



## THE HISTORIAN

Fall 2024

# LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

### ***Greetings from the Department of History.***

As you can see from the contents of this newsletter, things are hopping around here! Drs. Saltamacchia and Boxell have recently partnered with organizations in Omaha in order to help get students more involved with the community, grow student networks, and hone students' skill sets in doing applied history. Dr. Celinscak's students did similar projects in public history with contributions to a featured exhibit on World War I at the Durham Museum. Finally, our students were fortunate enough to have the experts come directly to them when Dr. Reames brought world-class scholars on Alexander the Great here to UNO for a three-day conference on the man himself in September. If Netflix was really smart, they would have sent a camera crew to campus for that one!

Our students and faculty are clearly doing great things, and there are no



History Department Chair, **Dr. Danielle Battisti** (middle photo, standing) at the Tell All the Truth Project event 12.05.24

signs that things will slow down in the spring. We even have a theme for next semester, see if you can spot it. We're excited to be offering courses on the history of medicine for the first time in many years. Dr. Korostyshevsky will be working with our friends at UNMC's Archives and Special Collections, including History Department alum Carrie Meyer (MA '18) to bring students from History of Medicine into UNMC's library to work with rare books, medical artifacts, public installations, and

many more resources. Finally, please mark your calendars for April 24 to join us for perhaps the scholarly authority on the Bubonic Plague, **Dr. Monica Green**, for this year's annual Winchell Lecture, "Where Do Pandemics Come From? Using Black Death Narratives to Rethink the Origin of Pandemics." We hope you can join us for what promises to be a meaningful talk that is sure to bridge the distant past with our recent experiences, as well as lend lessons for our future.

## CONGRATULATIONS SUMMER AND FALL 2024 GRADUATES

### Undergraduate

Matthew Holly

Joshua Kersch

Nathaniel Krejci

Clayton Moore

Seth Oney

Jordan Ring

### Graduate

Md Showkot Ali

Angela Ecabert

Thomas Forke

Anabel Hazelton

Bobbie McWilliams

Alexandra Shaner

Sean Summerfelt



## FEATURED STUDENT NEWS



*Undergraduate student **Mina Bussa***

## MINA BUSSA

*History students have the opportunity to work with numerous community partners in Omaha and the surrounding area.*

History minor, **Mina Bussa** is interning this semester at the Durham Museum. She works in the photo archives, learning from collection technicians, the collection manager, and the curator of the museum. Her tasks involve research, curating shows, and scanning photo negatives to be uploaded onto the museum's digital photo archive. One of her favorite projects this semester was researching and curating a photo exhibit on the World's Fair of Aviation at Offutt Field in 1946. **Mina** said, "I have really enjoyed my time at the Durham and have learned a lot about the field. I'm excited to go back next semester and encourage students to apply!"

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**Interested in an internship?  
Contact Dr. Mark Boxell**

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## ALEXIS RITTERBUSH

Presenting at two conferences and earning a GRACA award made October a busy month for **Alexis**!

**Alexis** presented research at the 49th Annual European Studies Conference in Omaha on October 3rd, and at the 16th Annual James A. Rawley Graduate Conference in the Humanities in Lincoln on October 4th. Her research project, "Music Evoking the Emotional Relationships Between Jewish Prisoners and SS Guards in Auschwitz" was well-received at both events. Her GRACA funded project also aligns with the theme of music in history. Titled, "German American Musical Culture in Omaha, Nebraska through the Life and Work of Mary Munchhoff," **Alexis** has created a digital website that incorporates not only images and primary and secondary sources, but musical audio, as well. Alexis hopes to immerse people in Omaha's German-American music heritage through the life and musical work of Mary Munchhoff.



*Graduate Assistant and current graduate student, **Alexis Ritterbush***



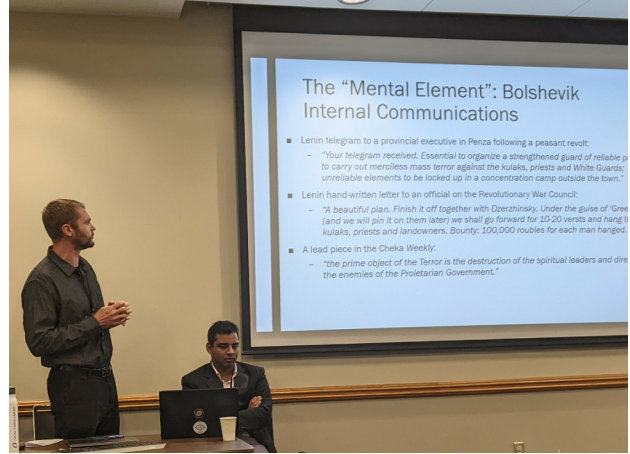
## Making Invisible Histories Visible

## TREYGAN RUSSELL

This past summer, graduate student **Treygan** Russell (second from right) had the opportunity to work with the Omaha Public Schools digital initiative "Making Invisible Histories Visible." As part of a team of seasoned researchers, he helped incoming high

school freshman with research and site visits. With this support, students delved into the history of the Underground Railroad in Nebraska. Read more about the project [here](#). In addition to his work over the summer, **Treygan** presented his own

research "Distant Learning: Migration in Medieval Europe and the Creation of Universities" at the 49th Annual European Studies Conference. The conference was held at UNO's Milo Bail Student Center on October 3rd.



