

ROOTS REVIEW

Meet Our Newest Colleagues

We are again excited to welcome four new postdoctoral teaching fellows to the program this year. Each were chosen from a nationally-competitive pool of candidates and collectively they reflect RCI's commitment to hiring the most innovative, up-and-coming scholar-teachers in the field.

Sarah Walsh (Ph.D. History, University of Maryland, College Park, 2013, pictured left) specializes in the history of the relationship among race, eugenics, and Catholicism in modern Chile. Walsh joins WSU fresh off of two research fellowships at the Center for Race and Ethnicity in the Global South at the University of Sydney, Australia and most recently at the European Research Council's "The Colour of Labour: the Racialized Lives of Migrants" project at the Instituto de Ciencias Sociais, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal. Her book manuscript, *The Religion of Life: Race, Eugenics, and Catholicism in Chile*, has been invited for submission at University of Pittsburgh Press, and her co-edited volume titled *Mapping Connections: Approaching Latin American Studies in the Global South* is under contract with Palgrave Macmillan.

Brenna Miller (pictured above center right) arrives from The Ohio State University, where she completed her Ph.D. in History in 2018 upon defense of her dissertation: "Between Faith and Nation: Defining Bosnian Muslims in Tito's Yugoslavia, 1945-1980." Miller is a historian of modern Europe with an emphasis on competing notions of Bosnian Muslim identity in socialist Yugoslavia. At OSU, Miller also served as managing editor of *Origins: Current Events in Historical Perspective*, published jointly by the Departments of History at The Ohio State University and Miami University.

Eugene Smelyansky (pictured above center left) earned his Ph.D. in history from the University of California, Irvine in 2015. His research interests focus on the history of religious persecution in medieval Central Europe and history of urban culture, society, and environment. His book project, *Persecution of Waldensians in Late Medieval Germany*, focuses on the unprecedented wave of persecution of heretics throughout German-speaking Central Europe between 1390 and 1404. These

anti-heretical campaigns were aimed at German Waldensians, who believed in lay preaching and simplified forms of worship. In an attempt to explain this sudden intensification of persecution, his study reconstructs and analyzes the careers of three itinerant inquisitors – professional freelance “heresy-hunters” – who served as catalysts for anti-heretical campaigns throughout the German-speaking lands.

Last but not least, Ben Nobbs-Thiessen (Ph.D., Emory University, 2016, pictured right on page 1) arrives from a postdoctoral research fellowship in the School of Transborder Studies at Arizona State University. Nobbs-Thiessen’s research is truly transnational in scope. He focuses on a diverse set of migrants - low-German speaking Russo-Canadian Mennonites, Mexicans, Paraguayans, Japanese, Okinawans, and highlands-dwelling indigenous Bolivians - all of whom migrated to the Bolivian lowlands in the mid-twentieth century to begin lives as rural farmers, settlers, and rural modernizers. Nobbs-Thiessen’s prize-winning dissertation titled “Landscape of Migration: Transnational Migration and Agro-Environmental Change on Bolivia’s Tropical Frontier” has been invited for submission to the University of North Carolina Press’s *Flows, Migrations, Exchanges* series.

We are excited to welcome to the Roots of Contemporary Issues program a group of accomplished and innovative scholars.

Faculty Productivity & Accolades

Our faculty have just completed another productive year of teaching, scholarship, and service. Their accomplishments reflect their commitments to these three interrelated endeavors.

In Fall 2017, Aaron Whelchel completed work as a L.I.F.T Faculty Fellow and was a 2017-18 Provost’s Featured Faculty. The L.I.F.T. program (Learn. Inspire. Foster. Transform) is one component of a major Transformative Change Initiative of the College of Arts and Sciences; the College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences; and the Office of the Provost. In Spring 2018, Whelchel was joined by two of his RCI colleagues in the L.I.F.T. program: Michelle Mann and Karen Phoenix. Their selection to the L.I.F.T. program represents the ongoing commitment of these RCI faculty to becoming even more thoughtful, engaging, and

Director’s Welcome



The sixth year of the Roots of Contemporary Issues program has been productive and full of change (as historians, we’re ok with that). We bid fond farewells to Drs. Matthew Unangst and Sean Wempe, who are off to tenure-track positions at the University of Jacksonville and California State University, Bakersfield, respectively.

Both brought a passion for teaching and scholarship that we will miss. But as we welcome our four newest colleagues, Sarah Walsh, Brenna Miller, Eugene Smelyansky, and Ben Nobbs-Thiessen, we are confident that that commitment and energy will continue.

As in past years, our faculty have accomplished a great deal. They are once again grant and award recipients, publishers of major works of scholarship, and teachers *par excellence* of undergraduate students at Washington State University.

