

History Section

In AY2018, the MIT History faculty continued to excel in the areas of scholarship, teaching, and public engagement. MIT historians published scholarship grounded in deep archival research and employed cutting-edge methodologies. Faculty taught a wide array of undergraduate subjects, and helped to train a talented cohort of graduate students in the History, Anthropology, and Science, Technology and Society (HASTS) doctoral program. They reached out to public audiences in the US and around the world. MIT History seeks to give MIT students a full educational experience that will prepare them to be engaged members of their local communities and an increasingly global society.

Highlights

The MIT History faculty were recognized for excellence in AY2018 in several ways. The MIT Corporation approved the promotion of Christopher Capozzola to the rank of full professor, and the promotions of Lerna Ekmekçioğlu and Hiromu Nagahara to the rank of associate professor with tenure, all effective on July 1, 2018. Professor Capozzola and Merritt Roe Smith (a member of the faculty in the Program in Science, Technology, and Society who holds an affiliate appointment in History) were named MacVicar Fellows, the highest teaching distinction the Institute bestows on members of its faculty. They join Will Broadhead, Anne McCants, and Emma Teng as active members of the section who have received this distinction. Elizabeth Wood was awarded a Levitan Teaching Award from the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (SHASS) for excellence in undergraduate teaching. Meghan Pepin, the history undergraduate administrator, received an Unsung Hero Award from the School for Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (SHASS).

Members of the History faculty hosted three major academic gatherings at MIT during the past year. In the fall, Eric Goldberg welcomed the 44th annual meeting of the New England Medieval Consortium. The majority of the presentations focused on Professor Goldberg's area of expertise, the Carolingian period of the European Middle Ages. In the spring, Professor Ekmekçioğlu and Melissa Bilal, a visiting scholar in the section, invited specialists in the history of 19th- and 20th-century Armenian History to participate in a two-day workshop devoted to their ongoing print and digital project, "Feminisms in Armenian." Also in the spring, Jeffrey Ravel organized the biannual symposium of the New England Regional World History Association; the theme was "Architectural History and the Maritime Past in Global Perspective." Anne McCants continued preparations to host the triennial gathering of the World Economic History Congress, scheduled to take place in Cambridge in early August 2018. More than 1,500 economic historians are expected to attend this conference.

History benefitted from the presence of several distinguished visitors in the past year. Professor Kenda Mutongi of Williams College, a leading historian of 20th-century Africa, was a Martin Luther King Visiting Professor, during which time she pursued research on the history of education in 20th-century Kenya and taught an undergraduate survey of modern African history. In AY2019, she will join the MIT History faculty on a permanent basis as its first-ever appointment in the field of African history. Melissa Bilal, a specialist in the field of Turkish and Armenian history and ethnomusicology

and a close collaborator of Professor Ekmekçiöğlü, was in residence for six months. Emily O’Gorman, a senior lecturer at Macquarie University who specializes in the environmental history of Australia, spent two months with MIT History. Wendell Adjetey and Sonia Gomez were SHASS Predoctoral Diversity Fellows. While in residence, Adjetey completed his Yale University history doctorate, entitled “From the North Star to the Black Star: African North Americans and the Search for a Homeland in Canada, 1919–1985.” He will have a post-doctoral fellowship next year at Harvard University’s Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, after which he will take up a tenure-track position at Providence College in Rhode Island. Gomez, a doctoral candidate at the University of Chicago, also completed her thesis, entitled “From Picture Brides to War Brides: Race, Gender, and Belonging in the Making of Japanese America.” Next year, she will hold a postdoctoral fellowship at the Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard University.

History again co-sponsored the Seminar in Environmental and Agricultural History, a series organized by Harriet Ritvo and Deborah Fitzgerald, a historian in the Program in Science, Technology, and Society (STS). Speakers from the following schools presented research: Concordia University; Wesleyan University; the University of California, Santa Barbara; Cambridge University, Macquarie University (Australia); and the College of William and Mary. The World History Seminar, run by Sana Aiyar, also maintained an active schedule, welcoming scholars from Colgate University, New Mexico State University, the University of Witwatersrand (South Africa), Grand Valley State University, Keio University (Japan), and the independent scholar and writer Charles C. Mann.

