

FOCUS ON LECTURERS

Volume 4, Issue 1
November 15, 2006

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, JOANNE FERRARO

This issue of the SDSU History Department Newsletter celebrates the achievements of a very important group of faculty, the History lecturers. Highly respected and widely admired, lecturers are vital members of the Department, devoted to teaching excellence and student mentoring in important ways. Lecturers are often named "most influential" or "best professor" by our undergraduates. They introduce lower-division students to history, often furnishing the inspiration that attracts majors to the discipline. Some lecturers are also engaged as undergraduate advisors. Carolyn Roy and Farid Mahdavi spend countless hours guiding majors and minors through orientation and history requirements. Similarly, Carole Putko supervises the Social Science program. Dr. Putko also directs History's study abroad program in London and Florence. Heavy teaching loads notwithstanding, many lecturers have research agendas and are very productive. Bud McKanna, for example, is one of our most prolific authors, and Edward Beasley—no longer a lecturer but now on the tenure track—recently produced two volumes in his specialty, British History. With this special issue, colleagues and staff would like to say "Thank You" to the lecturers for all the important work that you are doing. ■



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Ed Beasley on Twelve Years of Teaching at SDSU

When I finished my Ph.D. in September 1993, I needed something to do while I revised the dissertation. So I applied to teach at SDSU. I had worked my way through graduate school at UCSD as a teaching assistant for the better part of seven years, so I had some experience in the classroom. I began teaching at SDSU as a lecturer in Spring 1994. What I found was something I had never seen at UCSD: lower-division classes of 40 or less taught by people with Ph.D's, or close to it.

In the smaller classes of SDSU, you could see how your students were doing. You could continually adjust the readings and the lectures accordingly. We did have some 120-seat classes then, in which graduate students did a share of the grading. But the basic pattern was clear: there was close student-teacher interaction. Professors could very carefully monitor the "learning outcomes" of their students, to use a more recent term. And while lower-division classes ranged up to 40, upper-division classes often were smaller yet.

(Continued on page 2)

Bud McKanna: “The Salad Days”



I began teaching at San Diego State University in 1974, and unlike today, there were only four lecturers in the History Department. It was not uncommon to be laid off at the end of the fall semester and be asked to teach again after the spring term had been in session for a week or more. A typical teaching load consisted of two courses, usually History 115 or 116 (Comparative History of the Americas). Classes were large with forty to fifty students and we were encouraged to take lots of crashers.

In the 1970s Ron Quinn and I shared an office in the infamous “Campanile Palms” situated where the Gateway Center now stands. It was an old, dilapidated apartment building fully equipped with unisex bathrooms and a “moat” and bridge to be crossed to reach our office. We jokingly warned the students to look out for alligators and other moat monsters. In the early years, lecturers did not receive benefits such as health insurance or retirement, and most of us were “freeway historians” juggling our teaching schedules at two or more campuses in order to survive. I worked as an auto mechanic at Del Cerro Chevron and would quickly trade my uniform for “civvies” and hurry across the freeway to teach.

I believe that the secret to teaching is to gain rapport with your students within the first week or else risk losing them for the semester. For me the interaction with students proved to be an emotional high, and I quickly learned that if you entertain them it is easier to teach them. Using humor as a motivational technique, I developed a short monologue routine including current events, jokes, and outlandish stories taken from the newspapers. This method gets them laughing and allows me to quickly establish a bond with them; it always works and makes the classroom an enjoyable experience for everyone. On my teaching evaluations many students have provided positive comments about these brief, sometimes wild, opening sessions. When possible, I integrate my research into the classroom experience. For example, last spring my California history students were introduced to a variety of primary documents on homicide in the San Diego Historical Society Archives. I was able to use some of my articles and chapters from my book, *Race and Homicide in Nineteenth Century California*, to teach them historical research methodology. At first some of them were resistant to writing research papers on homicide, but they quickly warmed to their topics. I must admit it was a very rewarding experience; they proved to be some of the best papers I have ever received. Despite the stigma encountered as a lecturer during the 1970s and 1980s, I would not have traded my teaching career in the History Department at San Diego State University for anything. It has been a rewarding experience that provided me with the opportunity to travel throughout California, Kansas, and Arizona during the summer to complete research for books and articles. I have to admit, though, that I miss the good old “salad days” when the History Department parties were much more raucous and wild than they are today. The stories I could tell are legion. ■



