



THE HISTORIAN

Spring 2024

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Hello everyone and happy May!

As I look back on the semester, I can't believe how much we managed to accomplish in only a few months! I know we're all looking forward to a much-deserved summer break after such an exciting and full semester.

Early on in the semester, I had a chance to catch up with some of our partners around town. **Dr. Saltamacchia** and I made the short trip to Oakland, Iowa to check out our newest internship partner, the [Nishna Heritage Museum](#). This off the beaten path heritage site and museum has an astounding collection of items that showcase home, farm, and business life on the Great Plains.

The collection mostly contains artifacts from the 19th and early 20th centuries, but they truly have it all - from pre-historic fossils to 1960s beauty pageant memorabilia. My favorite item was the turn of the century barbershop bath-tub. Combine that with the stage coach, bank vault, post office, jail cell, dentist office, and butcher shop recreated in the museum, the only thing you're missing to make your own Western is a Clint Eastwood cameo.

Our graduate student, **Alexis Ritterbush**, has been working this year with the museum director to write grants to preserve the museum's collections. If you get a chance, you can ask Alexis about her favorite part of the museum, or you can check it out yourself during the [Pottawattamie County Museum](#)



Nishna Heritage Museum



McGoogan Library

Pictured: History Department Chair, Dr. Danielle Battisti at the Nishna Heritage Museum and McGoogan Library

[Crawl](#) this summer.

I also had a great time catching up with History Department alum, **Carrie Meyer**, who now heads Special Collections and Archives at the [McGoogan Health Science Library at UNMC](#). Carrie gave me a tour of the library's many standing exhibits on the history of medicine and science.

Just of few of their impressive displays included interactive exhibits on Omaha practitioner Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte, the first Native American woman to receive a medical degree in 1889; World War I medicine, and a peak at just a few of their rare books. Stay tuned next year as we look for opportunities to help more of our UNO students work with some of the McGoogan's many rich resources and find internships at the archives.

In the rest of the newsletter, you will see many of the other major activities that went on this semester, including the [Winchell Lecture](#) and the [Fried Academy's](#) on campus programming in partnership with the U.S. Holocaust Museum. Those and other events were major attractions for students, educators, and community members.

But of all of our goings-on, I am most proud of our students. Congratulations to all of our graduates, grant-recipients, and award winners. Please make sure to check out all of their hard-work featured in the newsletter.

Finally, I will close with a heartfelt thank you to **Dr. Sharon Wood** upon her retirement this month for the many years of teaching, service, and academic excellence she has brought to UNO. If you were fortunate to have Dr. Wood as a professor, don't hesitate to send her your best wishes, I am sure she would love to hear from you!

FACULTY NEWS



Pictured: Dr. Mark Scherer and Dr. Sharon Wood, History Year End Celebration, April 18, 2024.

Retiring

Dr. Sharon Wood will retire this month after nearly 30 years with UNO's Department of History. During her tenure at UNO, she produced award winning research, held leadership roles in the department and university, mentored countless students, and has been a valued friend to colleagues. **Dr. Wood** was honored at our department year-end celebration on April 18th and on May 15th at the Lamanna Luncheon hosted by Women's & Gender studies.

Thank you for your service and congratulations, **Dr. Wood!**

International Alexander the Great Symposium IX, "Repercussions of Violence Under Alexander and the Successors"

Top-ranked specialists on Alexander, his father Philip II, the Successors, and ancient Macedonia, will be coming to Omaha this fall from around the globe. This conference, brought to UNO by **Dr. Jeanne Reames**, showcases cutting-edge research on ancient Macedonia and enables high-level scholarly exchange.

The symposium will have an experimental archaeology demonstration with Macedonian sarissai, three keynote speakers, and a roundtable with historical consultants for the recent Netflix series, "Alexander: The Making of a God."

Mark your calendars for September 4th-7th and keep an eye out for more information!



Pictured: Dr. Jeanne Reames working in her home office, January 2024.

FEATURED FACULTY DR. JEANNE REAMES

Associate professor of history and director of the Ancient Mediterranean Studies Program, Dr. Jeanne Reames, acted as the Series Historical Consultant for this spring's docudrama, *Alexander: The Making of a God*. The series premiered on Netflix on Wednesday, January 31st.