Those undergraduates continue to impress with strong showings at the 2018 Showcase for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities, at the 2nd Annual Northwest Humanities Conference at North Idaho College, and as student representatives for ASWSU and other student organizations.

I invite you to visit our [website](#) for more insight into the program. The first half-decade has been great, and the second half-decade promises to be even better. Do not hesitate to reach out to learn more about RCI.

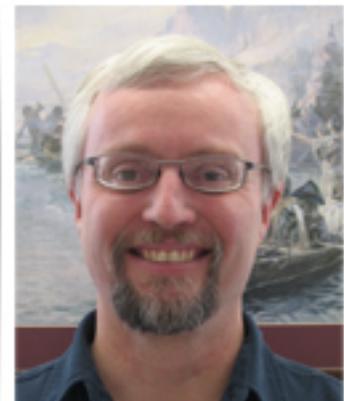
- Jesse Spohnholz

2017 & 2018 L.I.F.T Faculty Fellows

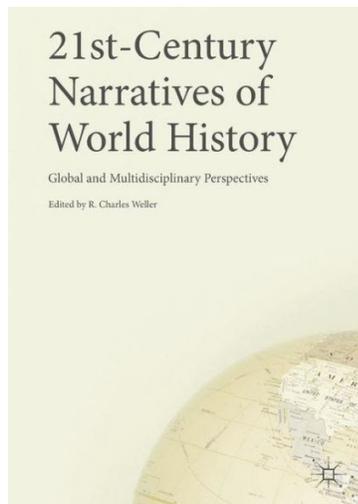
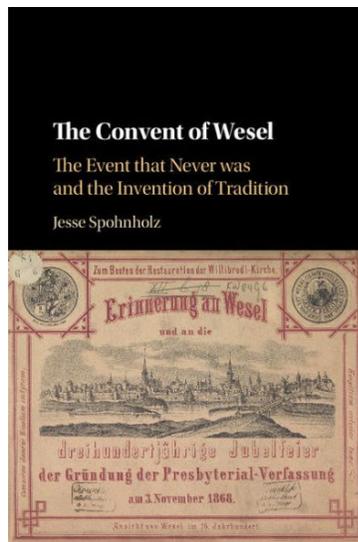


transformative educators.

The L.I.F.T. program is just one of a handful of venues where RCI faculty are actively engaged in history pedagogy initiatives. In Fall 2017, Katy Fry (right) began work in her new role as Curriculum Coordinator for the program. She has already made quite an impact. As a member of the Provost's Leadership Academy, Fry revamped teaching assistant mentoring and training for the coming year. Along with Clif Stratton, Fry remains in the vanguard of innovative teaching in her work as a Distinguished Teaching Fellow for 2017-2018, and as a summer seminar participant in the National Endowment for the Humanities' "Native American West: A Case Study in the Columbia Plateau" at Whitman College. Fry will leverage her NEH work to revitalize her RCI approach to focus on the place of the Columbia Plateau and its people in world history. Similarly, in Summer 2018, Ken Faunce (right) received a Smith Teaching and Learning Grant from the Office of Undergraduate Education at WSU to develop new digital assignments for History 105 with a focus on the historical origins and developments of the global trade in drugs. Faunce will pilot these initiatives in Fall 2018 in the active learning classrooms in the Spark Digital Innovation Hub.



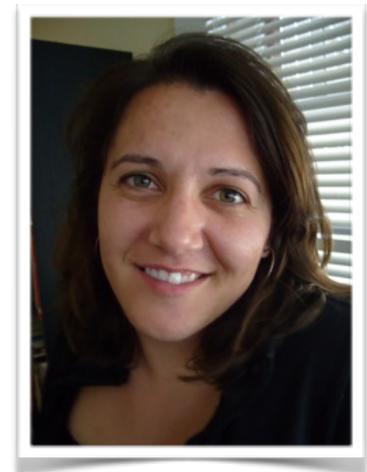
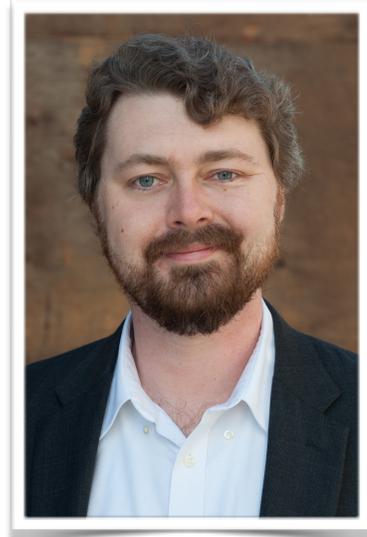
Grant committees are not the only ones that think highly of how are faculty are impacting students' experiences in positive ways at WSU. Students think so too. In April 2018, Charles Weller was invited to give the keynote address at the Associated Students of Washington State University (ASWSU) Faculty and Staff Appreciation Awards ceremony. Two ASWSU Freshmen delegates in Weller's History 105 Spring courses extended the invitation – a testament to the positive impact that Weller has in the classroom and beyond.



