New Faculty and New Programs

Jeff Zalar grew up in West Allis, Wisconsin. West Allis was originally called Honey Creek. Then it became North Greenfield. Finally it was renamed after the founder of the company, Allis-Chalmers, that employed most of its residents. West Allis was a working class, company town and most of its children wound up working for Allis-Chalmers. Jeff, however, was an exception to the rule.

Jeff first left West Allis by means of the military. He joined the Marines where an intelligence test landed him a spot working in, appropriately, intelligence. After a posting in Central America he did a tour of duty in the first Gulf War.

These adventures left him with a lot of experience and enough funding to attend Marquette University in Milwaukee where he could apply his brains in more traditional ways. Like many of our students here at UC, Jeff was the first person in his family to go to college. But that was only the first in a long string of academic achievements. At Marquette he finished as the top graduate in history and theology. A PhD (with distinction) followed at Georgetown University. Then followed challenging stints at Valparaiso University in Indiana, Pepperdine in California, and the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, jobs that required an enormous amount of administrative and service work. Through it all, Jeff became skilled at building programs from the bottom up, and that made him the perfect fit for a newly created position at UC-- The Ruth J. and Robert A. Conway Endowed Chair in Catholic Studies.

The Department of History is thrilled to have Jeff on board. His research, which focuses on religion and intellectual culture in Modern Germany, seamlessly complements and reinforces established department strengths. He also teaches a range of courses that should be exciting and challenging for students, from the “Global History of World War II” to the “Catholic Intellectual Tradition.” As Conway Endowed Chair, Jeff’s responsibilities include curriculum development, program alignment with College-wide academic initiatives, and community outreach. He has established an advisory board composed of leading UC scholars and administrators and a faculty group for those interested in teaching in the Catholic Studies curriculum.

Jeff and his family are now happily settling into life in Cincinnati. His wife Kim is an accomplished cardiac nurse, who works at The Christ Hospital. Their daughter Rebeccah is a freshman at Saint Ursula Academy. Their son Joseph and daughter Paula attend the seventh and fourth grades, respectively, at Saint Mary School in Hyde Park. “We enjoy hiking, camping, and reading books together,” Jeff says. “We are also viscerally committed to the Green Bay Packers.”

Welcome to UC, Jeff.
This fall, graduate student Rachel Powell began an exciting two-year project to investigate the history of the Woman’s City Club of Greater Cincinnati (WCC) from 1965 to the present. Working closely with Professor Fritz Casey-Leininger and Club members, Powell’s research will culminate in an illustrated publication in honor of the Club’s 100th Anniversary.

Powell first became interested in this project while taking a Public History course with Professor Casey-Leininger. Long fascinated by twentieth-century women’s history and second wave feminism, Powell began to explore the WCC’s activities during the 1980s.

Powell notes, “I was intrigued by their history as not only a volunteer organization run by women, but also as an influential club dedicated to encouraging civic responsibility and education within the city. I found the Club’s work concerning race relations, education, housing, and women’s rights reflective of similar initiatives in broader social movements of the same period.” Indeed, Club members have always taken pride in defining themselves as a civic group run by women as opposed to a women’s social club.

Powell’s initial investigations led her to bigger questions that required more extensive research: How influential were changing feminist ideologies on the club’s sense of identity and purpose? How did the club manage to remain relevant after the first wave of feminism? How did their interests and activities shift in focus? Powell notes that her determination to focus her graduate research on the WCC solidified after attending the Club’s meetings. “The Club members’ passion for understanding local, national, and international issues and their desire to educate the community about the significance of these issues are inspiring.”

Now diving into her research, Powell is reading through annual reports, meeting minutes, monthly newsletters, forum flyers, correspondence, and publicity documents housed in the WCC’s Archives, a private collection located in their offices at the Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church. She also plans to work in the Cincinnati Historical Society Library and Archives and work with local newspapers to gain a sense of how the public perceived the Club and its activities. Powell plans to analyze these sources and put them in context by looking at literature on second-wave feminism, female activism, and women’s clubs. She sees her project building on Andrea Tuttle Kornbluh’s book, Lighting the Way (1986), which examined how The Woman’s City Club of Cincinnati responded to the first-wave of feminism. Powell will continue that analysis to consider how the WCC reexamined its identity in the mid-to-late twentieth century. Excited by the accessibility of public history and the ways that history can be shared with the public, Powell notes, “I want my work to reflect their vivacity and their strong sense of civic duty.”

