



Taking Time

A NEWSLETTER FOR UNDERGRADUATES
FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIR

Given our long-standing commitment to excellence in teaching, the Department of History has had a wonderful Spring!

Professors Randy Roth and David Steigerwald each won an Alumni Award for Distinguished Teaching, the highest teaching prize presented by Ohio State, claiming two of the ten such awards given across the entire University. Professor Steigerwald, a modern American specialist at our Marion Campus, and Professor Roth, an expert on early U.S. history, were the ninth and tenth members of the Department to win the Alumni Award since 1999 (nine of the ten winners are still teaching; one has retired).

Moreover, Professor Greg Anderson, one of our ancient historians, was sole recipient of the Arts & Sciences Outstanding Teaching Award, having been selected from among the more than 1,000 faculty in the Colleges of the Arts and Sciences. Professor Anderson thus became the seventh History professor to win this prize over the 62 years it has been awarded. The achievements of

Professors Roth, Steigerwald, and Anderson confirm our Department's long legacy of commitment to excellence in undergraduate instruction.

We were also delighted to learn this Spring that Professor Stephen Dale, one of our specialists in the history of South Asia, won a University Distinguished



Prof. Stephen Dale, recipient of the Distinguished Scholar Award

Scholar Award, one of six awarded across the entire university. We truly believe that great research forms the foundation of great teaching and enhances the reputation of our Department and of each diploma earned

here. Thus we were extremely proud of Professor Dale's recognition.

**WINNERS OF THE ALUMNI
AWARD FOR
DISTINGUISHED TEACHING**



Prof. Greg Anderson, ASC Outstanding Teacher Award winner

This issue of *Taking Time* introduces you to the newest members of our faculty, Associate Professor and General Raymond E. Mason Chair in Military History Peter Mansoor and Assistant Professor Scott Levi, as well as Visiting Associate Professor Karen Spierling. All three of these new colleagues have demonstrated skill in our classrooms.

Another article will provide a student's perspective on study abroad opportunities open to Ohio State students. I encourage you to explore the possibilities of enhancing your undergraduate experience by gaining some real-world experience in a foreign country.

Congratulations to our majors and minors who will walk across the stage at Commencement in 2009. Best wishes for a happy and healthy future!

Peter L. Hahn
Professor and Chair



Prof. Randy Roth



Prof. David Steigerwald

HOW TO STUDY ABROAD AND LOVE IT by Tara Stephan

[Editor's note: Tara Stephan is a senior history major, double majoring in Arabic with a minor in Spanish.]

I have had my fair share of conflict and growth in my twenty years. However, living in a Spain for three months was by far the most life-changing event I have ever encountered. Even today, almost six months after arriving back in the United States, I am still working out the implications of all that I did, saw, thought, and discovered. Although I was never completely alone, I still had to learn how to communicate, interact, and simply live like a Spaniard. I gained a level of independence and confidence that went beyond what I had by simply going to college. Deciding that I wanted to study abroad was easy, but the process was a different story entirely.



Tara Stephan at the cathedral in Toledo

It may seem obvious, but the first issue with studying abroad is deciding where to go. I knew I wanted to go to a Spanish-speaking country because of my Spanish minor, but there are twenty-one countries therein from which to choose. I had this idealized, romantic image in my head of Spanish culture, and I had always wanted to go to Europe, so it was not a difficult choice for me. Ohio State's Office of International Affairs (OIA) offers programs in various countries, and many countries have only one city in which you can study. However, Spain had several options. Here is where my majors came into play: I am an Arabic and history major, and one of the places available was in Granada. Granada: the last city taken from the Catholic Ferdinand and Isabel from the Muslims in 1492. It was perfect. Essentially, in order to decide where to study, go with your interests, no matter how obscure. It will work out so that your time abroad is that much more meaningful.

After looking through several pamphlets on different options, I met with a counselor in the OIA and began the application process in earnest. We discussed the requirements for the trip and specific concerns that I had. Some programs require that you have studied up to a certain level in the language of that country, others do not. Because I was going on this trip for my minor for Spanish language study, I had to have taken up to a certain level of Spanish before I could even consider the trip. The counselor gave me my application materials, and I filled them out over the course of several days and turned them in. There was a general application as well as housing, roommate preferences, insurance, and all manner of other paperwork. Of course, if you do not already have a passport, that is a must, as is a visa for many places. It is a lot, but it is well worth the time and effort. Once that is finished, the most fun part is next: the wait.

Finally, one day when you have halfway forgotten that you even applied to study

abroad, you will get an email stating that you are accepted into the program. Then, the real work begins. You receive packets and packets of paperwork that needs to be filled out about everything from whether or not you are a vegetarian to the minute details of your flight. There is also a meeting that you have to attend through the OIA in which you can ask questions and learn more about the place you are to visit. You will also receive information packets about said place from both OSU and the organization with whom you are traveling. Although it is all very helpful, once I arrived in Spain, I found that a lot of things were left out of those packets. It was all a part of the adventure, though, figuring out those things for myself—such as why no store sold lotion (answer: it is located in the perfume store—who knew?).