Teaching is just one area in which RCI faculty continue to excel. They also have amassed an impressive scholarship and publication record, including the recent or pending release of four new books. Jesse Spohnholz's most recent book, *The Convent of Wesel: The Event that Never was and the Invention of Tradition* appeared with Cambridge University Press in 2017. Charles Weller's edited volume, *21st-Century Narratives of World History: Global and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, was published by Palgrave MacMillan in Fall 2017. Sean Wempe's (top right) first monograph *Revenants of a Fallen Empire: Colonial Germans, the League of Nations, and the Redefinition of Imperialism, 1919-1933* passed peer review with flying colors and will be published by Oxford University Press in late 2018 or early 2019. Similarly, Julian Dodson's (middle right) first monograph, *Fanatics, Exiles, and Spies: Revolutionary Failures on the US-Mexico Border* also passed peer review

and will appear with Texas A & M University Press in 2019. Last but not least, Charles Weller organized and served as co-editor for a volume titled *Reason, Revelation, and Law in Western and Islamic Theory and History*. He submitted the manuscript to Brill Academic in March and is now awaiting publisher reviews.

In addition to the release of important new books, RCI faculty have also contributed numerous essays to the ongoing debates within their respective fields. Rebecca Ellis's (bottom right) "Making Useful Men: The Roman Rosell Institute and Asylum for the Blind, 1933-1950" appeared in *Phallacies: Historical Intersections of Disability and Masculinity* (Oxford University Press, 2017). Jennifer Schaefer's "Mapping Politics into the Stadium: Political Demonstrations and Soccer Culture in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1973-1974" appeared in the *Journal of Sports History's* special issue titled "Doing Sport History in the Digital Present" (Summer 2017). Matt Unangst's





essay "Emin Pasha and the German Imagination of the Heart of Darkness" was published in *After the Imperialist Imagination: 25 Years of Research on Global Germany* (Peter Lang 2018). Further, Unangst's "Men of Science and of Action: The Celebrity Explorers and German National Identity, 1870-1895" appeared in *Central European History* in September 2017. Michelle Mann's "The Young Algerians and the Question of the

Muslim Draft, 1900-1914," appeared in *Algeria Revisited: Contested Identities in the Colonial and Postcolonial Periods* (Bloomsbury Press, 2017). Likewise, Mann's "Les musulmans dans l'Armée française: représentations et réalités, 1914-1918" is in press and scheduled to appear in *La Guerre des autres: Les colonies et la Première guerre mondiale. Traces, récits, mémoires* in late 2018. Last but not least, Spohnholz published two articles: "Social Fiction and Diversity in Post-Reformation Germany" in the *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* (Fall 2017) and "The Disputed Origins of Dutch Calvinism: Religious Refugees in the Historiography of the Dutch Reformation" in *Church History* (2017). Spohnholz also delivered the keynote address, titled "Remembering and Forgetting the Reformation, 1517-2017," at the annual meeting of the German Historical Institute in Washington, D.C. in November 2017.

Over the course of the last year, faculty have also organized and participated in panels at meetings of the American Historical Association, French Colonial Historical Society, Middle East Studies Association, German Studies Association, Latin American, Latino/a, and Iberian Studies Association of the Pacific Northwest, Western Association of Women Historians, and the Conference on Latin American History. To cap off the year, in April 2018, Charles Weller traveled to Al-Farabi Kazakh National University on the invitation of the International Al-Farabi Forum to participate in and lead events associated with the annual forum. Faculty have had another productive year researching, publishing, and presenting.

Announcing the recipient of the 2018 inaugural RCI Postdoctoral Summer Research Fellowship:

JENNIFER SCHAEFER



Dr. Schaefer's fellowship will advance work on three interrelated projects:

"Critical Commemorations: Memorializing Rebels, Martyrs, & Heroes in Argentina, 1966-1983" (book manuscript in preparation for Duke University Press or University of North Carolina Press)

"Reenacting 1970s Revolution in the 1980s" (book chapter for submission to *The (Un)Civil-Military State in 1970s Argentina*)

"The Detroit of Argentina" (article for submission to *Journal of Global History*)

Congratulations Jennifer!

