

HISTORY NEWS

HISTORY DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

FALL 2017



Dr. David A. Messenger

DR. MESSENGER TAKES OVER AS CHAIR

On August 15, 2017, Dr. David Messenger took up his post as the History Department's new chair. Dr. Messenger is a specialist in modern European history, with two published books on Francisco Franco. He was formerly a history and international studies professor at the University of Wyoming and arrived in Mobile after a three-day drive from Laramie.

The Department is excited and fortunate to have Dr. Messenger on the job. With the numbers of history majors declining nationwide, Dr. Messenger brings a determination to convince students that History is as important as ever for understanding how the world works and for developing important job skills such as writing and critical thinking. He is aware of USA's special place in the Mobile community, vowing "to maintain our strong record of serving first generation, working, and older students with a variety of offerings taught by a very dedicated and award-winning faculty." In recognition of the Department's role in training Mobile's history teachers, Dr. Messenger wants to expand the graduate program in history. Both graduate and undergraduate students at South, he has already observed, are "engaged in their work, willing to learn and to discuss what they are learning, and excited to be here, which is great for me in the classroom."

Dr. Messenger has found Mobile to be "a very welcoming community." With his wife and two sons, he has already visited several museums as well as the beach, and his entire family is becoming familiar with the local restaurant scene. We wish Dr. Messenger the greatest personal and professional success.

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Scholarship Student Visits Europe

Senior history major Shannon Lundgren participated in the History Department's USA in the UK program this summer, thanks to the Montgomery Carlton Stallworth Endowed Scholarship.

After learning about violence and gender in early modern England with Dr. Cage, Lundgren toured the continent. In addition to visiting the larger cities, Lundgren traveled off the beaten path to do research within her historical specialty: The Holocaust.

"Dr. Meola put me in touch with his contacts at Bergen-Belsen [site of a WW2

concentration camp], who generously helped me do research pertaining to a project I want to do next summer," Lundgren said. After visiting Bergen-Belsen, Lundgren also visited Westerbork, Sachsen-hausen, Auschwitz, and the Terezín ghetto.

"Seeing places that I have studied since I read *The Diary of Anne Frank* as a teenager was something I never thought I would be able to do," Lundgren said. "I can't thank the Stallworth family and Drs. Meola and Cage enough for giving me the chance to do this research."



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Letter from an Alumnus: Chris Dawson



Chris Dawson with former Secretary of Defense Ash Carter

“The historian must always at some point become aware of the desire to say that such a thing was good or bad, such an action right or wrong.”

— C.V. Wedgwood

I graduated from the University of South Alabama in May of 2008 with a B.A. in Psychology and a minor in History. After some time teaching English in South Korea, I was accepted to the U.S. Navy’s Officer Candidate School as a Surface Warfare Officer (SWO).

My first assignment was to a guided-missile cruiser forward deployed to Japan which, along with Korea, was a country whose history I had studied at South. Then, I spent half a year as the assistant to the Public Affairs Officer (PAO) of Commander, Naval Forces Japan (CNFJ), considered the “voice of the U.S. Navy in Japan.” As of 2017, I’ve been working in the computers and communications field as an Information Warfare Officer (IWO).

Having a background in history has served me well. While working and traveling abroad, understanding my host nation’s culture – along with the historical events that influenced that culture – has paid great dividends when it has come to establishing rapport with all the many people, associates and strangers, I must deal with overseas. Knowing Japanese history, for example, came in handy during my time as assistant PAO, when I often planned media engagements and drafted official statements to the Japanese public.

Like all military officers, I am continuously tasked with knowing and internalizing the historical occurrences that form the basis of the Navy’s tactics, techniques, and day-to-day procedures. Clichéd as the saying may now be, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

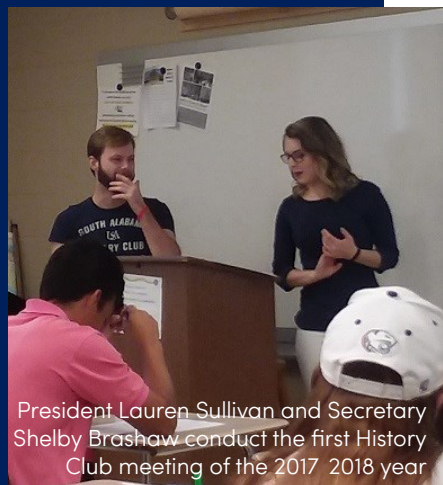
The History Club Plans a Busy Year

History Club President Lauren Sullivan wants to make her final term in office a memorable one. She arrived for the new academic year not only ready to carry out her presidency, but armed with a full agenda of meetings and events for the fall semester. In addition to the usual History Club business, regular meetings are now organized around thematic discussion topics. In the fall semester the Club will tackle the history of conspiracy theories, genocide, witchcraft, serial killers, history education, and winter holidays.

In addition to the regular meeting schedule, President Sullivan and her cabinet plan to run a float in the homecoming parade and will cap

off the semester with a trip to the National Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, Florida.

