is the inaugural recipient of the Henderson Family Award

Dr. Hawthorne was seeking students to work on Enslaved.org, an MSU-based grant-funded project that has resulted in an ever-growing digital repository with information about named enslaved people of African descent. The project’s website has attracted interest from scholars seeking data to answer questions about slavery and African American genealogists looking for information about their family history. Hawthorne recommended Crouch for a PURI Award (Provost’s Undergraduate Research Initiative). The PURI offers students up to $2000 and they are matched with faculty on a research assignment and work up to a certain number of hours per week.

“My goal was to just submit an application because I was really interested in the scholarship. I think that’s a huge accomplishment,” Crouch said.

Crouch said that awarding the scholarship was something that he knew he wanted to do from the start.

“Dr. Walter kind of brought up this opportunity of working on a project and working with old files of enslaved people over in Virginia,” Crouch said.

“This is about people’s history, even my own history because I have ancestors who were enslaved people,” Crouch said.

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“We are a minority or someone who has enslaved people in your family’s ancestry, a resource like 23andMe can be a dead end since enslaved people weren’t allowed to keep records or anything like that,” Crouch said.

“People want to learn about their family history and help families who have lost people,” Crouch said.

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When Dr. Alyssa Lopez stepped onto the campus of Michigan State University after earning her undergraduate degree at Queens College in New York, she was struck by the vastness of the campus and its many branches, from the Dairy Store to the Bug House. However, the wealth of opportunities and learning Dr. Lopez found at MSU helped her to become the researcher she is today. She credits her mentors in both the History and Film Studies departments for guiding her as she wrote her dissertation and the beginning of what will be her first book, “Reel Freedom: Black Film Culture in Early Twentieth Century New York City.”

“Coming to MSU was a huge change, but it was also a really amazing experience. I was able to find community even on that very big campus. All of my best friends are from my PhD program,” Lopez said. “What I remember most about my graduate education was choosing to study topics I was passionate about. It was like being in a safe space, and that having people with different backgrounds, perspectives and starting points is so essential to making academic institutions more open and survivable for those of us that don’t know it inside and out.”

Lopez counts Dr. Dagbovie, a professor in the history department, as someone who she would like to have joined her PhD program. He introduced her to the field of African American Studies, and was an invaluable mentor while at Michigan State and an inspiration to me to continue to teach and mentor others and improve their learning experiences. She was struck by his attentiveness and helpful attitude while she was still in the process of applying to MSU and other graduate schools.

“I hadn’t even submitted my application and he was putting in the time and resources to work with me,” she said. “He’s the kind of mentor that only comes around once in a lifetime. He just cares so deeply for his mentees and his students, and he wants to see success in whatever ways his mentees define it. I can say with confidence that I would not be where I am today without Dr. Dagbovie.”

In addition to teaching courses at Providence, Lopez is wrapping up her book and has begun a new archival research project on Marlon Riggs, a Black gay documentary filmmaker. She is particularly interested in his filmmaking practice, which many found controversial, but which Riggs stood behind and continued to push for relevance in the public sphere. She hopes the students she teaches continue to be curious individuals who “take what they’ve learned out into the world and into their work, to make the world a better place and a more understandable one that is accessible to all.”

As she developed her research, Lopez had to discover her own path through higher education as a first-generation college student. She credits it as one of the defining aspects of her college career and continues to serve as a mentor to fellow first-generation students at Providence College. While navigating the collegiate world without parents or siblings to offer advice can be difficult, she stresses that it’s not impossible and that more and more schools are offering services, like mentoring relationships, that help make the process a little easier.

“It was definitely harder to get where I am now without the privilege of having family members who have had this experience before, but it did get here, right?” she says. “I think academia can be this really scary space, and that having people with different backgrounds, perspectives and starting points is so essential to making academic institutions more open and survivable for those of us that don’t know it inside and out.”

Associate Professor of History Dr. Michelle Moya settled into campus life at MSU

By Patti McDonald

Michelle Moya, Photo credit: Jackie Belden Hawthorne

Associate Professor of History Dr. Michelle Moya joined the Michigan State University History Department in the fall of 2022 as a Red Cedar Distinguished Professor.

