

History Section

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 American, Middle Eastern, and Russian history. The faculty includes joint appointments in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning and the Program in Science, Technology, and Society, and it participates in the joint doctoral program in History, Anthropology, and Science, Technology, and Society (HASTS).

Professor Eric Goldberg, a specialist in the early Middle Ages (formerly of Williams College), will join our faculty full-time effective July 1, 2009, at the rank of associate professor with tenure. Professor Goldberg had been a visiting professor in the department in spring 2008 when he taught 21H.306 The Middle Ages: 300–1300 and a new class, 21H.308 The Vikings, which turned out to be extremely popular with MIT undergraduates.

We will also welcome Christopher Leighton, assistant professor of history, specializing in modern Chinese history with secondary study fields in Chinese history between the 8th and 17th centuries and American history since 1800. He recently completed his PhD at Harvard University with a dissertation titled “Making Capitalism Red: Cares, Capitalism, and Culture in China, 1949–58.” Professor Leighton will be on leave completing a post-doc at Stanford University for AY2010 and will arrive in Cambridge for the 2010–2011 academic year. We are very excited at the prospect of adding a modern Chinese focus to our curriculum.

Cognizant of the need to rethink both our undergraduate curriculum and our participation in the HASTS doctoral program in light of staff changes as well as the recently adopted changes in the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences General Institute Requirements, the department has continued to assess our curriculum in a process begun at our planning retreat in June 2008. We continue to feel a strong commitment to the specialized doctoral training offered by the joint HASTS program, recognized this year in our first national ranking among doctoral programs in history (listed at 28th). Yet we also desire to become a full and equal partner in the administration of the program. We began work on reordering and renumbering subject listings to better reflect requirements for our undergraduate major and minor and to better highlight the full range of our geographical specialties. We would like to pursue a dialog with other School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (SHASS) programs with course offerings in South and East Asian topics to consider changing the minor and major departure programs in East Asian Studies to Asian Studies more broadly. This would incorporate the growing strength in South Asian studies at MIT.

Professor Chris Capozzola, who received tenure this year, published an article, “Minutemen for the World: Empire, Citizenship, and the National Guard, 1903–1924,” in *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State* (A.W. McCoy and F. Scarano, eds., Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009). He gave presentations at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque; the Center for the United States and the Cold War at New York University; and the workshop Urban Development in a

Globalising World: Overcoming the Formal/Informal Divide, held by the Irmgard Coninx Foundation in Berlin, Germany, where he presented “Informality as a Historical Moment in Metropolitan Manila: Power, Politics, and Temporality.” Professor Capozzola also served as a consultant for the MCAS history and civics test items, and was interviewed for *The White House: Behind Closed Doors*, which aired on the History Channel in November 2008, and for *Baseline* magazine about how presidents have used technology in the White House. Finally, Professor Capozzola chaired the Faculty Committee on the Library System, and served on the Council on Work and Family and its Workplace 2.0 subcommittee. He served as chair of the Curriculum Committee of the Program on Women’s and Gender Studies, and also served on the Truman Scholarship Committee and the I. Austin Kelly Prize Committee for SHASS.

Professor Meg Jacobs won a Radcliffe Institute fellowship at Harvard University for academic year 2008–2009. Professor Jacobs published “The Conservative Struggle and the American Energy Crisis” in *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s*, (Bruce Schulman and Julian Zelizer, eds., Harvard University Press, 2008) and “Swinging Too Far to the Left,” coauthored with Julian Zelizer, in *Journal of Contemporary History*, 43 (2008): 689-693.

Professor Pauline Maier was invited to attend the Engelsberg Seminar, held June 11–13, 2009, in Sweden, and gave a short paper on the idea of America in the 18th century, the founding ideas, and how and to what degree 18th-century Americans were concerned with these ideals. She continues to revise her manuscript, tentatively titled “The People and the Constitution: An American Story, 1787-1788,” which tells the story of the constitution’s ratification state by state. The book is scheduled for publication by Simon and Schuster in 2010. In addition, she served as chair of the 2009 Pulitzer Prize Panel in American History, which provided nominations for three books published in 2008.

Professor Jeffrey Ravel coorganized a symposium at the Clark Art Institute last fall. A description of the symposium can be found at <http://www.clarkart.edu/visit/event-detail.cfm?nav=3&ID=9703>. Professor Ravel also won a prestigious Joint Information Systems Committee/National Endowment for the Humanities Transatlantic Digitization Collaboration grant for his joint Comédie-Française Registers project with Oxford-Brookes.