Ed Beasley (Continued from page 1)

All this was new to me. Lower-division classes at UCSD ranged up to 550 seats, and were usually one or two hundred – with all the work graded by the graduate students who led the discussion sections. Even in classes for juniors and seniors, graduate students did all of the grading if the enrollment topped 60, which it did more often than not. Professors whose classes attracted at least sixty students could quite literally go for years without seeing undergraduate work. Of course, some professors made sure that they saw student work all the time, deliberately meeting the undergraduates – but for the most part, if you were an undergraduate at UCSD and you were in a small class, it was being taught by a graduate student, not a professor. How different SDSU proved to be.

I spent most of my first few years at SDSU developing my courses. Like everyone teaching in the SDSU history department, I could see the work that my students were doing. I tried different ways to help students learn their way around history, argumentation, and evidence. I was also doing the reading necessary to teach and present world history.

Lecturer life is insecure by its nature, but for a long while after I arrived in 1994 things were pretty good for lecturers in our department. There were always more students who had to be taught, and the 1960s cohort of tenured professors was retiring faster than a post-Proposition 13 California state government could get the money to replace them. We lecturers were the cheaper way to go. More and more lecturers were hired. It was clear that those who had stayed on would not be easily dispensed with – unless the state budget were to crash as it had in the early 1990s, before I came, when most of the lecturers had been let go. With no new crisis of that order, there was day-to-day stability as the decade went on. I think I put my time to good use. By the late 1990s, in this increasingly secure if low-paying environment, I found that my teaching was getting simpler and better. I did not have to study up on so many of the basics anymore. I was able to make more intelligent choices about what to say in class. And in my own work I was shifting from expanding and working through my research back to writing chapters.

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Who We Are: Carole Putko



Carole Putko is a multifaceted, full-time lecturer/advisor/program coordinator in our department. She has served in a variety of capacities since 1994 after having taught in several local colleges and universities.

Her exemplary dedication to students has been evinced in her successful work as Social Science Advisor, a position which she assumed after the retirement several years ago of long-time advisor Al O'Brien. On numerous occasions at new student and transfer orientations, she has also very capably filled in for the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs to welcome students and parents to our campus. She serves on university-wide committees in her capacity as the Social Science Advisor and on the London and Florence Semester Abroad programs. Dr. Putko was selected as Most Influential Professor in the academic career of one of our Outstanding Social Science Graduating Seniors; this attests to the great influence she has had on some of our most excellent students.

Teaching a wide range of courses such as the History of Sexuality, World History, Western Civilization, Seventeenth-Century Continental Europe, and The French Revolution demonstrates her versatility and willingness to serve the department's needs. Dr. Putko served as the second elected Lecturer's Liaison in our department occurred during a particularly trying time of budget cutbacks when she adeptly communicated lecturers' concerns to the department over a period of two academic years.

In spite of a heavy workload teaching, advising, coordinating the London and Florence Semester programs, and serving on committees for the university, she still finds time to pursue her work on a monograph examining the life of Charles de Guise, Cardinal of Lorraine. ■



HISTORY TALKS

In its second year, the History Talks brown bag series continues to bring faculty and students together to discuss engaging issues from recent or current research. Further in hopes of transcending disciplinary boundaries, History Talks has invited participants from outside the discipline of history.

The first two speakers for this semester were Drs. Theodore Kornweibel from the Department of Africana Studies and Brad Cook of the Department of Classics and Humanities. Kornweibel presented his research on the southern U.S. railroads' use of slave labor, work that has "uncovered unpleasant truths, challenged cherished stereotypes, confronted gender and racial biases, revealed hidden loyalties, and questioned definitions of the field of railroad history." Cook revealed how an array of fourteenth-century Italian Renaissance figures transformed what was then a reclusive Cicero into a new Cicero "who paralleled their own lives as scholar-citizens."