Originally a collaborative effort between Tailfeather Productions and the U.K. production company Lion TV before being picked up by Netflix, Dr. Reames was brought on board to advise producers, the showrunner, and writers regarding the historical accuracy of the six-part series. She reviewed scripts, suggested historians to interview onscreen, and provided insights to maintain authenticity in storytelling.

"My role is to assist them in approaching these stories from a historical perspective. Being a novelist myself, I would often tell them, 'You can't do this. How about this instead?' So, at times, I would present them with an alternative, and in some cases, a couple of different alternatives, for them to consider and potentially incorporate into the narrative," said Dr. Reames. She initially looked at "episode beats," which outlined the essential aspects of the series, followed by carefully reviewing the scripts.

Dr. Reames is currently working on an academic monograph titled *Playing for Keeps: Hephaestion and Krateros at the Court of Alexander the Great*.

Congratulations to Dr. Mark Celinscak! In March, his article, "[The ecology of liberation: animals, nature, geography](#)" was published in *Holocaust Studies*. (March 2024)

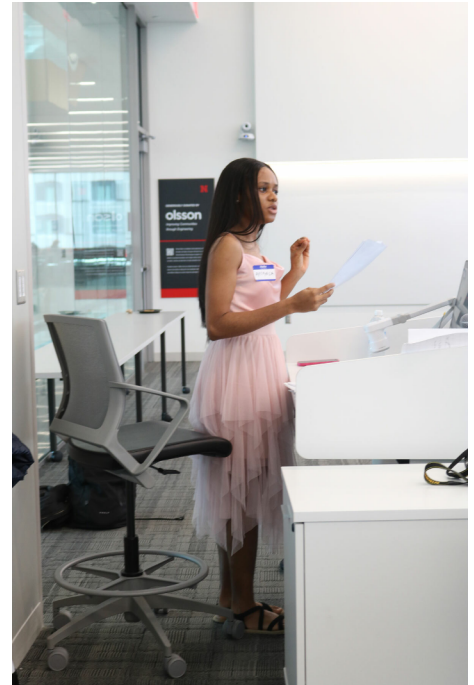
STUDENT NEWS - RESEARCH

Our graduate students presented research and projects in conferences and fairs this semester.

Graduate students and teaching assistants **Md Showkot Ali** and **Angela Ekwenye**, and graduate student **Mike Kelley** all participated in UNO's Annual Student Research and Creative Activity Fair on March 22nd. All three students were GRACA grant recipients and presented their Portfolio Projects to committees and community members. Our students were commended on their research and contributions to the fair.

Angela Ekwenye also presented "Historical Misinterpretation: Women As Silent Agents Against The Women Suffrage Movement" at the NU Graduate and Professional Student Showcase and Social in Lincoln. Held in Kiewit Hall, graduate and professional students from all Nebraska University campuses came together to showcase their research and socialize.

Graduate student and teaching assistant, **Treygan Russell**, presented at Northeastern University's History Graduate Student Association Conference in Boston. This year's theme, "Revolution, Resistance, and Resilience in History" examined how individuals championed causes and resisted oppressive measures through both large and small-scale movements. Treygan's talk "Path to the Plains: African American Migration and Recent Scholarship" was held on March 23rd.



Pictured: Angela Ekwenye, presenting at Kiewit Hall, UNL, April 5, 2024.



"I really want to stress there are so many jobs out there and people are starting to think about Historians differently..." - Dr. Crago-Schneider

APRIL LUNCH AND LEARN - DR. KIERRA CRAGO-SCHNEIDER

The Department of History is proud to support the regional partnership between the Sam and Frances Fried Holocaust and Genocide Academy and the [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum \(USHMM\)](#).

History Professor and Executive Director of the Fried Academy, **Dr. Mark Celinscak**, formed this partnership in 2018.

The theme of this year's regional program was "Physical and Social

Spaces of Exclusion: Nazi Germany and the Great Plains." Among a series of events ("Meyerhoff Lecture" page 6), our graduate students attended a Lunch and Learn on April 30th with Dr. Kierra Crago-Schneider the Campus Outreach Program Officer University Programs, for the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Research, USHMM.

This was an outstanding opportunity

for our graduate students! Dr. Crago-Schneider covered careers available outside of academia, how one becomes a public historian, how to best market skills gained at UNO, and how to network, among other topics.