Professor Harriet Ritvo completed numerous publications this year among which the most important include: “Resisting System: Britain, Buffon, and the Avoidance of Linnaeus,” *Proceedings of the Buffon Heritage Conference*; “The Animal Turn in British Studies,” *Proceedings of Anglistentag 2007*; “Humans and Humanists,” *Daedalus*, 2009; and “The Darwinian Eye” (a review of “Endless Forms: Charles Darwin, Natural Science, and the Visual Arts” exhibition and catalogue), *Science*, March 27, 2009. She also reviewed manuscripts for Cornell and Yale University Presses as well as numerous journals, and six published book reviews. While on sabbatical, Professor Ritvo served as the Simon visiting professor at the Centre for the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine at Manchester University for a month in spring 2009. She also served as vice president/president elect of the American Society for Environmental History. She continues to organize the MIT Seminar on Environmental and Agricultural History and

advise numerous doctoral students in the HASTS program and other doctoral programs in the Boston area. Finally, she served as co-director of a dissertation development seminar on animal studies for the Social Sciences Research Council Advisory Committee, as a TeacherServe instructional guide on the role of science and technology in US history for the National Humanities Center, and as a faculty associate at the Harvard Center for European Studies.

Professor Haimanti Roy's article "A Partition of Contingency? Public Discourse in Bengal, 1946–47" was accepted for publication in *Modern Asian Studies*. Professor Roy presented (in absentia) "Creating Indians: Refugees and Citizens in Post-Partition India" at the Association for Asian Studies Conference in Chicago in March 2009. She also presented "Citizenship and Identity in Post-Colonial South Asia" as a panel organizer for that same conference, "The Partition of India and its Aftermath" at the University of Wyoming in Laramie in October 2008, and "Women in the Partition of India" for the Women's Studies Department at the University of Wyoming.

Professor Craig Wilder, a new member of the history faculty this year, continued his strong commitment to both research and service. In February 2009 he was invited to give the commencement address for the Bard College Prison Initiative, where he gave two lectures at two different New York state prisons. He also completed his long-time work with the Bedford-Stuyvesant Boys and Girls High School in Brooklyn and the Weeksville Heritage Center museum. This entailed a semester-long research course for a group of seniors that ended in a museum exhibit and opening. Other museum work included the final planning for the opening of the new museum at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. In addition to his service on the board of the New York State Historical Association, Professor Wilder also completed a two-week Teaching American History program with teachers at Queens College, City University of New York, and participated in a Teaching American History program refresher course in February 2009. He finished final revisions to a new book for Bloomsbury Press tentatively titled "The Matriculating Indian and the Uneducable Negro: The Origins of the American College."

Professor Elizabeth Wood received alumni class funds for her teaching project "Bringing Russian and Soviet History into the Digital Age." She gave two conference talks: "Vladimir Putin: Masculinity and HyperMasculinity" for the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies in November and "Life in Brezhnev's Leningrad" in the Philology Department at St. Petersburg State University in July 2009. She was in St. Petersburg, Russia, in summer 2009 serving as a visiting professor in the Harvard summer school program there. She also served as the program chair for the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies conference during this past academic year and on the McMillan-Stewart faculty chair search committee at MIT.

Anne McCants received the Elizabeth Topham Kennan award for outstanding educational achievement from the Mount Holyoke College Alumnae Association in May 2009. She has also received support from the SHASS Dean's Fund for Educational Innovation for spearheading a new interdisciplinary course in ancient and medieval studies. She continued her teaching collaboration with Susan Silbey of Anthropology for the MIT Portugal Program, co-teaching the Engineering Systems Research Methods

course for the current cohort of 17 Portuguese doctoral students in engineering systems design. She served as a trustee of the Economic History Association and the economics network coordinator for both the Social Science History Association and the European Social Science History Conference. She presented work on the history of colonial goods consumption at the Portuguese Economic History Association meetings in November, as well as work on her new project on financing Gothic cathedral construction at the World Economic History Congress in Utrecht, Netherlands, in July. She will have publications forthcoming in *Social Science History* on gendered wage inequality during the Industrial Revolution and in *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* on recent developments in demographic history as part of an invited special retrospective volume on the crisis of the 17th century. At the Institute, Professor McCants served as the faculty co-chair of the Council on Family and Work, as a member of the Dean for Undergraduate Education's advisory board, as a member of the Committee on Student Life, as a member of the Budget Task Force subgroup on student life, as the faculty representative to the Truman Scholarship competition, and as a member of the Presidential Fellowships Committee.

History enrollments totaled 332 in the fall and 288 in the spring. Three history majors graduated in June 2009. Three undergraduates submitted winning essays in the annual Bruce Mazlish History Prize: Aubrey Samost for "[Youngsters and Their New-Fangled Gadgets: How Children in a Household Helped Spread Ownership of Radios](#)," Sam Hollander for "[Parthia and the Fall of the Republic](#)," and Pall Kornmayer for "[The Technology of Mercy: From the Gallows to the Chair](#)."

The Sahin Lecture Series for 2008–2009 included a special presentation in March by J. B. Shank, associate professor of history at the University of Minnesota, called "Making Enlightenment: Newtonianism in France c. 1700."

Anne E.C. McCants
Section Head
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More information about the History Section can be found at <http://web.mit.edu/history/www/>.