## JEFF PRESTON AND TOM FORKE

Graduate students **Jeff Preston** (L) and **Tom Forke** (R) presented at UNL's Rawley Graduate Studies Conference held October 3rd-4th. **Jeff's** talk, "Interacting with History: Pop Culture's Effect on the Way We

Understand the Past" and **Tom's** presentation, "The Russian Civil War, The Red Terror, and the Question of Genocide" emerged from work they completed for their classes. As part of his

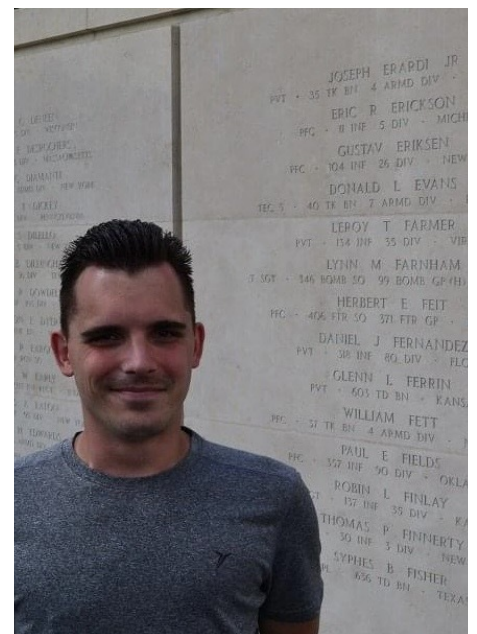
GRACA grant last spring, **Tom** did research for his thesis, "Religious Expression in the Soviet Gulag," at Stanford University. He successfully defended his thesis this fall and will be graduating on December 20th.

## FEATURED ALUMNI NEWS

### NICHOLAS TUMA, MA '23

Thanks to generous donor funding of the Nebraska National Guard Museum (Seward, Nebraska), **Nicholas Tuma** participated in a second tour to Europe this past summer. The tour traces the path that Nebraska National Guard units took through France, Belgium, and Luxembourg in 1944-1945. Nicholas joined the tour as a subject matter consultant.

On Nicholas's first trip with the organization in 2022, he collected material that contributed to his thesis, "From Cornrow to Hedgerow: The Nebraska National Guard in Peace and War, 1919-1945."



*Nicholas Tuma, European Tour, 2022*



## CONFERENCES

### Dr. Danielle Battisti

"Hidden Histories of Unauthorized European Migrations to the United States" - Social Science History Association Conference, Toronto, Canada (October 31-November 3)

"Community Engagement for Social Justice in the Humanities" - National Humanities Conference, Providence, RI (November 14-17)

### Dr. Mark Boxell

Commentor for panel "Managing and Manipulating Nature on the Great Plains" - Western History Association Conference, Kansas City, MO (October 24-25)

### Dr. Mark Celinscak

Conference of the Consortium of Higher Education Centers for Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Right Studies, Birmingham, AL (October 13-17)

### Dr. Martina Saltamacchia

"The New Pilgrim Guide: A Multimedia Final Project" - Midwest Medieval History Conference, University of Missouri, Kansas City, MO (September 20)

"The Devotion to the Holy Sepulcher and the Sacred Nail" - Mid-America Medieval Association Conference, University of Missouri, Kansas City, MO (September 21)

"Bringing the Hold Land Home: Sepulchers and Sacred Nails in Medieval Milan" - The Firth Quadrennial Symposium on Crusade Studies, Madrid, Spain (October 5)

"Community Engagement for Social Justice in the Humanities" - National Humanities Conference, Providence, RI (November 16)

## FEATURED FACULTY NEWS



Visiting Assistant Professor **Dr. David Korostyshevsky**

## DR. DAVID KOROSTYSHEVSKY

*History proudly welcomed visiting Assistant Professor Dr. Korostyshevsky to the department this fall. His research focuses on the intersection of law, medicine, and society, and this spring he will be teaching History of Medicine.*