In the next talk, scheduled for November 15, Dr. Sarah Elkind of the History Department will take us to the contested landscape of the Los Angeles County public beaches and inform us not only "how political groups used language of the public good to defend their interests, but also how political institutions favor some publics over others."

The Spring line-up promises to be as engaging, with speakers from Religious Studies, English, Asian Studies, and History sharing their research. The History Talks series is free and open to the public, and everyone is welcome. The series hosts would like to extend our appreciation for the continuing financial support from the History Department. We also thank all of you for your attendance and unflagging support in this endeavor. ■

Ed Beasley (Continued from page 2)

I even had time to get involved in the larger life of the university, helping out in the teacher education programs.

By the late 1990s, a number of lecturers were doing university service like this – not to mention doing the advising in the History Department. Around then, the department seemed to make a renewed commitment to its lecturers. Coming out of the glut of Ph.D.s in the 1980s and 1990s, we were the people who had yet to get a tenure-track job – but who nonetheless had the years of service and achievement that made us valuable as colleagues in the educational mission of the department.

The department's renewed commitment to us took several forms. Most concretely, we went from teaching three classes at a time to teaching the full-time load for lecturers, which is five at a time. That means we went from sixty percent pay and sixty percent retirement credit per year to one-hundred percent. Another effect of the move to five classes a piece was that we could concentrate our attentions and our office hours on the campus on which we had proven ourselves, instead of having to piece together an adult income by teaching at several places at once. Even the offices got less crowded, because not so many new lecturers had to be hired if the old ones were teaching five classes each instead of three. The department was simply more collegial.

But then, after the turn of the century, the tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty alike were carried screaming back to reality during the budget crisis of the Davis administration. It looked like some lecturers might be fired.

(Continued on page 6)

Sarah Elkind: Current Research

Sarah S. Elkind (Ph.D. University of Michigan, 1994) teaches courses addressing a wide variety of environmental history topics. Her publications include *Bay Cities and Water Politics: The Battle for Resources in Boston and Oakland* which won the Abel Wolman prize for best book in public works history in 1998; *Public Works and Public Health: Reflections on Urban Politics and Environment, 1880-1925*; "Public Oil, Private Oil: The Tidelands Oil Controversy, World War II and the Control of the Environment," in *The Way We Really Were: The Golden State in the Second Great War*, ed. by Roger Lotchin; and "Building a Better Jungle: Growth, Reform and Public Works in American Cities, 1880-1930," *Journal of Urban History*, (1997). Her current book, *Citizens Without Standing: Political Influence, Public Priorities and the Environment in Twentieth-Century America*, examines the definition of the "public good" that drove policy in the first half of the twentieth century.

In *Citizens Without Standing*, Sarah Elkind argues that from the 1870s to the 1920s, politicians in Los Angeles and across the nation won elections by attacking corporate monopolies. By the 1950s, however, Americans embraced private, industrial expansion rather than government regulation or public enterprise as the best way to serve the public good. Attacks on monopolies so lost their grip on the public imagination that they could be dismissed as subversive. Deregulation had profound consequences for American cities and especially for urban physical and political environments stressed by rapid growth. Because of California's reputation as a haven from the Depression and because of its military manufacturing during World War II, Los Angeles felt these changes especially keenly.

Many forces at work in Los Angeles contributed to the reshaping of the notion of public good between the 1930s and 1950s. Migration changed the demographic and political makeup of the region. Confidence in technological solutions to industrial and urban problems gave scientists and engineers profound influence in public debate. Perhaps most importantly, Los Angeles City and County officials explicitly recognized the business-oriented Chamber of Commerce as the voice of the general public, calling upon the Chamber to represent the citizenry in public hearings and on committees studying environmental problems. While other groups also attempted to speak for the public, claiming to be more neutral than the Chamber or to have greater legitimacy as victims of environmental pollution, these challenges to the Chamber's status as the voice of the public interest nearly always failed.