MSU established the title of Red Cedar Distinguished Professor in fall 2022 and awards it to selected current and new faculty to assist in the recruitment, recognition, and retention of outstanding faculty at all academic ranks, with the primary aim of enhancing the stature of the institution in research and creative activity.

The Office of Innovation’s website states: “The award of the title will be made to individuals who combine externally recognized, exemplary scholarly accomplishment and/or potential, with clear professional relevance to specific areas of MSU scholarly interest; disciplinary development, or research or creative emphasis. Consideration will also include the candidate’s teaching innovation and excellence.”

Dr. Moya said she is proud to be a part of MSU’s History Department because she’s always admired the institution.

“I’ve always had a lot of respect for MSU.” Moya said. “In my field of African History, MSU is a leading institution, and a place where many exciting initiatives were happening. When I was recruited, I knew MSU would be a place where I could continue to expand my career and be more integrated into an African History and African Studies community and faculty. I already knew some of the faculty in the history department too, so the combination of all that made MSU a great fit for me.”

A historian of eastern Africa, Moya teaches courses in African History. She has also taught courses on World War I, the history of soldiers and veterans, and the history of humanitarianism.

Moya’s main research focus is on African soldiers, warfare in Eastern Africa, and the history of Africa and World War I.

In her first book, Violent Intermediaries: African Soldiers, Conquest, and Everyday Colonialism in German East Africa (Ohio University Press, 2014), she explores the social and cultural history of African soldiers in the colonial army of German East Africa, today’s Tanzania.

This semester, Moya is teaching two courses: Integrative Social Science 330A: Africa and the Social Sciences and HST 481: Seminar in African History. “ISS 330A’s theme is African environmental histories and activism,” she said. “HST 481 is a senior seminar, exploring war and militarization in African History.”

She is currently working on her second book project, Africa, Africans, and the First World War, which examines the spectrum of African experiences in the war, especially as soldiers and workers, "Because Garment East Africa played a key role and was one of the main campaigns that was fought in World War I, I became very interested in that and thinking more broadly about Africans and Africa in World War I.”

In addition to writing her book, Moya also edits the Journal of African History (JAH). She also holds several editorial advisory roles with the journal First World War Studies; with the series Ohio Short Histories of Africa at Ohio University Press; at Elements of Modern Warfare at Cambridge University Press; and Studies in the Cultural History of Modern Warfare at Cambridge University Press.

She is also involved in many different projects, including researching the impacts of war and violence on Africans.

“I am currently working on a project that looks at the history of photography during a German colonial war fought in 1905–1907 and trying to think about how violence against African people was captured in photography, often in ways that might not be noticeable to the first glances.”

“I have also written about the interaction between military history and African history. My work addresses issues such as why African military history continues to be sidelined in mainstream military historiography.”

Outside of teaching and writing, Moya enjoys exploring the East Lansing community with her family. Moya moved to East Lansing from Bloomington, Indiana where she was teaching at Indiana University Bloomington.

Moya said she discovered the Lansing Shuddle over the summer and enjoys relaxing at Hoekel or Schooler’s Books & Music. She said she also likes walking on the Northern Tier Trail.

“It’s been really fun getting to know the area,” Moya said. “We are exploring what our favorite foods are and where we like to go. We would like to spend more time in Detroit and explore the northern part of the state.”

Moya said she hopes to spend the upcoming summer focusing on writing her book and further exploring Michigan.

To learn more about Moya and her research, visit: history.msu.edu/people/faculty/michelle-moya

Read more about Lopez and her work by visiting: https://history.providence.edu/faculty-members/alyssa-lopez/
**Associate Professor of History Dr. Matthew Pauly on Research Obstacles Amid the Russo-Ukrainian War**

By Patti McDonald

Dr. Matthew Pauly, an associate professor in the History Department at Michigan State University, is a highly experienced researcher of Ukraine, with over 30 years of dedication to the region. Pauly’s first trip to Ukraine was in 1988 when he was a high school student. Since then, he’s gone on countless research trips there. He said the war between Russia and Ukraine has significantly disrupted his research due to safety concerns around travel and the accessibility of archives.

“I feel the need to go back,” Pauly said. “Some central state archives reopened last summer, but most regional ones have not; it depends on the archive. I’d say universally, they’re not prepared to receive foreign researchers at this time.”