Tara at the Alhambra in Granada

Once all of the minor details were settled, there was nothing more for me to do but go. Packing was a challenge, but I found that moderation was the key. Once on the plane,

I felt like I had done enough worrying and planning for three trips, so I was ready to relax and enjoy the flight—which I would have done had I not been rerouted to Germany. Really, though, once I got to Spain I had one of the most memorable experiences of my life, and those three months are ones that I would not give up for anything.

Congratulations . . .

to history major **Sarah McBee** of the Mansfield Campus of Ohio State who won an award in the Autumn 2008 Undergraduate Research Scholarship competition. The funds will be used to support research for her Senior Honors Thesis. Sarah's thesis is titled "The History of the Jamestown Colony: Seventeenth Century and Modern Interpretations," and her adviser is Prof. Heather Tanner of the Mansfield Campus. In her thesis, she briefly discusses the story of Jamestown, Virginia, and looks at what historians have said about the colony over the four centuries since its founding in 1607. She also looks at some of the important events associated with Jamestown and the archaeology that is changing the traditionally negative views of the colony.

The History Department applauds Sarah for the hard work that brought her to this point. The Senior Honors Thesis is an educational opportunity that many outstanding history majors should consider.

. . . to an award winner.

NEW FACULTY

Three new faculty members joined the department of history this year, and already they have enriched our program with their varied approaches to teaching.

Peter Mansoor just finished a twenty-six year military career that includes teaching military history at the United States Military Academy at West Point, three deployments to the Middle East, and two combat tours in Iraq. He was the commander of the 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division in Baghdad in 2003-2004, and later served as the executive officer to General David Petraeus, the commanding general of Multi-National Force-Iraq, during the surge of 2007-2008. Prof. Mansoor holds the General Raymond E. Mason, Jr. Chair of Military History, a joint appointment with the Department of History and the Mershon Center for International Security Studies.



Prof. Peter Mansoor

Baghdad at Sunrise: A Brigade Commander's War in Iraq is his acclaimed memoir of his experiences in Iraq in 2003-2004. He uses the experiences of his brigade combat team as a lens to look at the wider historical and strategic aspects of the Iraq War. His previous book, *The GI Offensive in Europe: The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions*, on the American army in World War II, won the Society for Military History Distinguished Book Award in 2000. He is a military historian with broad interests, but focuses his research on modern American military history--particularly World War II and counterinsurgency warfare.

He enjoys teaching because “my philosophy is that education is the cornerstone of civilization, for without the ability to pass on knowledge from generation to generation, all is lost.” Additionally, he thinks that historical awareness is absolutely essential for the citizens of our country to be able to understand the world around them and to make informed judgments on the critical issues facing our nation today. He tries to make classroom learning interesting and fun for the students, but has a keen desire to sharpen the intellect of students--particularly by improving their ability to think critically and write clearly. History, he believes, provides the forum for improving the mind and equipping students with the ability to communicate effectively, regardless of their eventual career choices.

Scott Levi specializes in Central Asian history, the first full time faculty member at Ohio State to do so. Before coming to Ohio State, he taught at the University of Louisville and Eastern Illinois University. He has also taught courses at the University of Wisconsin and Indiana University.

Prof. Levi's work focuses on the social and economic history of early modern Central Asia in the broader context of the eastern Islamic world. His interest in World History is reflected in his publications. He is the

author of *The Indian Diaspora in Central Asia and its Trade, 1550–1900*, the editor of *India and Central Asia: Commerce and Culture, 1500–1800*, and co-editor of the forthcoming *Islamic Central Asia: An Anthology of Sources*.



Prof. Scott Levi in Uzbekistan

Prof. Levi has developed an approach to teaching that emphasizes transregional connections and the critical analysis of primary sources. He regularly offers courses on Islamic Central Asia, and plans to introduce a new course on the History of Afghanistan next year. One of his courses, which he taught for the first time at OSU this past year, is History 544: “The Mongol World Empire.” He designed this course as an introduction to the social, cultural and political history of medieval Central Eurasia, paying special attention to the interactions of pastoral-nomadic and sedentary peoples. In the beginning of the quarter students studied the pastoral-nomadic way of life, the history of pastoral-nomadic states in Central Asia, the rise of the Mongol Empire under Genghis Khan’s leadership, and the governing institutions that he put in place. Following a survey of the Mongol conquests, which stretched from Southeast Asia and Korea in the east to Syria, Hungary and Poland in the west, attention turned to the lengthy recovery under the Pax-Mongolica: the Mongol peace. In the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, Eurasia witnessed an unprecedented rise in the movement of people and a

corresponding rise in the transcontinental exchange of goods, scientific knowledge, religious and cultural traditions, and even disease pathogens. Exploring this period, students found that Genghis Khan was not just a barbarian and a brutal agent of destruction. Rather, the Mongol Empire has had a profound and undeniable impact on the trajectory of world history.