Thank you to Dr. Crago-Schneider, **Dr. Mark Celinscak** and History Graduate Program Chair **Dr. Martina Saltamacchia!**

CONGRATULATIONS SPRING 2024 GRADUATES!

Bachelor of Arts

Carter Bruneau

Sierra Denos

Quincey Epley

Zachary Manning

Conner Mason

Cassandra Mendoza

Bailey Vanderpool

Bachelor of Science

William Copper

Dan Radicia

John Schnelker

Master of Arts

Michael Kelley

Nick Pribyl



Pictured: Alexis Ritterbush at the Nishna Heritage Museum, February 2024.

FEATURED STUDENT ALEXIS RITTERBUSH

The Department of History recently entered into an internship partnership with the Nishna Heritage Museum of Oakland, Iowa, and our current graduate assistant, Alexis Ritterbush, held the inaugural internship there this spring.

During her internship at the Museum, one of her responsibilities was assisting with grant applications and letters to help the museum fund improved experiences for visitors. She also helped create and manage events and videos for community/educational outreach at the museum. Her efforts helped the museum become a significant part of the Oakland community.

Her favorite aspect of the internship was collaboration and community building. She enjoyed working with the programs director and treasurer managing grant paperwork and event planning for the upcoming year. But the creative side of the position was also rewarding. Alexis liked editing scripts and videos about the museum on the museum's social media platforms and YouTube Channel.

Reach out to our History Internship Program
Coordinator, [Dr. Mark Boxell](#), for more
information on internships!



Jordan Gross

BS '22

Pictured: Jordan Gross, BS '22

FEATURED ALUMNUS JORDAN GROSS

Since high school, Jordan has been passionate about History, Political Science, and computers.

He followed these passions into his college career and is currently working at Do Space. Jordan started with Do Space in his final year at UNO, working part-time as a community technologist responsible for over 50 windows computers. After graduation in December 2022, he was promoted to a full-time community technologist position with responsibilities over the most complex equipment in the 3-D Lab (laser cutters, 3-D printer, CNC mill, etc.). In addition, He has taught classes, been a panelist at local events, and helped create a plan for the new 3-D lab makerspace for the [Omaha Central Library Project](#).

Jordan enjoyed his time at UNO taking all the classes his favorite professors had to offer, even if the subject area was something he had previously never thought about studying. While earning his History degree, he said, "I learned how to write, research, and communicate complicated ideas and concepts. These skills have helped me be successful in my current job in the non-profit STEM world."

"These skills have helped me be successful in my current job in the non-profit STEM world."

ALUMNI NEWS

Ben Whisenhunt MA '92

Ben earned his Pd.D in Russian History in 1997 at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He taught for 25 years and was a J. William Fulbright Senior Scholar in 2006. He has written or edited eight books on Russian history. In 2017, he co-founded an academic journal, Journal of Russian American Studies (JRAS). In 2022, he retired from College of DuPage and is currently a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Illinois at Chicago, a Teaching Professor at DePaul University, Co-Managing Editor of the Journal of Russian American Studies, and finishing a study of the life and times of American witness to the Bolshevik Revolution, Albert Rhys Williams.

Lieutenant Colonel Peter Taylor, U.S. Army Retired, BGS '73

Lt. Col. Taylor was a "Bootstrapper" at UNO after his assignment in Vietnam. He was inducted into Phi Alpha Theta in 1973 and was working on an M.A. in History under Professor Ert Gumm when he was reassigned. Among other duties during his military career, he was the Historian for Old Fort Omaha. Ultimately, Peter retired from the U.S. Army in 1994 and became a teacher, writer, and guest speaker on the Civil War and Vietnam. He hiked the Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine and has several published books available on Amazon. He currently lives in Clarksburg, West Virginia.

Thomas Hopkins, BA '62

Thomas attended Omaha University and recalled his favorite professor, Dr. A. Stanley Trickett. In the summer of 1960, Dr. Trickett, a Army Reserve Colonel on summer duty at the Pentagon, visited Thomas at the Marine Corps Officer Candidate School at Quantico, VA. Dr. Trickett took Thomas to dinner in Fredericksburg, VA. "I'll never forget what he did for me." Thomas was the first Marine Corp Officer in Omaha University's history to be commissioned a Second Lieutenant at graduation ceremonies in June, 1962.