Plans are also in the works for the third annual Career Night to take place in the spring semester. All in all, the History Club has a busy year planned! A full schedule of meetings, topics, and events can be found on the History Club bulletin board on the third floor of the Humanities Building. The University of South Alabama History Club and Rho Theta chapter of Phi Alpha Theta invites you to join them.



President Lauren Sullivan and Secretary Shelby Brashaw conduct the first History Club meeting of the 2017-2018 year

USA History Faculty Fly High!

Two History professors will be presenting papers at conferences abroad. Dr. Williams will present “The Scholar as a Whole Person,” in London, in October. Dr. Messenger will present a paper on Allied and Nazi intelligence operations in Spain during WW2, in Vancouver, in November.

Kudos to Dr. Claire Cage, whose book, *Unnatural Frenchmen: The Politics of Priestly Celibacy and Marriage, 1720-1815* (University of Virginia Press), won the Baker-Burton Prize for the best first book on European History published between 2013 and 2017 from the European History Section of the Southern Historical Association!

“The golden iridescence of beauty is often distilled from the slime on murky water, and that is why we love the great and troubled river that is history.”

– Antal Szerb

2017 Stallworth Lecture Examines the Idea of Rights

This year’s Stallworth Lecture was delivered by Dr. Laura F. Edwards of Duke University, who addressed a full house at Laidlaw Performing Arts Center on “The Reconstruction of Rights: The Fourteenth Amendment and Popular Conceptions of Governance in the South.” Dr. Edwards has examined the records of local circuit courts and has found them to have been used to uphold “what was right” and thus preserve public order, through the early nineteenth century. During the Civil War and Reconstruction, Dr. Edwards asserted in her

talk, the idea of “what was right” evolved into the abstract notion of “rights.” The audience seemed most to appreciate Dr. Edwards’ descriptions of the grass-roots origins of the law, of courts held in mill houses and disputes over geese. The homey images highlighted the accessible quality of the law in bygone times, perhaps contrasting with our exalted notion of the law today. For bringing the past so intriguingly to life, Dr. Edwards’ talk was a huge success.



In Memory of our Friend Clarence Mohr

Dr. Clarence Mohr, who retired as chair in 2016, passed away on August 5 after a brief hospitalization.

To his many former students and colleagues, Dr. Mohr was a great mentor and friend, someone who would think of them in the course of his own research and send them the books, articles, photos, or curios he thought they would like. Many old students’ bookshelves and colleagues’ desks are still graced by keepsakes from Dr. Mohr.

Dr. Mohr was a special champion and benefactor for younger professors, whom he

helped to get established at crucial moments in their lives. If one is fated to know only one such benefactor in one’s life, hopefully, it will be someone like Dr. Mohr.

For both long-standing colleagues and graduate students of recent years, his willingness to go to bat for everyone was legendary and made the difference in many careers. Clarence Mohr leaves every successful student or scholar who ever worked with or for him as his legacy. He will be sorely missed and forever appreciated.



Dr. Clarence Mohr

Spring 2018 History Courses

- 101..... HY of Western Civilization I (various)
- 102..... HY of Western Civilization II (various)
- 104..... HY of Asian Civilization I (Miller)
- 135US History to 1877 (various)
- 136 US History since 1877 (various)
- 312 America in the 1960s (Lombardo)
- 357Europe since 1945 (Messenger)
- 382WJews and Modern American Culture (Meola)
- 384Japanese Film (Miller)
- 390Special Topics: History of Ancient Rome (Good)
- 435/535 Civil War and Reconstruction (McKiven)
- 442Research Seminar: Trials in History (Cage)
- 454/554.....British Empire (Strong)
- 457/557 Studies in European History: War and Memory in 20th–Century Europe (Messenger)
- 461/561 Studies in Asian History: Women in Asian History and Literature (Miller)
- 465/565..... Studies in Islamic History: Gender and Sexuality in Islam (Williams)
- 541..... Major European Thinkers (Kozelsky)
- 590 American Foreign Policy (McWilliams)



Calendar of Upcoming History Events

The History Department is co-organizing a panel discussion on “Racial Discrimination and Institutionalized Violence in Nazi Germany and the Jim Crow South” on Tuesday, October 10, from 6:00 to 7:30 PM, in the Terrace Room of the Student Center. Dr. Meola will be a speaker. The event is free and open to the public.

Next semester’s Mahan Lecture is set for Tuesday, March 13, 2018. Dr. Erica Armstrong Dunbar, of Rutgers University, will speak on “The Founding of a Nation through the Eyes of the Enslaved: The Life of Ona Judge.” Time and venue to be announced.

The USA History Department offers a wide variety of exciting courses, covering the histories of Eastern and Western Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, as well as the history of the United States and the South. Faculty are committed to teaching research and writing skills and the critical thinking that is becoming even more necessary for survival in the information age. Now, more than ever, a history education is a prerequisite for an informed global citizenry.

Please visit us online or in person and see what History has to offer!



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