



Dr. Jennifer Kerns, Dr. Katrine Barber, and 2025 YHC winners Sid James, Weston Klein and June Baeck

36th Annual Young Historians Conference

Sponsored by:
Portland State University's
History Department
& the Challenge Program
April 30th, 2026



Young Historians 2026 Schedule

8:00	DOORS OPEN
8:30 – 9:10	INTRODUCTION, WELCOME & SPEAKER
9:10 – 10:25	FIRST SESSIONS
10:25 – 10:35	BREAK
10:35 – 11:45	SECOND SESSIONS
11:45 – 12:35	LUNCH
12:35 – 1:50	THIRD SESSIONS
1:50 – 2:15	AWARDS CEREMONY

8:00	DOORS OPEN
8:30 – 9:10	INTRODUCTION: Katrine Barber, Professor and Chair, Department of History
SMSU 355	SPEAKER: Catherine McNeur, Professor, Department of History
(Ballroom)	PDXScholar Recap Julia Stone, MLIS, Open Scholarship Librarian, PSU Library
9:10 – 10:25	FIRST SESSIONS: Choose from Three
SMSU 338	Holy Smoke and Mirrors: Religious Authority and Faith Moderator: <i>Dr. John Ott</i>
Morgan Henderson	Heavenly Righteousness: How Religion Facilitated the Rise of The Order of The Knights Templar
Saint Mary's Academy	
James Hennessey-O'Connor	Catholic Syncretism: A Framework for Understanding Post-Colonial Religious Identity
Grant High School	
India Black-Mitchell	The Revolutionaries of Mt. Tabor: Religion, Radicalism, and Propaganda of The Taborites in Hussite Bohemia
Saint Mary's Academy	
SMSU 328/29	Mythic Waves: Seas of Change Moderator: <i>Dr. Loren Spielman</i>
Lily Manne	A Battle of Will and Wisdom: Polar Opposites in the Polar Extremes of the Viking World
Saint Mary's Academy	
Leif Crockett	The Kraken Wakes: Myth, Science, and the Rise of a Maritime Sensation, from 1750-1900
Riverdale High School	
Lily Nelson	Demonizing Sexuality: Dangerous Women in Folklore
Grant High School	
SMSU 327	Revolution and Resistance: Pushing Back on Power Moderator: <i>Dr. Jennifer Tappen</i>
Holland Burd	Revolutionary Resistance in Denmark: The Impact of Grundtvigism on the Danish Resistance to Nazi Occupation
Saint Mary's Academy	
Eloise Brentano	Integration as Resistance: How Palestinian Chileans Have Acted as Transnational Activists from 1870-2008
Grant High School	
Glory Bangs	The Sliding Scales of Solidarity: How Shared Colonial Elements Have Created Solidarity Amongst the Irish and Palestinians, Despite a Lasting Racial and Religious Divide
Saint Mary's Academy	
10:25 – 10:35	BREAK

10:35 – 11:45

SECOND SESSIONS: Choose from Three

SMSU 338

This is my Place Moderator: *Dr. Brenda Frink*

Quinby Maruna

Saint Mary's Academy

Unapologetic Anger: How Female Punk Musicians Redefined Feminism in 1970s Britain

Sy Jones

Riverdale High School

Subversive Shooting: How Annie Oakley Rose to Nationwide Notoriety

Kate McFarland

Grant High School

From Mogadishu to Minneapolis: Transnational Political and Social Ties in the Somali Diaspora

SMSU 328/29

Crafting the Truth: Reconsidering the Stories We are Told Moderator: *Dr. Brian Turner*

Zuzana Langer

Saint Mary's Academy

The Prominent Voice of Cold War Era Radio: The 1968 Soviet Union Invasion of Czechoslovakia

Eben Cole

Grant High School

Rhetoric, Shakespeare, and Tony Soprano: The Influence of Suetonius's *The Life of Julius Caesar* in Personalizing the Leader

Marlo Dabareiner

Saint Mary's Academy

Division for Profit: 'The Ripper' Created by the London Press

SMSU 327

Truth Illuminated: Medicine, Technology, and the State Moderator: *Dr. Natan Meir*

Alisa Safina

Saint Mary's Academy

Chernobyl: How the Government's Response Impacted Health

Lucy Herzig

Saint Mary's Academy

The Great Plague of Marseille

Elias Henkle

Grant High School

Artificial Light: A Conduit of Human Productivity Through the Ages

11:45 – 12:35

LUNCH

SMSU 355 (Ballroom)

12:35 – 1:45

THIRD SESSIONS: Choose from Three

SMSU 338

Right on the Money: Transnational Capitalism Moderator: *Dr. Joseph Bohling*

Solène Curren

Saint Mary's Academy

Imported Hierarchies: Early European Colonial Feudal Land Regulation, Patroons, and Oppressive Systems of the Dutch Colonial Management

Tess Nestel

Grant High School

Little Africa in Global China: Transnational Nigerians in Guangzhou and the Making of Xiaobei

Charlotte Osenar

Saint Mary's Academy

From Silver to Smoke: Britain's Economic War on Qing China

SMSU 328/29

The Role of Aesthetics in Rebellion Moderator: *Dr. Jennifer Kerns*

Portia Trabue

Saint Mary's Academy

Practicing Vice: Successful Homosexuality Within the Frameworks of the Medieval Church

Camille Friess

Saint Mary's Academy

"A Deliberate Sense of Propaganda:" The Enduring Activism of Picasso's *Guernica*