According to Pauly, in-person access to the archives was already constrained due to COVID-related restrictions put in place before Russia’s full-scale invasion in February 2022. However, those limitations are now exacerbated because of the war.

“You can remotely order copies of a few files from the archives but there’s a significant wait for the processing of any requests. It’s not the way historians are used to working; we’re accustomed to sitting in the archive all day, sorting through materials, and finding new leads from what we encountered in the files that we’ve received. Now even the work of Ukrainian historians who have returned to the reading rooms is regularly interrupted by air raid warnings.”

Dr. Pauly emphasizes his experience doesn’t compare to the hardships endured daily by Ukrainians who are trying to survive the war. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) verified that more than 9,000 civilian deaths have occurred during Russia’s invasion of Ukraine as of September 2023. Furthermore, more than 17,000 people were reported to have been injured.

The Russian Army continues to bomb civilian populations throughout Ukraine, including in the capital city of Kyiv and the town of Odesa.

“Odesa, where I most recently worked, is also the home of the Ukrainian Navy and is frequently attacked,” Pauly said. “The Ukrainian Navy is not a huge force because when the Russians annexed Crimea in 2014, they stole a lot of the Ukrainian fleet. So, there’s not a large presence, but the Navy is responsible for protecting the Ukrainian coastline and has had considerable success. The city itself is a target. It seemed pretty clear in 2022 that Russia intended to conquer Odesa. The Kremlin views the port as the centerpiece in its campaign to capture the former Tsarist-era territory of ‘Novorossiya.’ Much of Ukraine’s grain, which the rest of the world depends on, is exported from Odesa. Russia seeks to disrupt this trade.”

Odesa is also the subject of one of Pauly’s current book projects. His research monograph, *City of Children: Juvenile Poverty, Crime, and Salvation in Odesa,* investigates the impulse of Odesa’s citizens to care for marginalized children at the turn of the 20th century and how children’s welfare institutions and programs were simultaneously maintained and transformed under Soviet rule.

Pauly said he stays in contact with friends and colleagues who live in Odesa, and it can be heart-wrenching to hear their stories of what they’re enduring.

“I have a friend who sends me daily messages about drones and missiles that are headed towards the civilian population in Odesa. Can you even imagine? They don’t get much sleep, if any. Then, they have to try to do work. I would think any historian, or former student in the MSU History Department would appreciate what librarians, historians, and archivists do. They’re just no different than ourselves.”

There were materials that were officially accessible and then there was what really existed... the archival structure in Ukraine was a legacy of the Soviet Union and the purpose of Soviet archives was not to make files publicly available, but to preserve them for selective, regulated use.

Pauly credits his scholarly success to local historians and librarians in Ukraine who helped him examine files that were not easily accessible to foreign researchers, especially early on in his career as a graduate student researcher in the ‘90s.

“I would not have had a career without the advice of local historians who pointed me in the right direction towards files. There were materials that were officially accessible and then there was what really existed... the archival structure in Ukraine was a legacy of the Soviet Union and the purpose of Soviet archives was not to make files publicly available, but to preserve them for selective, regulated use,” he said.

Pauly said he and other historians are worried that the constant bombing will cause an erasure of history with the disappearance of paper files.

“Only a small fraction of this material is digitized. Before the full-scale invasion, Ukraine didn’t have the infrastructure to digitize these files. Soviet records were often published on poor-quality paper, and the paper itself was not meant to hold together over time. The files are really fragile things, and they can fall apart in your hands. By and large, almost all my work up until this point has been with physical paper files that are easily destroyed if a bomb hits an archive. Last March, Russian forces burned down an archive of the Ukrainian Security Service in Chernihiv, a city in northern Ukraine that has since been liberated. Key documents on the Stalinist era, the Second World War, and the Holocaust in Ukraine have been forever lost. In the part of Ukraine that remains under Russian occupation, the fate of archival holdings is unknown.

To learn more about Pauly and his research, visit: [history.msu.edu/people/faculty/matthew-pauly](http://history.msu.edu/people/faculty/matthew-pauly)
Yun Zou credits History Professor for Success

By Emily Jodway

Yun Zou, a Ph.D. student studying history at Michigan State University, credits her advisor as one of her greatest sources of support while she navigated the world of earning a Ph.D. as a Chinese student.