Citizens Without Standing thus examines six distinct environmental policy debates—air pollution, flooding, coastal erosion and pollution, water supply, hydroelectric power development, and offshore and urban petroleum production—that emerged in Los Angeles from the 1930s to the 1950s. The central question of *Citizens without Standing* is this: did environmental policy change in early twentieth century America because the definition of the public good was altered—meaning that the general public's priorities indeed changed—or did public priorities only seem to change because the Chamber of Commerce's positions did or because new scientific theories came to dominate public debate? ■

PHI ALPHA THETA

Phi Alpha Theta (PAT) is the Beta-Kappa chapter history honor society at San Diego State University. Each semester, our student organization attempts to further a love of history in the student body and the wider campus community. To achieve our goal, we hold events that promote camaraderie and integrate students into the world of the historian. Our activities for this semester included a workshop on how to apply for scholarship and graduate programs, a get-together to talk about current historical trends over coffee, more formal discussions of history and film in conjunction with the History Department Film Series, a masquerade social mixer, and a spirited softball game. In the spring, members will present papers at the PAT annual regional conference in California State University-Northridge. We make an effort to work and play hard.

PAT always welcomes new members. To join, undergraduates must have at least a 3.0 overall grade point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale, a 3.1 GPA in history courses, and at least 12 completed units of history. Graduate students must have a 3.51 or better GPA, at least 7 completed graduate history units, and no grade of "F" on the graduate record. Applicants are also required to attend at least one meeting and one event put on by the organization each year. The deadline for filing applications is March 1, 2007. For more information please contact us via the organization's e-mail address: patsdsu@rohan.sdsu.edu ■

Spring 2007: History Department Variable Topics Courses (History Course Number/Section)

- 400W/1, Historian's Craft** (Colston), **"History Through Film"**: Examine how scholars interpret representations of the past in both documentary and feature films.
- 400W/2, Historian's Craft** (Putman), **"The Cold War Era"**: Read and discuss books on three major themes: origins of the Cold War; Cold War culture; race; gender and the family.
- 400W/3, Historian's Craft** (Elkind), **"The History of the American West"**
- 450W/1, Writing of History** (De Vos), **"San Diego History"**: Research the city's history using materials from local archives and historical societies (including SDSU's Special Collections).
- 450W/3, Writing of History** (Campbell), **"Life of the Prophet Muhammad"**: Research aspects of the Prophet's life using translated sources.
- 450W/4, Writing of History** (Wiese): Explore themes in **U.S. urban and suburban history**.
- 496/1, History of the Philippines** (Abalahin): Learn the basics of the Filipino national story while also reconsidering it from the perspectives of women, peasants, and minorities (uplanders, Muslims, Chinese, and Overseas Filipinos) as well as understanding it in the context of Asian and world history.
- 496/2, Southeast Asian History** (Le), **"The Making of Southeast Asia"**: Explore how Southeast Asia became a region of historical study: How were its various nations formed? How have those historical processes shaped the region's contemporary issues?
- 581, Suburbia** (Wiese): Explore the emergence of modern America's dominant social, spatial, and political milieu from 1800 to the present: What role have suburbs played in the histories of planning, technology, and real estate? How has suburbia helped shape race, gender, and class in the modern U.S.?
- 582/1, Muslim and Christian Asia** (Abalahin): Analyze issues in the historical careers of kindred monotheisms Islam and Christianity in East and Southeast Asia, where the two religions find much of their most dynamic growth in the world today: How have these religions influenced state formation, colonialism, nationalism, separatism, and contemporary politics?
- 582/2, Iraq and Syria** (Tauber): Examine the formation of modern Syria and Iraq following World War I and the ramifications for Lebanon and Palestine.
- 582/3, American Jewish History**, (Zollman): Survey American Jewish life in its uniqueness and diversity from 1654 to the present, focusing on such themes as: immigration patterns; labor movements; traditional denominations and religious innovations: gendered experiences; and interaction with "mainstream" American culture.
- 585, America in the Sixties** (Cobbs-Hoffman): Explore the politics, culture, and social relations of the era in which global power and domestic wealth built, and then tore apart, the national consensus. The course focuses on the Civil Rights movement, the Cold War, and the emergence of the "Counter-Culture" in its many guises, from feminism to "Sex, Drugs, and Rock 'n Roll."
- 596, Race and Ethnicity in US History** (Yeh): Study the historical formation of race and ethnicity, in particular how whiteness and other identities were constructed as well as how minorities resisted, subverted, and transformed dominant racial ideologies and practices (with emphasis on thinking beyond black and white racial dichotomy).
- 620, Sexuality in European History** (Kuefler): Examine the history of sexuality in a European context from antiquity to the present day as well as the origins and evolution of the field itself, its pioneers, its influences, and its contributions to the study of history.
- 630, Urban History** (Wiese): Investigate the metropolitan roots of American political history from the New Deal to the rise of Conservatism.
- 680, Making Victorian England** (Beasley): English people of the Victorian era (1837-1901) saw themselves as very different from their wild Romantic forebears. Investigate how Victorians understood and interpreted their own time and how post-1901 historians have kept reinterpreting a period that continues to live in the popular consciousness.