Undergraduate Student Learning & Accomplishments

History 105 and 305 undergraduate students have just completed another productive year in advancing a range of critical skills, including faculty-mentored research. Several of those students have moved beyond the classroom and the syllabus to enhance their research and presentation profiles. They and their mentors have logged many extra hours in the pursuit of these goals. Here are a few highlights:

On Saturday, November 4, 2017 six RCI students presented their research in History 105/305 at the **2nd Annual Northwest Undergraduate Conference in the Humanities** held on Saturday, November 4th, 2017 on the campus of North Idaho College in Coeur d'Alene, ID. We are excited to announce the receipt of three awards by our student researcher-presenters:

2nd runner up: **Cassandra Pellett**, "White Gold: The Origins of the African Ivory Trade"

1st runner up: **Ace Cassidy**, "Shifting Perceptions of Gender and Crime in 19th Century British Law"

Best Overall: **Carmen Hewlett**, "'God is Weeping As Addicts are Massacred': Rodrigo Duterte's War on Drugs in the Philippines"

Congrats to all of our presenters on a job well done!

Students took their research outside of the classroom and into the public forum in Spring semester too. On April 2, 2018, fifteen Roots students presented their work at the Showcase for Undergraduate and Creative Activities (SURCA) in the CUB senior ballroom. The strong showing by Roots students marked a dramatic uptick in the overall number of History students participating in the annual event. The lists of presenters and projects were quite impressive and demonstrated a wide range of interests and foci in historical research. And three – Kelsey Byus (pictured bottom right), Sean Nooney (pictured bottom left) and Madeleine Hunter – picked up 2018 RCI Undergraduate Research Prizes! Congratulations to all of our presenters, each of whom show dedication to the pursuit of scholarly research at Washington State University.



Program Outreach

Each year the RCI program hosts a lecture series that is designed to engage students and faculty at WSU, both in and beyond the RCI program, as well as interested members of the broader Pullman-Moscow community, with cutting-edge scholarship addressing vital contemporary issues in global-historical perspective. We were excited to invite Drs. Katie Cooper (of WSU) and Dr. Jane Freedman (of Université Paris 8, France) to deliver, respectively, the Interdepartmental and George and Bernadine Converse lectures. Both Dr. Cooper of WSU's School of the Environment and Dr. Freedman (a sociologist) offered RCI students critical insights into the ways in which historical study informs and is informed by other disciplines.

The Year Ahead

In addition to the hires of our newest colleagues, exciting developments are afoot for 2018-19. Five faculty are nearing completion of the initial volumes for the Roots of Contemporary Issues book series, to appear with Oxford University Press.

This Fall we're excited to host WSU's own Lawrence Pintak on November 6th to deliver the annual interdepartmental lecture, titled "America and Islam: Soundbites, Suicide Bombs, and the Road to Donald Trump." Pintak is professor and the founding (former) dean of The Edward R. Murrow College of Communication, WSU and a former CBS News Middle East correspondent.

In the Spring, we will welcome Dr. Alfiee Breland-Noble of the Georgetown University's Center for Trauma and the Community to deliver the George and Bernadine Converse Lecture. Breland-Noble's talk is titled "Mental Health Disparities in Racially Diverse Adolescents, Youth, & Families: Historical Roots & Contemporary Consequences." Look for details on our website in the coming months.

We would like to thank you for learning more about the recent efforts of students and faculty in Roots of Contemporary Issues program at WSU, and invite you to seek us out on the web at: history.wsu.edu/rci.

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| <p><i>Issues of Environment & Climate Change, From one of WSU's own Experts in the Field</i> RCI Annual Interdepartmental Lecture 2017-18 <i>Free & Open to the Public</i></p> |  <p>Professor Katie Cooper <i>School of the Environment</i> Washington State University</p> |
| <p>Tue, Sep 12, 7pm, CUB 220 (Senior Ballroom)</p> <p>"Plate Tectonics: How the Earth's Interior Impacts Elections, Cell Phones, Global Climate, and You"</p> <p><small>This talk will explore the emergence of the theory of plate tectonics, explain the importance of building scientific consensus, and demonstrate several surprising ways that the slow motions of the Earth's surface dramatically shape our daily lives.</small></p> | |
| <p><small>Sponsored by:</small> Roots of Contemporary Issues (RCI) Program Washington State University Department of History <small>For more information, contact history@wsu.edu</small></p> | |

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| <p>The 2018 RCI George and Bernadine Converse Lecture <i>Free & Open to the Public @ Washington State University</i></p> |  <p>Professor Jane Freedman <i>Université Paris 8, France</i></p> |
| <p>Tue, Feb 6, 7pm, CUB 220 (Senior Ballroom)</p> <p>"The Politics of 'Crisis': The Origins and Implications of Global Refugee Flows"</p> <p><small>Should states be able to find more effective solutions for the protection of those forced to flee their countries of origin? This talk will explore the origins and implications of global refugee flows and will argue for a more nuanced and human-centered view of the current situation.</small></p> | |
| <p><small>Sponsored by:</small> Roots of Contemporary Issues (RCI) Program Washington State University Department of History <small>In partnership with the WSU College of Arts & Sciences</small> <small>For more information, contact history@wsu.edu</small></p> | |