CO-SPONSORED EVENTS

Wolfwalkers, March 5

Medieval and Renaissance Studies hosted "Deconstructing Gender Expectations in Cartoon Saloon's *Wolfwalkers*." Held at the CEC, attendees were treated to a historical introduction by Dr. Lisabeth Buchelt, a screening of *Wolfwalkers*, and discussion following the film.

John Trudell Lecture, April 18

Cindy Krafa (Sicangu Lakota), addressed "Native American Educational Sovereignty" at this year's John Trudell Lecture. Her talk focused on advocacy for Native American Students in higher education.

Constitutional Studies Forum, April 25

Historian and author of *La Duchesse*, Bronwen McShea gave a talk titled, "When Church and State Were United: The Public Roles of Powerful Women in Renaissance Europe."

Meyerhoff Lecture, May 1

Hosted by The Fried Academy and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Meyerhoff Lecture is one of the USHMM's oldest and most prestigious academic lectures. **Dr. Danielle Battisti** moderated his year's lecture, "Preserving Shared History: Art in Internment During the Holocaust." Speakers discussed the importance of art in documenting persecution and murder, while bearing witness to the atrocities and preserving the stories of those who endured the Holocaust.

Middle East Forum, May 8

Panel discussion on current affairs in the Middle East featuring Dr. Ramazan Kiliç and Dr. Michelle Black, Political Science, Mr. Sher Jan Ahmadzai, Director of the Center for Afghanistan Studies, **Dr. James Clark**, UNO Department of History, and Moderator Dr. Curtis Hutt, Religious Studies.

Kirwin Lecture, May 9

The Kirwin Lecture, presented by Samantha Barbas of the SUNY at Buffalo School of Law, featured lecture, "Actual Malice: Civil Rights and Freedom of the Press in *New York Times v. Sullivan*" and a panel discussion.



Pictured: Winchell Lecture attendees at the Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center, March 26th.

DEPARTMENT EVENTS - R.D. WINCHELL LECTURE

The R. D. Winchell Lecture was held on March 26th at the Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center. A short reception preceded the lecture where attendees had a chance to meet speaker Dr. Jan Grabowski. Dr. Grabowski, professor of history at the University of Ottawa, specializes in Jewish-Polish relations in German-occupied Poland during World War II and his talk focused on Holocaust distortion, particularly in Poland.

Dr. Grabowski defined Holocaust distortion as people, institutions, and states, denying their ethnic group, or their nation, had anything to do with the Holocaust. Using the massive resources of the state, they falsify the historical narrative in order to make it compatible with various national myths. In addition to Holocaust distortion, Dr. Grabowski touched on aspects of the Holocaust, genocide denial, complicity, politics, academic freedom, search for truth, and the distortion and manipulation of history via social media.

"Producing a 'Usable' Past: Holocaust Distortion and New Threats to the Memory of the Holocaust"



Pictured: Dr. Danielle Battisti, History Department Chair, addresses ceremony attendees at the Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center, April 18th.

DEPARTMENT EVENTS - YEAR-END CELEBRATION

This year's department celebration was held at the Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center on April 18th.

The turnout was wonderful! Student award recipients, their families, faculty, and friends of the department all came out to celebrate.

Students worked extremely hard this year and it showed in the record number of grant recipients, scholarship winners, and awardees. We are very proud of their efforts.

A big thank you to our donors and community members that continually support the Department of History and our students!

AWARD RECIPIENTS

- Md Showkot Ali (GRACA)
- Jessica Botts (GRACA)
- Carter Bruneau (Carrigan)
- David Clark (Carrigan)
- Angela Ekwenye (GRACA)
- Thomas Forke (GRACA, Shuflata Graduate)
- Tyler Gillis (Shuflata Fellowship)
- Victoria Grote (George B. Lake)
- Michael Kelley (Carrigan)
- Sarah Lehn (GRACA)
- Zachary Manning (Carrigan)
- Isabella Martin (Timothy S. Dunning)
- Graham McVicker (Carrigan)
- Jeffrey Preston (Carrigan, Sam Fried, Frederick Adrian)
- Jordan Ring (Sam Fried)
- Treygan Russell (Shuflata Fellowship)
- Wyatt Smith (A. V. Sorensen)
- Megan Streff (Shuflata Undergraduate, Frances Fried)
- Audie Thornton (Jerold Simmons)
- Bryan Yumul (FUSE)



BLAST FROM THE PAST!
Dr. Sharon Wood

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