The mission of the History Faculty is to promote advanced research and undergraduate teaching in a broad range of fields, including American, ancient, East and South Asian, European, Latin America, Middle Eastern, and Russian history. The faculty includes joint appointments in Urban Studies and in Science, Technology, and Society, and it participates in the joint PhD program in the History and Social Study of Science and Technology.


Ford international professor of history John Dower was awarded a Mellon distinguished achievement award to continue work on his project called “Visualizing Japan.” Professor Jacobs received a grant from the Class of ’51 Fund for Excellence in Education, the Class of ’55 Fund for Excellence in Teaching, the Class of ’72 Fund for Educational Innovation,
and the Class of ‘99 Fund for Excellence in Student Learning. Professor Capozzola was awarded the J. Franklin Jameson Fellowship from the American Historical Association/Library of Congress. Professor Ritvo has been elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.


Professors Maier, Perdue, Ritvo, and Jacobs participated in the joint PhD program in the History and Social Study of Science and Technology by teaching graduate seminars and reading courses, setting general examinations, and supervising dissertations. Professors Dower, Ritvo, and Kenan Sahin dean Philip S. Khoury advised Harvard graduate students in Japanese, British, and Middle Eastern history, respectively.

History enrollments totaled 318 in the fall semester and 453 in the spring. One history major graduated in June 2005. Morgan Sonderegger’s senior project, supervised by Professor Ravel, was entitled “Usage and Utility: The Spread of French in Early Modern Europe.”

Four undergraduates submitted winning essays in the annual Bruce Mazlish History Prize: Morgan Sonderegger for chapter 3 of his thesis, “Language in Diplomacy”; Zach Gazak for “Mathew Brady and the Civil War”; Brian Campbello Chase for “Dishonor before Ruin: Franklin, Jay, and the U.S. Treaty with Britain in 1782”; and Lindsay Kuo for “The Evolving Female Societal Role in Margaret Mitchell’s Gone with the Wind.”

The History Faculty had a retreat at the Enfield Shaker Inn, September 10–11, 2004, to discuss History’s future curriculum. Professors Ritvo, Perdue, McCants, Ravel, and Jacobs supervised Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program projects. Professor McCants served as president of MIT’s Phi Beta Kappa chapter. Professor Watson was a housemaster for Baker House. Professor Wood served as chair of the Women’s Studies Program. Professors Maier and Ciarlo served as chairs of the Bruce Mazlish History Prize Committee. Professor Jacobs served on the Humanities, Arts, and Social Science Oversight Committee and the HASTS Graduate Curriculum Committee. Professor Maier served on the Committee on the Undergraduate Program. Professor Perdue served on the Faculty Committee on the Library System and on a subcommittee of the Committee on General Institute Requirements, Science and Engineering Requirements. Professor McCants chaired the Graduate Consortium on Women’s Studies.

Harriet Ritvo
Section Head
Arthur J. Conner Professor of History

More information about the History Faculty can be found online at http://web.mit.edu/history/www/.