Greetings from the Chair

I’ve enjoyed my five years as department chair, and I’m happy now to welcome our new chair: Shiho Imai. I’m sure you’ll join me in wishing her the best.

Dr. Thomas Baker

Honors and Awards

The department offers several awards to students. Congratulations to the following:

Department Scholars
Abigail Sexton & Mahala Nyberg

F. Roger Dunn Memorial Essay Award
Austin Raetz

Ilse J. Shaw History Award
Mahala Nyberg & Austin Raetz

Roger L. Briggs Award
Kanenishon Arquette & Jennifer Darlak

Robert and Katherine Briggs Scholarship
Bailey Durham & Abigail Sexton

Father James Pennock Scholarship
Alexis Michael

John Schwaller Award
Alexis Michael

Austin Raetz also received the Amelia Morey Essay Prize in Women’s and Gender Studies.

We thank our donors for their generous support for these awards and scholarships.

Phi Alpha Theta

The annual Phi Alpha Theta dinner was held at the Trinity Episcopal Church in Potsdam in April. The inductees and their guests were treated once again to a home-cooked dinner by Dr. Sheila McIntyre and Dr. M. J. Heisey. This year’s guest speaker was Dr. David Simkins, Assistant Professor in the School of Interactive Games and Media at the Rochester Institute of Technology. He is the author of *The Arts of LARP: Design Literacy, and Learning, and Community in Live-Action Role Play* (2015). Founded in 1921 nationally, Phi Alpha Theta is the international honor society in history. We are proud to announce the following inductees: Kylee Bicknell, Zachary Blackmer, Xzavier Carter, Bailey Durham, Reno Lenci, Shannon Mattice, William Rogozinski, Matthew Saddlemire, Abigail Sexton, Ingrid Taveras, and Colleen Twomey-Mulvey.
A double major in history and political science at Potsdam, Michael received his Ph. D. in political science at Binghamton University in 2013. After a one-year post-doc at the University of Alabama, he landed a tenure track job at Kansas State University in 2014. Michael’s teaching and research interests include international security, conflict, and foreign policy. His most recent research project looks at how the United States’ overseas military deployments affect their host state’s. Just this year he, along with three others at Kansas State, Boise State, and the University of Texas Austin, received a $1.2 million grant from the DOD to conduct research in Germany, Japan, South Korea, and England. “I’ve always enjoyed history, and I still use a lot of historical work in my current research,” he states, “Political science often focuses on generalizable trends or abstract theories, and I think drawing on historical work can be incredibly useful in helping students to better understand these concepts. It’s also great for identifying new and interesting research questions.” Michael was just promoted to Associate Professor with tenure this March. Congratulations!

**Featured Alumni**

Katelyn Legacy (’16) was featured on our campus website’s Alumni Spotlight. A double major in history and math with a minor in museum studies at Potsdam, she is completing her master’s in library science at Simmons College in Boston. In the interview, Katelyn shares her internship experience at Chateaugay Historical Society (where she now serves as a board member) and more recently, at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston. She has a job lined up at the Northeast Document Conservation Center in Andover, MA. The full interview can be accessed at the link below: https://www.potsdam.edu/alumni/spotlight/legacy
in ‘Fighting Words’ with Dr. McIntyre that I really learned to hone my writing and argumentative skills. The relationships I developed with some of the faculty within the History Department helped me understand the value in not only writing history, but the importance of making it accessible and understandable for future generations.” His advice: “I encourage every student to take advantage of any internship or opportunity, and to make valuable connections with their professors – believe me, it can start with a simple, ‘hi.”

Liam Kinglsey (’17) is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in African History at Indiana University. As a part of his funding package, he worked as an editorial assistant for the Journal of American History, the leading publication in the field of American history, last summer. “This might seem odd at first blush given that I study African history, but it would be difficult to overstate how valuable this experience has been to me as a young historian,” he writes. Copyediting articles and book reviews served as a crash course in good academic writing, while spot-checking footnotes forced him to develop an encyclopedic knowledge of Chicago-style citation, what Liam calls, “an essential skill for any historian.” He continues, “All told, in a contracting academic world with an ever-decreasing number of tenure-track professorships, this editorial assistantship has led me to widen my career horizons to include positions in academic publishing.” He credits his experiences in the SUNY Potsdam history department for giving him a strong foundation that has been immensely useful in his doctoral program: “Libbie Freed taught me the importance of letting African history reshape my understanding of history as a whole. Steve Stannish taught me to be rigorous and attentive in my analysis. Tom Baker taught me to think broadly (and forced me to learn Chicago style!). Sheila McIntyre, Geoffrey Clark, and Jim German taught me how to run a history course. And everyone I met in the department taught me through example how to be decent, fair, and passionate.” He concludes, “I miss the wonderful people I met in the SUNY Potsdam history department, but I carry the lessons I learned from them with me every day in my work as an academic.”
Faculty Presentations

Dr. Steven Stannish gave a talk at Clarkson University this February on the reign of the pharaoh Akhenaten (ca. 1352-1336 BC), one of the most controversial figures in Egyptian history. Akhenaten patronized the worship of a single god, the Aten or “Solar Disk,” and wrought changes to the politics, art, and official language of the Nile Valley. Modern scholars have characterized Akhenaten as a false prophet whose revolution offended and enraged his subjects. The talk explored the accuracy of this description, focusing on a later papyrus fragment, Rollin 213, which suggests a more complex reaction to the king’s “heresy.”


Get involved and stay connected. Please email Dr. Shiho Imai at imais@potsdam.edu or Laurie Peary at pearyll@potsdam.edu with any info that you would like to add to our homepage or newsletter. Visit us on Facebook.

History Events

The department hosted a number of events this April, including a “Presidential Scholars/Seminar Night,” where senior history majors, Alexis Michaels (‘18), Mahala Nyberg (‘18), and Austin Raetz (‘18) gave a presentation on their respective projects. The talk was followed by a Q&A session on their seminar experience. Dr. Sheila McIntyre graciously prepared some delightful nibbles for the occasion. We also welcomed Dr. David Simkins as a guest speaker for our “History for Gamers” event, co-sponsored by the Lougheed Applied Learning Grant.

At the Museum

The opening to Mahala Nyberg’s (‘18) exhibit at the Onondoga Historical Association (OHA) in Syracuse this April was a tribute to her extensive work on the project. “Donald R. Waful: The Remarkable Life Story of a Local Syracusan,” details Waful’s experiences before, during, and after World War II. The gala drew a sizable crowd, top administrators from the OHA, and 102-year-old Waful himself. The exhibit is up until November 25, 2018.