In the area of digital humanities, History hosted the SHASS digital postdoctoral fellow, Douglas O’Reagan, for a second year. The section and its faculty actively support digital humanities projects such as the [Comédie-Française Registers Project](#), Feminisms in Armenian, and the Visualizing Maritime History Project. The History Section looks forward to playing a major role in the newly established SHASS digital humanities initiative, funded by a substantial grant from the Mellon Foundation. In addition, Chris Capozzola completed work with MITx on a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) entitled “Visualizing the Philippines,” and Jeffrey Ravel, Hiromu Nagahara, and Sana Aiyar received a start-up grant from Office of Digital Learning to support a four-week experiment in co-teaching world history online with Keio University in Tokyo. This collaboration will launch in fall 2018.

History continued its commitment to issues of equity and diversity at MIT. Faculty, evenly balanced between women and men, researches and writes about the history of times and places around the world from local, national, transnational, and global perspectives. Faculty members bring these concerns into classrooms and are committed to exposing students to the diversity of past human and animal experiences on the planet—so that they may be increasingly efficient stewards of our natural and political heritages. Each semester, History appoints an equity and diversity officer whose role it is to follow these concerns and report to History faculty periodically on relevant MIT community-wide conversations.

Teaching

The History faculty takes great pride in the quality of its innovative graduate and undergraduate teaching, as witnessed by the significant number who have been named MacVicar Fellows. In AY2018, at the request of President Rafael Reif and with the support of the SHASS dean and MIT Libraries, Craig Wilder taught a new subject, 21H.281 MIT and Slavery. Wilder, the pre-eminent historian of slavery and its foundational role in higher education in the US, created this seminar in which undergraduates do original research on the topic in the MIT archives. The results of their work have been posted on an [MIT Libraries website](#), and students in subsequent iterations of the class will build on this research. Other teaching innovations include the use of the [Beaver Press](#), a Gutenberg-facsimile letterpress, in the teaching of media and cultural history, and the experiment mentioned above that Nagahara and Aiyar will conduct with Keio University next fall.

History continued its popular offering, IAP in Ancient Italy and Greece, in January 2018. Led by Professors Broadhead, Goldberg, and Ostrow, a group of twenty students visited classical sites in ancient Rome and Pompeii. The Beaver Press was also opened to MIT faculty, staff, and students for introductory letterpress workshops during IAP and the spring semester.

In AY18 the History Section offered 43 subjects which enrolled 543 students. Thirty-one members of the class of 2018 graduated with a HASS concentration in history. The winners of this year's year-end essay competition were:

- Lev Kendrick '19, "A Prehistory of Corporatization: College and University Business Officers, 1909–1955."
- Janice Ong, '19, "Made in His image: The influence of personal motivation in the fostering of Carolingian saints' cults by Charlemagne's Einhard and Hincmar of Reims."
- Diana Faust, '21, "The Power of Female Voters: Why the Eisenhower Campaign's Use of Television to Target Female Voters in the 1956 Election Matters."

After 27 years on the teaching staff of the History Section, Steven Ostrow, a specialist in Ancient Roman history, retired at the end of this academic year. He will be sorely missed by his colleagues and students.

Faculty and Staff Updates

Sana Aiyar, associate professor of history without tenure, continued work on her next book-length project, tentatively titled *India's First Partition: Burma and India in the 1930s*.

William Broadhead, associate professor of history with tenure, currently holds a MacVicar Faculty Fellowship, and the Levitan Award for Excellence in Teaching. Professor Broadhead led 20 students on the Independent Activities Period (IAP) Program in Ancient and Medieval Rome. Professor Broadhead is finishing his book, *Hegemony and Mobility in Roman Italy 4th–1st centuries BC*.

Christopher Capozzola, associate professor of history with tenure, continued to serve as a Distinguished Lecturer of the Organization of American Historians. He completed his book manuscript, *Brothers of the Pacific: America's Forgotten Filipino Armies and the Making of the Pacific Century*. On campus, Capozzola chaired Chancellor Cynthia Barnhart's Post-Election Working Group, established after the 2016 US Presidential election.

Lerna Ekmekçioğlu, associate professor of history and women's and gender studies with tenure, holds the McMillan-Stewart Career Development Chair in Women in the Middle East and North Africa. She continues to serve on the executive committee of Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association, where she fosters dialogue between historians of Turkey, Armenia, and the Ottoman Empire. She and Melissa Bilal, a visiting scholar in the History Section in fall 2017, continued work on their book project and website, *Feminisms in Armenian*.