Zou clicked early on with her advisor, Dr. Aminda Smith, an associate professor in the history department. Smith specializes in modern Chinese history and Chinese communism, interwoven with research on gender, sexuality, and the history of the global left.

She [Yun] is doing cutting-edge research that spans the fields of women’s and gender studies, environmental history, and modern Chinese history.

- Dr. Aminda Smith

Zou found an interest in gender issues in China around the time of the MeToo movement, an awareness movement surrounding sexual harassment and sexual abuse of women that grew to prominence in 2017, after news of American film producer Harvey Weinstein engaging in this behavior went public.

#MeToo has highlighted and made a lot of gender issues very visible. It started in the U.S. and now it’s starting up in China,” Zou said. “I feel for it very deeply. I know many women who have suffered sexual harassment. And during this period, for the first time, there are a lot of women sharing their stories and feelings. That got me even more interested in gender issues.”

For now, Zou has pivoted her research toward a newfound interest she encountered during her Ph.D. program at Michigan State. She has taken her previous research on gender studies and woven it in with environmental history in China. She has been visiting several construction sites led and built by women during Mao Zedong’s reign in China, a period in which women worked in accordance with Mao’s ideals of gender on several state labor projects. Mao believed that women were an untapped resource of labor power which should be used in the interests of the country.

“My current project looks at the relationships between gender, nature, and culture,” Zou said. “There were several women-led environmental transformation projects going on in China in Mao’s era. Basically, anything you can imagine them doing labor-wise, they did. It wasn’t even about men and women working together to build a dam; I’m talking about a dam that was built almost entirely out of female labor.”

Zou will return to Michigan State after this semester of field work back in her home country. In the face of several new cultural differences and adjustments, Zou has found East Lansing to be a welcoming home away from home.

“I quite like East Lansing for the environment. There are not too many people here. Where I come from, there are always many, many people. I can basically always find a spot on the bus here, which is great!”

Undergraduate Program Update

By Dr. Emily Tabuteau

The study of history offers our undergraduates much more than insight into the past. It provides a means of improving and sharpening their research, writing, and analytical skills. Courses in our department introduce students to times and places as varied as the Roman Empire, the Soviet Union, Imperial China and Japan, and modern South Africa.

We are delighted to have just added courses on South Asia. Courses on special topics cover concepts, ideas, and practices that include but are not by no means limited to Catholicism, sports, film, food, alcohol, the history of magic, witchcraft and the occult. In studying these places and themes, students also learn the fundamentals of research in primary sources, the construction of arguments and concise, persuasive writing. This set of skills prepares students for a variety of careers that rely on research and analysis while also providing them with the foundation for acting as engaged citizens in their local, national, and international communities.

The department offers three majors. The standard History major is very flexible and provides students with enough electives to undertake a second major or several minors. The Global History major is for students particularly interested in a part of the world other than the United States. The History Education major is in the process of morphing into a new social studies major which combines the previous history education major with the former social studies education major that was housed in the Center for Integrative Studies in Social Science. Both the department’s minor in History and the minor in Defense Studies are popular.

The pursuit of history is not limited to the classroom at Michigan State University. The undergraduate club is open to all undergraduates who are interested in history, whether they are majors or not.

Graduate Program Update

By Dr. Aminda Smith

Ph.D. students are at the heart of the intellectual life and the educational mission of the History Department at Michigan State University. They conduct cutting-edge research around the world and across time periods. They are award-winning teachers who work closely with faculty to mentor undergraduates. Our graduate students are regularly honored with awards recognizing their excellence in both teaching and research.

In 2022 and 2023, we celebrated and said goodbye to our many successful graduates, we congratulated multiple award winners, and we welcomed new students.

We are delighted to announce that six recent graduates moved on to faculty and postdoctoral fellowship positions: Jen Andrella (U.S. History) now holds a Mellon Digital Humanities postdoc at Knox College. Aki Cornelius (African History) is a visiting Assistant Professor at Kalamazoo College. Ayesa Dilahari-Helloway (U.S. History) is an Assistant Professor at North Carolina State University. Lydmila Austin (European History) is a postdoc at Harvard University. Katie Carlene (African History) is a Graduate Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council postdoc at Dalhousie University. Eric Kesse (African History) is an Assistant Professor at Clark University. Abdoulie Jabang (African History) will be joining Texas Christian University as an Assistant Professor.