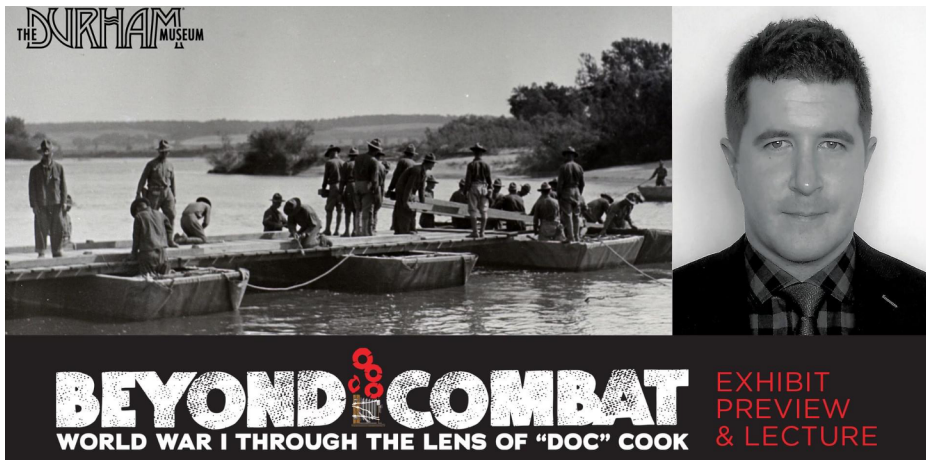
**Dr. Korostyshevsky** says, "I am thrilled to teach a course exploring the history of medicine and healthcare while building collaborative relationships with **UNMC**." This collaboration allows UNO students to experience rare books, historical manuscripts, medical artifacts, and materials culture firsthand. These materials demonstrate the changing nature of medical knowledge, theory, and practice. They also highlight the foundational role of allied professionals and the historically contingent nature of health and well-being throughout history. Through his course, students will gain a deeper appreciation of where modern healthcare and public health systems come from and the complex challenges they continue to face.

### History of Medicine

## DR. ANTHONY AFTONOMOS

In December 2023, adjunct faculty member **Dr. Anthony Aftonomos** traveled to Limassol, Cyprus to donate the archives of his grandmother, pioneering Cypriot educator and noted author, Eleni Nicolaidou Aftonomou to the Patticheion Municipal Museum Historical Archives & Research Centre of Limassol. Several significant Greek language historical volumes from the Eleni and Thrasyvoulos Aftonomos collection are currently housed at the University of Nebraska at Omaha History Department.

Pictured: Academic director Professor Mimis Sophocleous (Left) and staff member Eleni Paphiti (center) welcome **Dr. Aftonomos** (Right) to the Patticheion Municipal Museum Historical Archives & Research Centre in Limassol, Cyprus.



**Dr. Mark Celinscak**  
Key Note Speaker,  
Durham Museum

## DR. MARK CELINSCAK

On November 7th, **Dr. Celinscak** was the keynote speaker for The Durham Museum's preview of their exhibit *Beyond Combat: World War I Through the Lens of "Doc" Cook*. Addressing a full house, **Dr. Celinscak** described the

different types and techniques of propaganda used in the Great War and the impact it had on perception of the so-called Christmas truces. Students from **Dr. Celinscak's** First World War course received a

special shout out for contributing their project displays to the exhibit! The Durham Museum's exhibit *Beyond Combat: World War I Through the Lens of "Doc" Cook* runs until January 12, 2025.



## DEPARTMENT MINOR HIGHLIGHT: MEDIEVAL/RENAISSANCE STUDIES

The minor in Medieval/Renaissance Studies is designed to help students understand and appreciate a very broad and important era through the disciplines of history, English and other European languages, art history, history of music, history of science, Middle Eastern studies, philosophy, and theology.

Students explore the Medieval and Renaissance era and their crucial developments, from the invention of eyeglasses to the printing by moveable type, from Gothic cathedrals to the discovery of America, from the birth of university to the development of all the modern European vernacular languages, from King Arthur and Robin Hood to Shakespeare's plays and Michelangelo's paintings and sculpture.

See [the University website](#) for more information or contact **Dr. Saltamacchia** by [email](#).



*Associate Professor, **Dr. Martina Saltamacchia***

## DR. MARTINA SALTAMACCHIA

Last spring, **Dr. Martina Saltamacchia**, completed a 40+ hour training on "Inside-Out Pedagogy," becoming a certified Inside-Out Instructor with the ability to implement this pedagogy to all her courses at the Omaha Correctional Center. This program includes an innovative approach tailored to facilitate dialogue across differences by bringing together campus-based students with incarcerated students for semester-long courses held in prison. She was extremely grateful for the experience. "In this intensive training, being tutored by formerly incarcerated individuals and collaborating with enthusiastic educators from around the country was a truly humbling experience. The stories, the hope, and the shared reflections renewed my passion for education within the criminal justice system, reaffirming its transformative power." **Dr. Saltamacchia** serves on the Goldstein Center Executive Committee, as the Director of UNO Medieval and Renaissance Studies, and as History Graduate Program Chair.