Robert M. Fogelson, professor of history and urban studies and planning, has taught at MIT since 1968. This year, in addition to his teaching responsibilities in Courses 4 and 21H, he continued work on a book-length project concerning the rise of Co-op City in the Bronx in the late 1960s and the fall of cooperative housing.

Malick W. Ghachem, associate professor of history with tenure, is also a senior scholar at the University of Maine Law School. He continued work on his current book-length project, *In the Name of the Colony: The Fall of the Indies Company and the Rise of Plantation Slavery in Haiti, 1720–1725*. A French translation of his prize-winning book *The Old Regime and the Haitian Revolution* is currently in progress, with an expected publication date in 2018. He serves on the executive board of the American Society for Legal History.

Eric Goldberg, associate professor of history with tenure, has completed his book typescript, *In the Manner of the Franks: Hunting, Kingship, and Nobility in Early Medieval Europe*, which will be published by the University of Pennsylvania Press.

Caley Horan, assistant professor of history, continued revisions to her first book typescript, tentatively entitled *Actuarial Age: Insurance and American Culture in the Post-WWII United States*. This work is under contract with the University of Chicago Press.

Christopher Leighton, associate professor of history without tenure, holds the Class of 1948 Career Development Chair. He continues work on a book manuscript tentatively titled *Revolutionary Rich: Political Fortune and Red Capitalism in China, 1949–79*.

Kathleen Lopes completed her first year as an administrative assistant in the History Section.

Anne McCants, professor of history, served as the president of the International Economic History Congress, which held its 2018 annual meeting at MIT in August. On campus, she directed the Concourse first-year learning community. AY2018 was her final year as Head of House at the Burton-Connor dormitory. She is the co-director of the Beaver Press print shop and is a former MacVicar Faculty Fellow.

Hiromu Nagahara, associate professor of history with tenure, holds the Cecil and Ida Green Career Development Chair. He is currently at work on his second book project, tentatively entitled *After the Masquerade Ball: The Birth of Japan's Cosmopolitan Elite*.

Tanalís Padilla, associate professor of history with tenure, is currently completing a history of the radicalization and politicization of Mexico's rural normal schools, tentatively entitled *Unintended Lessons of Revolution: Teachers and the Mexican Countryside, 1940-1980*. She is an op-ed writer for *La Jornada*, a respected Mexico City daily newspaper. In spring 2018 she began a two-year stint as director of graduate studies for the HASTS Program.

Meghan Pepin, the undergraduate administrator for the History Section, won a SHASS Unsung Heroes Award for her outstanding efforts to support the History undergraduate curriculum.

Jeffrey Ravel, professor and head of history, completed an initial version of a website that provides access to more than 3,800 items in the maritime history collections of the MIT Museum. He continued as co-director of the Beaver Press Print Shop. He continued to serve as faculty lead on the MIT-Nepal initiative. He was the second vice president of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. He is working on a book-length study of the history of French playing cards from 1650 to 1850.

Harriet Ritvo, Arthur J. Conner Professor of History, advises multiple doctoral candidates in the HASTS program, as well as at Harvard University and other top research institutions. She continues as editor of the *Animals, History, Culture Series* at the Johns Hopkins University Press, and co-editor of the *Flows, Migrations, and Exchanges* series at the University of North Carolina Press. She is currently finishing a book-length project entitled *At the Edge of the Wild*, which is under contract with Harvard University Press.

Mabel Sorett, now in her 30th year at MIT, is the administrative officer of the History Section.

Emma J. Teng, TT and Wei Fong Chao Professor of Asian Civilizations, has a dual appointment in History and the Global Studies and Languages (GSL) Section. She is the head of the latter unit. Professor Teng serves on the board of the Association for Asian Studies and the North American Taiwan Studies Association, and is a faculty advisor to the Harvard-Yenching Institute.

Craig Steven Wilder, Barton L. Weller Professor of History, advises many educational institutions in the US that wish to better understand the roles slavery and the slave trade played in their origins and development. His 2013 book *Ebony and Ivy* inspired the Grammy Award-winning artist Esperanza Spalding's song, "Ebony and Ivy" on the album *Emily's D+Evolution*.

Elizabeth Wood, professor of history, is co-director of the MISTI-Russia Program, (MIT International Science & Technology Initiatives). She also held a secondary appointment in the Global Studies and Languages Section. She continues work on a book-length project concerning the gendered politics of Vladimir Putin's rule in Russia.

Jeffrey S. Ravel, Section Head
Professor of History