WILLIAM WEEKS: “A Much Changed Department...”

When I first began to teach at SDSU Department of History in 1984, I did not anticipate that my relationship with it would last for so long. I was working on my dissertation at UCSD when I was asked if I could teach History 544, American Foreign Policy, as a last minute replacement for a hire that had fallen through. From there a steady diet of different American history courses (110s, 310s, 430Ws, 544s) and other lecture opportunities made the title “part-time temporary” somewhat ironic. The gig was made much more humane by union representation that secured health and retirement benefits for lecturers. From 1987 to 1990, I had the opportunity to teach at SDSU North County, the precursor of Cal State San Marcos. Although located in a business park next to Jerome’s Furniture, the campus attracted a talented and motivated group of mostly older students. I look back at those years and those students very fondly.

SDSU’s increasing reliance on “part-time temporary” faculty to do essentially full-time permanent work mirrored trends in many American industries during the 1980s and 1990s. I guess the growing cadre of lecturers in the department was inevitable given our ability to deliver more bang (i.e., teach more students for less money) for the academic buck. The fact that a number of us began to publish (in some cases prolifically) also made us look good to university administrators, I suppose. In any case, union work rules and the gracious leadership of department chairmen David DuFault and Harry McDean made being a long-term lecturer at SDSU quite bearable, even desirable as compared to the truly exploitative conditions lecturers seem to face in so many universities across the country.

After a few years’ hiatus, I returned to SDSU in 2005 to find a much changed History Department, and much for the better as concerns the status of lecturers. That lecturer positions have been semi-regularized and certain lecturers given the chance to become, in effect, permanent member of the department is a huge improvement. More intangible but no less meaningful is the department’s new attitude of respect for and concern about the interests of “the lecture-tariat”. This started at the top and has contributed to what in my view is a much more collegial environment in the department. I hope to continue my association with it for many years. ■

Ed Beasley (*Continued from page 3*)

It also looked like all the lecturers would have to reapply for their jobs. for prior teaching experience – but no special credit would be given for teaching at SDSU instead of some other place.

In Spring 2001, the national advertisement did indeed go out—anyone could apply to take our jobs. We arranged for letters of recommendation and turned in our applications. Meanwhile, we kept up with our teaching and our writing and/or service. In our shared offices, we lecturers kept up our discussions about teaching, about historical research, and about ideas – heavily laced with Monty Python and Blackadder references, at least in the office that Bruce Castleman, Chris Kenway, and I shared. Still, having to reapply for our jobs was a distraction from the real work that we were doing. Just then, out of the blue, after our job applications had been turned in, but before they had been read, the California Faculty Association negotiated a contract that gave each of us (those of us with at least five-and-a-half years of teaching) a three-year contract that would be more or less automatically renewed in perpetuity. The national search was called off. The age of the three-year contract had begun. And in recent years the History Department has once again been able to create a collegial environment for both lecturers and tenure-track faculty.

But I have to say that I am glad that I had a couple of books in the process of getting edited and published by the mid-2000s, and that I was able to shift over to the tenure-track. Because class sizes have been increasing, the piles of essays have gotten bigger. For lecturers teaching five classes (and, as proper historians, marking both the content and the grammar of five sets of essays or five sets of exams at a go), those stacks of grading can border on the soul-killing.

