

# HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS



Volume 2 | Spring 2022



## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR – DR. CAROLYN SHAPIRO- SHAPIN

Past and present have merged eerily in History of Medicine classes over the past two years. I regularly assign Kristy Wilson Bowers' article, "Balancing Individual and Community Needs: Plague and Public Health in Early Modern Seville."<sup>[1]</sup> While her article appears regularly on the class's "Three Favorite Course Readings and Why?" discussion board, the students' reasons for selecting the article have evolved. My students did (and still do) enjoy Bowers' story of how Seville's city counselors crafted a porous quarantine that kept plague at bay and allowed needed foodstuffs into the city, but now their responses express a true admiration for the creativity and resilience displayed in Seville and a recognition that we might learn from the city counselors' courage. Perhaps we value in the past what we strive most for in the present. Our recent celebrations of our Phi Alpha Theta inductees and graduates make abundantly clear that at Grand Valley State University, our History and Social Studies students, our staff, and our faculty possess an abundance of such courage, creativity, and resilience.



[1] Kristy Wilson Bowers, "Balancing Individual and Community Needs: Plague and Public Health in Early Modern Seville," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 81 no 2. (2007): 335-358.



## 2022 PHI ALPHA THETA INDUCTEES

Emily B. Dudley  
Taylor L. Ferrier  
Matthew Gilmore  
Benjamin Joseph  
Alison McCarthy  
Chloe Plescher  
Elizabeth Raven  
Madison Terpstra

## 2022 AWARD WINNERS

### Breen Prize

Meaghan McGilvray

### Frances A. Kelleher Memorial Scholarship

David Knarian

### Glenn A. and Betty J. Niemeyer History Scholarship

Coltrane Bodbyl-Mast, Tess Dornan, Chloe Plescher, Daisy Soos

### Jo Ellyn Clarey Women's History Scholarship

Rebekkah Bowen

### Outstanding Major in History

Rebekkah Bowen

### High Merit in History

Ysabela Golden, Grace Marz

### Outstanding Major in Social Studies

Niabh Keenan

### High Merit in Social Studies

Emily Dudley



Meaghan McGilvray



David Knarian



Coltrane Bodbyl-Mast



Tess Dornan



Daisy Soos



Rebekkah Bowen



Ysabela Golden

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## GREAT LAKES HISTORY CONFERENCE

The Great Lakes History Conference took place on October 22-23, 2021. Delayed due to COVID in 2020, the event featured five sessions on the history of sociability across time and space, as well as the keynote address by Dr. William Woys Weaver on the origins of the pretzel. Thankfully the conference ran smoothly, with co-chairs Dr. Nathan Kapoor and Dr. Peter Dobek going to extraordinary lengths to ensure that the hybrid format functioned as planned. With over 200 people registered, this was one of the largest conferences ever hosted by GVSU's History Department, and the quality of the sessions was particularly gratifying. Thanks to all the students, faculty, and staff who participated, and we are looking forward to seeing everyone next year!

## HISTORY DAY

The GVSU History Department continues its support for the History Day program. The 2022 Theme was "Debate and Diplomacy in History." History alumni may remember judging middle and high school entries in their last years at GVSU. History Day now has five types of entries: exhibits, papers, performances, documentaries, and now websites. It continues to be an excellent way for teachers to have students learn history by "doing history." Our regional contest was on March 19, 2022. Four students in our region made it through State finals and are National finalists!

## FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Scott Stabler** co-authored a journal article with an alumni, Eleanor Gleason, who is currently the archivist for the state of Texas. "The Odd Couple: William T. Sherman, O.O. Howard, Loyalty, Soldierly, and the Freedpeople" in *The Journal of America's Military Past*, 46: 1 (Winter 2021), 5-24.

**Louis Moore** was recently interviewed by the New York Times for a story about Muhammad Ali's popularity with filmmakers and authors.

**Carolyn Shapiro-Shapin's** research on Pearl Kendrick and Grace Eldering and their development of the whooping cough vaccine was featured in the March 2022 issue of the Smithsonian Magazine.

**Alice Chapman** was granted a Residency Research Fellowship for Fall 2022 and Winter 2023 from The Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies at the University of Michigan.

**Jason Crouthamel** published a monograph on religion in the trenches, *Trauma, Religion and Spirituality in Germany During the First World War*, with Bloomsbury Press in November 2021.



## STUDENT REFLECTION - DAISY SOOS

Whenever I tell someone, I am double majoring in nursing and history they shoot me a puzzled look. To most people, the two are completely unrelated. Essentially, history can be understood as political science with the benefit of hindsight. I would argue that politics are inseparable from any discipline and important to be aware of. History teaches a different kind of critical thinking that scientists sometimes lack: it teaches us to recognize cultural, political, social, and economic factors involved in any situation and related issues. I plan to use my history-informed background while working as a nurse to analyze contemporary issues in healthcare to raise awareness and be involved in politics/community projects to develop solutions.