## DR. MARY LYONS-CARMONA, RETIRED

**Dr. Mary Lyons-Carmona** taught for the Department of History as an adjunct for over twenty years.

Before she taught and mentored students, she played an unprecedented role in bringing a chapter of Habitat For Humanity to Omaha.

She was 24 years old when she started this massive endeavor. The path was not always smooth, but with the support of her family and her "tenacity and clarity of purpose" she succeeded.

**Dr. Lyons-Carmona** was recognized for her efforts in November by KMTV 3 News in their "Positivity The Heartland" segment. You can watch the interview and read about her history with Habitat For Humanity by clicking [here](#).



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**9th International  
Alexander the Great  
Symposium,  
September 4th-7th**

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## CO-SPONSORED EVENTS

In early September, thirty-four ancient history and archaeology scholars at the top of their field assembled online and in-person at UNO for the 9th International Alexander the Great Symposium: Repercussions of Violence under Alexander and the Successors. They represented universities in eleven countries and all share in common a passion for ancient Macedonia and the Hellenistic Successor Kingdoms.

**Dr. Jeanne Reames** (pictured third from right) brought the symposium to UNO. Many compliments flowed on everything from the modern venue of the Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center, to the lovely, walkable campus, to how delightful Omaha was, especially the Old Market and the Zoo. In addition to eleven panels, the symposium featured two keynote speakers, and

an experimental archaeology session with Macedonian sarrisai (pikes, pictured) held on the Pep Bowl. Several papers given at the conference will appear in *Macedon and its Influences: Narratives of Politics and War in Honor of Edward M. Anson* (Peeters, 2025), and in a special volume of *Karanos: Bulletin for Ancient Macedonian Studies* (UBA Barcelona, 2026).



## DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

### Tell All the Truth Project



**Dr. Mark Boxell** (above) and Dr. John Price (English) collaborated on a Tell All the Truth Project sponsored course. They partnered with City Sprouts and the Malcolm X Memorial Foundation to raise awareness for environmental justice and food security.

As part of their course, **Dr. Boxell's** American Environmental History students researched the environmental histories of Omaha's city parks, Native Lands, and other sites.

On December 5th, faculty, staff, students, and community members gathered at Omaha's Millwork Commons to celebrate the semester. Attendees had the opportunity to view student and community partner displays and enjoy food catered by House of Bah.



**Dr. Martina Saltamacchia** (L) and **Daphne Di Cinto** (R) at the screening of *Il Moro - The Moor*, Di Cinto's directorial debut. **Dr. Saltamacchia** is director of the Medieval/Renaissance Studies minor.

## CO-SPONSORED EVENTS

***The Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center's OPPD rooms were filled to capacity on November 19th*** for a screening of *Il Moro - The Moor*, a short film long-listed for the Academy Awards. The film is based on the true story of Alessandro de' Medici, the illegitimate son of an enslaved African woman and Pope Clement VII, who rises to become the head of the powerful Medici dynasty. An exclusive Q&A with director Daphne Di Cinto followed the screening.

Di Cinto brought this untold story to life and audience members heard first-hand how she uncovered the real Alessandro de' Medici. **Dr. Martina Saltamacchia** as director of the Medieval/Renaissance Studies minor was the force behind bringing this film and director to campus.

***Il Moro - The Moor, Directed by Daphne Di Cinto***



## BLAST FROM THE PAST - JO ANN CARRIGAN

**Dr. Carrigan** joined the Department of History in 1970 and became the first female full professor in the College of Arts and Sciences in 1971 teaching medical, social, and Southern regional history. Among many other scholarly accomplishments, she wrote a chapter on yellow fever for Disease and Distinctiveness in the American South (1988), multiple articles for the journal *Louisiana History*, chaired the Southern Historical Association's Membership Committee, and published her book The Saffron Scourge: A History of Yellow Fever in Louisiana, 1796-1905 in 1994.

**Dr. Carrigan** retired in 1996 but continued to serve on UNMC Ph.D. committees, present papers, and organize sessions on Medical and Public Health History at the Missouri Valley History Conference. In her lifetime, **Dr. Carrigan** advocated for equity for women in the workplace, fought against inequalities inside and outside of academia, and supported historical scholarship and public engagement. We are honored to award significant financial support to multiple graduate students each semester in her name.

## JO ANN CARRIGAN SCHOLARSHIP

We are pleased to offer the Jo Ann Carrigan Scholarship to incoming graduate students pursuing a Master's Degree in History every fall and spring semester of the academic year. The number of scholarships available during a given academic year may vary based on the availability of funding.

### The scholarship covers

- the tuition costs and associated fees of
- the recipient's first 18 credit hours and
- the recipient's last three credit hours of course work - if completed within a four-semester time frame.

### For more details

- on eligibility and application deadlines, please see our [website](#).



***Send us an email - we'd love to hear from you!***

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