Now I have begun my tenure-track career at SDSU. My teaching load has gone down to two or three classes a semester. I can look forward to more of the fun of researching and teaching in my own field than I could have before. But I am worried about the effects of those growing piles of essays on myself and on others. Whether the upward creep of class sizes can be arrested or not, lecturers remain vital to maintaining the quality of the department. Without lecturers, class sizes would have to more than double overnight. At stake is a research university of a special kind: one where the faculty remains intellectually engaged *while still personally teaching the students* – and teaching them in classes that are small enough to give the students the support they need. ■

HISTORY THROUGH FILM

The film series, sponsored by the SDSU's Department of History, aims to use the medium of film to engage people in broader discussions about persons and events of the past and how historical events relate to current events. It endeavors to foster life-long excitement for history among current SDSU students and to encourage community members from the wider San Diego region to get involved in the programs that our department has to offer. These films are open to the public, and admission is free.

Fall 2006 Series: PROJECTING PAST, PRESENT, & FUTURE IN 1960s FILM

Coordinator: Elizabeth Ann Pollard



The selected films stress themes such as gender, race relations, and the Cold War. At each gathering of the film series, a professor in the department provides an introduction to the film and its themes, as well as some issues for viewers to think about while enjoying the film. Afterwards, the professor leads a wide-ranging discussion that responds to viewer interest while emphasizing the historical importance of the film.



The films have ranged from comedic social satire to sci-fi horror. On September 21, Professor Lisa Cobbs-Hoffman shared the film *The Graduate* (1967), starring Dustin Hoffman, Ann Bancroft, and Katherine Ross. Post-film discussion highlighted the gender and generational differences of the late 60s. On October 12, Professor Christian's presentation of Stanley Kubrick's classic, *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), was particularly timely, coming as it did during the same week that North Korea tested a nuclear device. Cold War fears and the role of humor in dealing with them dominated the post-film conversation. Given that 2006 is the fortieth anniversary of the television series *Star Trek*, Prof Putman's selection of episodes from the series was also well-timed. On November 9, Prof. Putman shared *Errand of Mercy* (Stardate 3198.4) and *Let That Be Your Last Battlefield* (Stardate 5730.2) in order to explore Cold War tensions and the race-divide of the 1960s.



On December 7, Prof. Steve Colston will take a step back into the 1950s to share the horror-science fiction film, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956, 80 minutes). Discussion of this anti-communist allegory will no doubt reveal 1950s fears, as well as our own 21st Century concerns about the 'other'. This last film will be shown in the SDSU Little Theater at 7:30 PM. ■



Spring 2007 Series: TOUGH CHOICES

Coordinator: Kathryn Edgerton-Tarpley

The Department of History's spring 2007 "History Through Film" series will focus on the theme of tough choices across time and place. During a time when Americans are faced with difficult choices concerning social, economic, foreign policy, and environmental issues, the four films in this series encourage viewers to gather together to discuss the ordinary and extraordinary decisions faced by women and men in four distinct moments in Lebanese, Japanese, American, and Jewish history. The spring films are tentatively scheduled to be held at 7:00pm in the Little Theater on the first Thursday of each month (2/1, 3/1, 4/5, and 4/26). All four movies will be introduced by faculty members from the History Department.

The series will open with Ziad Doueiri's timely film *West Beirut* (1998, co-sponsored by the Center for Islamic and Arabic Studies), which traces the dilemmas faced by three Lebanese teenagers when their city is divided into Christian-controlled East Beirut and Muslim militia-controlled West Beirut at the beginning of Lebanon's civil war. Set in Japan during the tumultuous period leading up to the 1868 Meiji Restoration, the second film, Yoji Yamada's *The Twilight Samurai* (2004), features a man torn between his love for his family and his duty as a samurai. Next, Robert Redford's film, *The Milagro Beanfield War* (1998), takes viewers to a small town in New Mexico, where ordinary people grapple with environmental issues, people's rights, and local activism. Lastly, set in the Nazi death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau, Tim Blake Nelson's *The Grey Zone* (2002) forces viewers to confront the hideous choices forced upon the Hungarian Jews of the Twelfth Sonderkommando unit, who delayed their own deaths by helping Germans escort fellow Jews into the gas chambers. ■

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