In the fall of 2023, we welcomed four new students to the Ph.D. program in History: One, Eric Baylis, in U.S. History; and three, Emmanuel Ankomahene, Tobias Avrit, and Lucio Bianchi, in African History.

Several of our students won prestigious research fellowships. We had three Fulbright fellows; Caitlin Barker (Africa and Asia), Ryan Carty (Africa), and Mario Buser (Europe); two Social Science Research Council fellows: Chioma Uchefuna (Africa) and Caitlin Barker. Eric Kesse (Africa) held a Newcombe fellowship, and Adam Coldren (Europe) is a Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council postdoc at Dalhousie University. Eric Kesse (African History) is an Assistant Professor at Clark University. Abdoulie Jabang (African History) will be joining Texas Christian University as an Assistant Professor.

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Ph.D. student in European History, Marissa Knaak, won two graduate prizes. This fall, she received a Biel McNamara Award from the Western Conference on British Studies for her paper: “In the Shadows of Window Displays: Department Store Employees and Class Boundaries in Late Victorian Sheffield” and the William & Mary Burgn Prize from the Midwest Victorian Studies Association for her presentation “Mourning and the Annual Sale: Sheffield’s Department Stores and Queen Victoria’s Death.”
Graduate Awards

Kwan-Wai So Award
The award is given to a graduate student with an exemplary academic record focused on Asian History. This award was made possible by Kester and Cheryl So, and Wu-Yi So.
- Caitlin Barker

Fred Williams Graduate Award
This award recognizes a teaching assistant who plans a teaching career in History at the college or university level as exemplified by Professor Williams during his tenure at Michigan State University. This award was made possible by Kenneth and Sandra Beall.
- McKayla Sluga

The Donald Lammers Graduate Award
This award is designed for a graduate student in good standing whose research interests and related activities promise to improve our knowledge and historical understanding of the nature and dynamics of international and intercultural relationships in any geographical region or time. This award was made possible by Donald and Giovanna Lammers, Juliette Primeau, and Craig T. Johnson.
- Yun Zou

Milton E. Muelder Graduate Fellowship in History
This fellowship is awarded to a graduate student pursuing a Ph.D. in a field of European, Middle Eastern, and/or history of the Arabic/Islamic World. This award was made possible by Beth Schwartz.
- Marissa Knaak

The Sinclair and S. Suzanne Powell Scholarship in Transportation History
This award is for an undergraduate or graduate student in the Department of History who has a strong interest in Transportation History. This award was made possible by Dr. Bryce Plapp, Rosemary Plapp, and Larry Murray.
- Jada Gannaway

Muelder-Lowe Graduate Award
The award recognizes a teaching assistant who plans a teaching career in European History at the college or university level. This award was made possible by Beth Schwartz and Dr. and Mrs. William Lowe.
- Gloria Ashaolu

Harry Brown Graduate Fellowship in American History
This fellowship is awarded to a student who demonstrates academic excellence. This award was made possible by Suzanne Powell.
- Samantha Smith

Jeff Rooney Paper Prize
This award is given to a graduate student who writes the best paper in a seminar in the year of the award.
- Eric Kesse

Undergraduate Awards

The David T. Bailey Endowed Scholarship in History
The award honors the late Professor Bailey, who was a professor of American intellectual and religious history in the Department of History at Michigan State for many years. The recipient is a History major from the state of Michigan.
- Alivia Young

Blight History Scholarship
The scholarship, endowed by alumni and Yale professor Dr. David Blight, is intended to support students majoring in History and encourage students who have demonstrated the capacity to achieve educational and professional goals.
- Ayden Ferris

David LoRomer Scholarship
This award remembers our colleague, David LoRomer, professor of European and Italian History, and recognizes the best undergraduate essay written in the History Department for this academic year.
- Sophie Allegi

Honorable Mentions: Ayden Ferris, and Max Martus

Robert and Catherine Workman Endowed Scholarship in History
This scholarship is intended to support students majoring in History and encourage students who have demonstrated the capacity to achieve educational and professional goals.
- Ayden Ferris