Rachel worked closely with the Woman’s City Club to determine the best way to disseminate her findings. Together, they determined that an illustrated publication best fit their goals. Powell is excited about this opportunity to hone and practice her design skills alongside research and historical analysis. We look forward to seeing the results of this exciting project.
UC History Faculty:
Notes from the Field

On September 16th, Elizabeth Frierson was quoted by the Cincinnati Enquirer on the challenges and rewards faced by Americans living and working overseas.

Isaac Campos gave a talk on October 2nd at Princeton University on his book Home Grown: Marijuana and the Origins of Mexico’s War on Drugs. The talk was sponsored by Princeton's Program in Latin American Studies.


Martin Francis was one of the expert witnesses featured in the final episode of the BBC Radio Four series 'Amanda Vickery ... on Men'. The episode dealt with men and masculinity in Britain in the 1950s. Martin was interviewed by Vickery, his friend and former colleague. The program appeared on Monday September 10.

UC Graduate Student Presence Felt Around the World

Fourth year PhD student, Ufuk Adak, is doing research in Turkey this year. He recently presented his paper, “The Ottoman Prisons and Prisoners in the Province of Aydın in the Late Ottoman Empire,” at the First International Ottoman World Conference in Karabuk, Turkey.

Cole Lyon is doing her dissertation research at the Herzog August Library in Wolfenbüttel, Germany. She is being funded through the German Academic Exchange Service. Her dissertation looks at how people perceived and experienced calendar time through nature and its cycles, in 16th- and 17th-century Germany. She says she is having a great time and is fortunate to be working at a place so rich in historical resources.

This past summer Mackenzie Keys spent time in Dublin, Ireland researching eugenics, insane asylums, and the third Home Rule bill at the National Library of Ireland. She also traveled to the other side of the country to attend an Irish language immersion program in Carraroe, Galway where she lived, learned, and spoke Irish with native speakers.
Arielle Lavigne has always been interested in history and enjoys “discovering the why and how of the stories we tell and the histories we think we know.” Originally a major in geology, Arielle discovered her passion for history in a large lecture class taught by Dr. Thomas Lorman. Next, she enrolled in classes on North Africa and the Middle East with Dr. Lily Frierson and race and identity with Dr. Tracy Teslow. This groundwork served her well when she next undertook a senior seminar taught by Dr. Shailaja Paik. Working closely with Dr. Paik, she learned how to conduct original research and embarked on an ambitious project examining the lives of women in India. According to Arielle, Dr. Paik “taught me the importance of listening to every voice, even the quietest one.”

Arielle’s senior thesis on “Excluded Perspectives: Dalit Women and the Message of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar” investigates the predicament of “Dalits,” formerly referred to as “Untouchables,” who have long occupied the very bottom rung of India’s caste system. Dalit women traditionally worked as toilet attendants, trash sweepers, and performed other socially undesirable functions; many were beggars. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who was both a social reform advocate and a Dalit, offered a radical counterpoint to Gandhi’s reform agenda, which Ambedkar argued did not go far enough for the very downtrodden.

Against this backdrop, Arielle’s thesis examined newly translated autobiographies of Dalit women. She closely studied the women's statements and examined the similarities and differences between them. “I felt honored to bring their stories further into the light of academia,” she explains, and to situate them “in regard to caste studies and Third World women's history.” Last spring, Arielle’s thesis was awarded the Hilda Smith Prize for Excellence in Women’s History as well as the George B. Engberg Prize for the best undergraduate paper in the senior research seminar on any topic in the field of history.

Arielle has also studied abroad in Korea. Her experience there opened up new horizons for her. “I was able to immerse myself in the Korean language and lifestyle… The question of women’s roles in Korean history and in contemporary Korean society is changing and emerging as an interesting site of historical and sociological research.” She hopes to return to Korea and perhaps investigate these issues further.