If I had not taken AP history courses in high school, I would not be able to complete this double-major in four years. I entered my freshman year with almost half of my history credits done, so now I just take one history course per semester with my nursing courses. Unfortunately, that means I am over 15 credits almost every semester and also have to take summer courses, but it is nice to have a history class amidst all the science-heavy courses. My first semester being accepted in the nursing program has been the busiest of them all, as some days I am waking up at 5am for clinical and taking care of patients for 6 hours, and later in the evening I am writing a discussion post about how the Mexican Revolution failed to fundamentally improve the political rights of and socioeconomic circumstances for the majority of Mexicans.

I have thoroughly enjoyed both majors so far in my academic career, and it has been very rewarding to build a community and make an impact in each of my programs here at GV. Don't tell KCON I said this, but my nursing advisor asked if I felt more like a nursing or a history major, and I said history! The smaller class sizes of the history major has allowed me to make connections with the students and staff in every class I have taken so far. I have loved every professor I had and am thankful for the support and encouragement from all of the history staff. I am excited for the rest of my journey here at GV, and hope to continue to be deeply involved in both my great majors.



## A REFLECTION ON TEACHING – DR. PAUL MURPHY

In my senior capstone class (HST 495), which I entitled “The Purpose of History,” we tackled *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story* (2021), the book-length version of the New York Times project conceived by the journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones commemorating the four-hundredth anniversary of the first documented arrival of Africans in the English mainland colonies, to get at the role of history in the tempestuous debates about race, ethnicity, and national identity currently re-shaping our politics. Hannah-Jones’s powerful introduction frames the project, which is itself an attempt to “reframe” American history around race, treating “slavery and anti-Blackness as foundational to America,” through a consideration of her own reconciliation with American identity.

In our class discussions, students were deeply sympathetic to the goals of the project. One future teacher reflected on the deficits of her own education and discussed the challenge of incorporating the full diversity of the American historical experience while working within the framework of Michigan’s social studies standards. Students found the stories powerful and were especially drawn to the profound meaning of the work for African Americans, including one ninety-year-old woman who hugged Hannah-Jones with tears in her eyes and thanked her for releasing the shame she had felt about a history in which her people appeared only as laborers. “I always knew the truth,” she told Hannah-Jones. “But I didn’t have the facts of what happened.” Yet after having grappled with questions of objectivity and the use of evidence in class, many students were troubled by the project’s journalistic framing of the topics. We read critical perspectives on the project, including historians critical of Hannah-Jones’s controversial argument that “one of the primary reasons some of the colonists decided to declare their independence from Britain was because they wanted to protect the institution of slavery.” I was impressed by the students’ engagement with the controversy. Some championed the expansion of the “canon” of historical subjects while others chafed at what they considered political bias. One future teacher determined to teach the controversy in class. Another student noted that the revisionists’ claim to base their interpretation on “factual evidence” is true, but the issue is not so much the facts as the selection of evidence, creation of narrative logic, and historical interpretation. The lesson: GVSU students are eager to engage challenging subjects and ready to change the conventional narrative, but they approach the issues with a careful attention to evidence and use the critical skills they feel they have learned in their college courses.

## THREE MINUTES WITH DR. TAMARA SHREINER

*Associate Professor of History and Assistant Dean for Curriculum Approval, Content Teacher Education, and Assessment*

Dr. Shreiner’s research focuses on teaching and learning about data visualizations, such as timelines, graphs, and maps, in history and social studies education. She is currently working with colleagues in statistics and computer science to develop social studies-specific tools and resources for teaching data literacy, and analyzing articles across three history journals to determine how historians use and integrate data visualizations within their writing.

**Where did you grow up?** Port Huron, MI

**Do you have any kids/pets?** Three kids and two dogs, Asker and Mabel

**Harry Potter or Lord of the Rings?** Harry Potter

**DC or Marvel?** DC

**Star Wars or Star Trek?** Star Wars

**Favorite savory snack?** Popcorn

**Favorite dessert?** Carrot Cake

**Movie you rewatch the most?** The Godfather

**Favorite song to dance to in the car?** “Billie Jean” by Michael Jackson

**What do you listen to on your way to work?** Audiobooks

**Fictional book recommendation?** The Vanishing Half by Brit Bennett

**Favorite sport to watch?** Basketball


**Favorite sport to play?** Basketball

**Favorite concert you’ve been to?** The Grateful Dead with Jerry Garcia in Las Vegas 1995. Dave Matthews Band opened.

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