The Rout-Williams Award in History
This award honors the late Professor Rout, one of the first African American professors in the department, and Dr. Frederick Williams, former chair of the department, honors an outstanding history sophomore.
- Jared Visser

The David T. Bailey Endowed Scholarship in History
This scholarship is made possible by Anthony Woods, Jr. and Kay Samuelson Woods, honors Anthony and Mary Joan Woods and their legacy of teaching and philanthropy. The award funds the research of a student in the History Scholars Program with an outstanding GPA.
- Joseph Konczal

The Sinclair and S. Suzanne Powell Scholarship in Transportation History
This award is for an undergraduate or graduate student in the Department of History who has a strong interest in Transportation History. This award is made possible by Suzanne Powell.
- Joseph Konczal

J. Morgan Sweeney Memorial Scholarship
The award is named in honor of the late Professor J. Morgan Sweeney who enriched the lives of his students through Study Abroad Programs in Great Britain. The award provides funds for a student with an exemplary GPA planning a study abroad trip in Summer 2023. This award was made possible by James Adam-Berger, Richard Kars, and Noel McSweeney.
- Rashad Bates
History Scholars News

By Dr. Emily Conroy-Krutz

In the late summer, our best students are invited to apply to join the History Scholars for the upcoming academic year. Our program aims to help students build a community within the department, go deeper into their interests in history, and familiarize themselves with the Michigan State University faculty and visiting professors. Membership in the group also makes Scholars eligible for awards to advance their own research. This fall has seen an exciting lineup of events for the History Scholars, including history in the headlines lectures, professional development workshops, visits to MSU Special Collections, and study breaks (featuring one very exciting tic-tac-toe tournament).

In the History in the Headlines series, MSU History faculty have helped the History Scholars understand the historical context behind major news and cultural stories. Dr. Ethan Segal shared a fascinating presentation on the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant, the environment, and Japan’s international relations. Dr. Rich Bellon talked to us about “Oppenheimer” and what the movie gets right about the history of science. Dr. Michael Stamm helped students contextualize the current panic around artificial intelligence in light of the longer history of communications technology. Dr. Emily Elliott talked us through the rise and fall of Yevgeny Prigozhin and Russian politics in the late twentieth century.

On Halloween, we visited MSU’s Special Collections with Dr. Liam Brockey, who provided a fascinating overview of sources on witchcraft. Early in the semester, we were joined by Dari Willcutt to learn about internships and career opportunities in history. Students were able to enjoy meals with visiting alums and scholars, where they were able to ask questions about the visitors’ career paths, interests, and more.

We look forward to even more fun in the spring semester, when we will be going back to Special Collections, hearing from Dr. Justin Simard of the MSU Law School, and having development workshops, visits to MSU Special Collections, and study breaks (featuring one very exciting tic-tac-toe tournament).

Support the Department

Please consider contributing to our department. Your gift will be used to help undergraduate and graduate students carry out research, present at conferences, and other scholarly activities.

TO DONATE NOW VISIT: history.msu.edu

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Are you a faculty, student, staff member or alumnus of the MSU Department of History? Contact the department with updates and news you want to share!

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Facebook: facebook.com/MSUHistoryDept
Instagram: instagram.com/msu.history

HONORS THESIS AUTHORS

Students graduating with honors must maintain an exceptional GPA and write a senior thesis. The honors thesis obliges students to pursue original research and to produce a thesis of a minimum of 50 pages.

Emily Austin
Creatures of the Night: Werewolf Trials in Early Modern Europe
Thesis Advisor: Dr. Emily Tabuteau

Britton Gustafson
Imperial Medicine and the Second World War: The Kenyan Plague Epidemic of 1941-42
Thesis Advisor: Dr. Peter Alegi

Michelle Norello
The Sioux Uprising of 1862: Native Resistance, Settler Expansion, and the Civil War in the West
Thesis Advisor: Dr. Nakia Parker

Daniel Opp
The Myth of Achaemenid Decline
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Aaron Pap
Faith in Spite of the Facts
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"When the War Raged On: Montana Territory, the Politics of Authority, and National Reconstruction"
Advisor: Dr. Thomas Summerhill

Lyudmila Austin
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