Arielle will be graduating as a History major this spring. She currently has an internship at the Cincinnati Public Library downtown, where she is working with the Rare Pamphlet collection. After graduation, she plans to earn a Master’s in Library and Information Science.
UC Alumni News:

Dan La Botz (PhD, 1998) had his chapter, “The Tea Party and the Unions: Class Struggle in America at the Opening of the 21st Century,” published in Social Scientists Explain the Tea Party Movement: With a Selection of Primary Documents, ed. Roger Chapman (Mellen Press, 2012). La Botz also remains on the editorial board of New Politics, a long-standing journal of socialist thought, to which he is also a frequent contributor. He also continues to be the editor of Mexican Labor News and Analysis.

William Bergmann (PhD, 2005) had his book, The American National State and the Early West, published by Cambridge University Press in September. Dr. Bergmann currently teaches at Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania. Aaron Cowan is also teaching at Slippery Rock University and serves as curator of The Old Stone House, a reconstructed 1822 stagecoach tavern museum owned by Slippery Rock.

Robert Gioielli (PhD, 2008) is now an assistant professor at UC-Blue Ash, teaching courses in American, Environmental, and Urban history. He also serves as co-editor of Ohio Valley History.

2012-13 TAFT Speaker:

The History Department is excited to announce two lectures by distinguished historian Robin D.G. Kelley. Kelley is the Gary B. Nash Chair in U.S. History at UCLA and will visit UC February 21-22. The first lecture will be on “The Long Rise and Short Decline of American Democracy” (3:30-5:30 in Main Street Cinema, TUC, followed by a reception). Details of the second lecture will be announced as they become available.

Von Rosenstiel Research Seminar Series:

On November 2nd at 2:30 pm, the UC History Department hosted the first in a series of 2012-13 research seminars. This year’s inaugural colloquium featured Professor Tim Forest of UC-Blue Ash and his paper “Connaught or Hell: Irish State-Aided Emigration to North America in the 1880s.”

Each seminar in the series will take place in the Von Rosenstiel Room on the third floor of McMicken Hall. Here’s the rest of the schedule.


February 8: Professor Sigrun Haude, “The Experience of Disaster During the Thirty Years’ War: Autobiographical Writings by Religious in Bavaria.”


April 5: Professor Hsing-yi Ho, “Nation, Progress and A New Worldview: Yan Fu’s ‘Tianyan’ (Heavenly Evolution) and its Impact on Chinese Intelligentsia, 1895-1911.”
New Members of the UC History Community

We are excited to welcome many new history majors to our undergraduate program:

Jason Alinsky
David Amann
Andrew Bahrs
Samuel Bailey
Madeleine Bain
Crystal Baker
Madelyn Barrett
Todd Baumer
Lemeki Betomakita
Laura Bradley
Laura Branham
Erica Brown
Abigail Brueggemeyer
Beau Brunner
Marie Buldain
Joseph Clark
Sarah Clark
Tyler Crockett
Charles Curry
Megan Curry
Daniel Dressler
Luke Frederick
Dominick Goodman
Gretchen Green
Mathea Harbaugh
Taylor Hensley
Erin Hill
Shannon Hokanson
Matthew Hughes
Danyul Jackson
Mason Jeffreys
Marc Johnson
Jared Karrasch
Michael Karrer
Mary Keenan
Tyler Kochensparger
Richard Koehler
Jasmyne LeCappelain
Erik Maloney

Markus Mason
Shaun McClanahan
Elden McCubbin
Jeffrey Morehead
Roy Mullins
Matthew Murray
Matthew Norris
Gwendolyn O’Brien
Jared Randall
Gabriel Robinson
Susan Roth
Alex Schneider
Tegan Siereveld
David Simon
Kaitlyn Spears
Adam Stang
Kamaria Talley
Christopher Teuschler
Jiaying Wang
Jeremy Waugh
Steven Wilfert
Laura Wilson
Matthew Woodruff
Joshua Worley

We also have new MA and PhD students joining the department with a wide variety of research interests.

PhD Program:
Vanessa de Los Reyes
Matthew Hall
Alyssa McClanahan
Nathan McGee

MA Program:
Debra Burgess
Kristen Gasten
Dustin Meier
Alana Minor
Alexander Parker
Nathan Silver