Karen Spierling, Visiting Associate Professor, also taught in the history department of the University of Louisville. Her particular interest is in the religious history of early modern Europe, during the Reformation and the first major period of European expansion. She is especially interested in questions of how religious reformers and leaders attempted to put their ideas into practice and how social, political and economic concerns helped to shape those religious ideas and practices.



Prof. Karen Spierling

Her research focuses on sixteenth-century Geneva, the center of the international Calvinist reform movement. In her current research she is looking at the ways that Protestants and Catholics interacted with one another—particularly at their (unexpectedly) peaceful interactions—in and around Reformed Geneva, in order to compare Protestant-Catholic relationships in Geneva with those across western Europe.

Her recent publications include a paperback edition of *Infant Baptism in Reformation Geneva: The Shaping of a Community and Defining Community in Early Modern Europe*, which she co-edited.

Her general goal in the classroom is “to help students to see how exciting and messy history is,” and to encourage them to ask questions about how historical developments are related to one another—why did history happen the way it did? And why should we care? Her concern is not to have students memorize a list of dates and names that may be easy to forget once the quarter is over, but to have them think about the causes, consequences, and significance of a wide variety of historical events, ideas, and individuals. In addition to a better understanding of how our world came to be as it is today, she believes that one of the most important things students can take away from history courses is the ability to think critically and to express their critical analysis clearly and precisely in writing. While the topics of her courses are always related to early modern Europe, her goal is to help equip students with skills of analysis and communication that they can apply not only to other history courses, but to other aspects of their daily lives and future careers, as well. In winter quarter 2010, Prof. Spierling will be teaching a special 594 course on “Witches, Saints, and Skeptics.”

HISTORY SCHOLAR-ATHLETE HONORED

Corey Elkins, a history major who graduated in Winter Quarter 2009, and a forward on the men’s hockey team, was named the team’s Central Collegiate Hockey Association Scholar-Athlete of the Year. Nominees must have a cumulative GPA of 3.25 through the fall term of the selection year to receive the award. #39 will be a four-time Ohio State Scholar-Athlete and a three-time Academic All-Big Ten selection. He has signed a contract

with the Los Angeles Kings organization of the National Hockey League.



CONGRATULATIONS TO RECENT GRADUATES

Summer 2008

Stephen Adams, Brennen Bader, Aaron Bagent, Mat Ballay, Julia Belcher, Anna Bolman, Rani Conger, Aaron Crabtree, Kevin Csubak, Scott Dishon, Colton Ditmer, Melissa Elliott, John Foley, Christine Foster, Justin Giddy, Ashley Grimwood, James Hall, Robert Hedger, Andre Holt, Cengiz Inceoglu, Sara Irvin, Brock Kelley, Jan Labrake, Matthew Leader, Kyle Mason, Sara McCardle, Eric Nichols, Frederick Plateck, Eric Shambaugh, Joshua Steigerwald, Adam Strickland, Jesse Tierney, Jonathan Tindor, Kyle Tissue, Matthew Tomich, Alexander Vu, Jeff Whidden, Joshua Whitaker, Charles Wilkins, Jenna Yates

Autumn 2008

Joseph Alvarez, Christopher Anthony, Anthony Beavers, Carl Betts, Eric

Butke, Andrew Butler, Erin Cody,
Jennifer Coelho, Timothy Cordell II,
Kevin Coughlan, Jason Cox, Thomas
Davis, Richard Denton, Nicholas Dysert,
Angela Flanigan, Anna Flory, Kyle
Gordon, William Gregory III, Caleb
Hoffman, Ashley Lobaugh, Ryan
Martin, Franz Monnig, Caleb Ng,
Jonathan Nirote, Carol Pegg, Bradley
Reed, Michael Reed, Ryan Saeger,
Matthew Smith, Jeffrey Spencer, Kyle
Spurgeon, Matthew Struhar, William
Stump, Jessica Tice, Richard Tinapple,
Jessica Wagshul, Joshua Williams,
Joshua Wilson, Adrian Young, Muna
Yusuf

Winter Quarter 2009

Amy Beining, Jason Belcher, David
Bosak, Geoffrey Davis, Anita De
Acosta, Corey Elkins, Michael Feltis,
Melissa Foxworth, Timothy Griffin,
Nasser Haddad, Gregory Haer, Megan
Hartman, Max Hobson, Robert Hoon,
John Huffman, Robert Johnson, Thomas
Kennedy, Kasey Kernen, Edward
Kerwin, Amanda King, Damian Kristof,
Catherine Luna, Seamus Mahoney, Todd
Mitchell, Hugh Moody, John Noland,
David Patterson, Colin Peters, Charles
Prueter, Breanna Roach, Bowen Ross,
Clare Rubel, Jessica Sillasen, Tyler
Walsh, Tyler Williams, Kyle Wine