Stella Gatziolis

Riverdale High School

Golden Age or Gilded Cage? The Rise and Dissolution of the Olympic Art Competitions, 1912–1948

SMSU 327	Building and G(u)ilding: Creating Communities Moderator: <i>Dr. Richard Beyler</i>
Isabel Fogel Saint Mary's Academy	"To Live and Die with Each Other Like Brothers": Guilds and the Growth of Urban Community in the Medieval and Early Modern Low Countries
Elinor Stoll Grant High School	Blueprints of City Planning: How Function and Symbolism Have Shaped our Cities
Caspian Green Grant High School	Nation-Building on Pillars of Fascism: How Italian Fascist Ideals Have Remained Alive in Eritrean Identity Through the Asmaran Urban Landscape

1:50 – 2:15	AWARDS CEREMONY	SMSU 355 (Ballroom)
	Dr. Jennifer Kerns, Department of History Dr. Katrine Barber, Chair, Department of History Joy Beckett, Challenge Program Director	

ABSTRACTS

9:10 – 10:25

FIRST SESSIONS: Choose from Three

SMSU 338

Holy Smoke and Mirrors: Religious Authority and Faith

Moderator: *Dr. John Ott*

Heavenly Righteousness: How Religion Facilitated the Rise of The Order of The Knights Templar

The Order of the Knights of the Temple of Solomon, commonly known as the Knights Templar, was a critical organization in the Christian occupation of the Holy Land during the 11th to 14th centuries. This paper explores how the Templars' relationship with the papacy and the Catholic Church enabled the order to amass its power. Through its doctrine, papal grants, and founding council, the Templars structured their order to be a military force used to attack the Muslim infidel. Religion was the unique element that enabled the Knights Templar to become the most significant military order of their time, greatly influencing the outcomes and events of the crusades. Due to their religious status, the Templars gained military and political stature, but the loss of papal backing following the collapse of the crusades undermined the order's *raison d'être*, creating the impetus for its demise. The Templars' relationship with the Church granted them monetary endowments from secular rulers, tax exemptions allowing the order to create trade monopolies, and a high level of military discipline, which became key to their defense of the Holy Land. This paper will also explore how these powers painted a target on the Templars' back, creating the justification for the order's destruction.

Morgan Henderson, Saint Mary's Academy

Catholic Syncretism: A Framework for Understanding Post-Colonial Religious Identity

Syncretic Catholicism, the blending of Catholic Christianity with Indigenous, African, and other pre-existing belief systems, represents a recurring and globally consistent pattern of religious adaptation arising from colonial encounters. This essay examines syncretic Catholic traditions across three regions: Latin America, Asia, and North America. In Latin America, where Spanish and Portuguese colonization imposed Christianity through force, syncretism functioned as a strategy of cultural survival. In Asia, where early Catholic missions relied more on persuasion than conquest, syncretism relied on voluntary negotiation and creative religious blending, producing hybrid traditions. In North America, African-derived traditions demonstrate that syncretic adaptation operated as a mode of cultural resistance under conditions of enslavement and dispossession. Across these contexts patterns emerge, such as the adoption of Catholic iconography and ritual as a flexible framework, the covert preservation of suppressed traditions, and the long-term durability of syncretic forms. These suggest that syncretism is not an anomaly but a process by which religious systems interact during cultural contact, and that the agency of colonized and marginalized peoples was central to shaping global Catholicism as it exists today.

James Hennessey-O'Connor, Grant High School

The Revolutionaries of Mt. Tabor: Religion, Radicalism, and Propaganda of The Taborites in Hussite Bohemia

This paper explores the formation of the radical Hussite group, the Taborites, in fifteenth century Bohemia, and their eventual decline and absorption into other religious groups. Tabor was founded in the rural countryside of Bohemia, populated by an impoverished working class. Under the leadership of Jan Zizka, and the influence of Jan Hus and Bishop Nicholas Biskupec of Pelhrimov, Tabor was able to establish itself as a highly successful military and religious force despite the opposition of the powerful Catholic Church. Tabor promoted literacy in the Bible to its working class members, including women, which set them apart from their urban counterparts. This paper traces the spread of Taborite written and verbal propaganda across Europe and its influence on the budding Protestant reformation. By revealing the cultural and religious radicalism of the Taborites, in comparison to their Catholic and Hussite counterparts, the religious diversity in Bohemia is shown

to be dynamic. Through analysis of scholarly texts, historical Hussite and Taborite propaganda, and religious writings from the Taborites, this paper delineates the Taborites, what made them radicals for their time, and their influence as an early example of anti-authoritarian and Christian radicalism in Early Modern Europe.

India Black-Mitchell, Saint Mary's Academy

SMSU 328/29

Mythic Waves: Seas of Change

Moderator: Dr. Loren Spielman

A Battle of Will and Wisdom: Polar Opposites in the Polar Extremes of the Viking World

This paper explores the connection between the polar climate of Viking-age Scandinavia and the success of the Vikings through examining the dual nature of their culture brought about by their environment. The Scandinavian peninsula is known for its harsh, variable climate full of cold winters and unpredictable harvests that turned into long summers and melting fjords. Outside of shaping survival strategies and material culture, this polar environment seeped into the fundamental cultural values the Vikings exhibited, creating the foundation for a society that understood the value of destruction and violence as well as creation and craftsmanship. Using Norse mythology as a primary reference for the ethos of Viking society, there is strong evidence for a mindset of duality through various social and cultural practices that directly led to the success of the civilization as a whole. From the polar creation myth to the unhappily married Njörd and Skadi and the great and dangerous Allfather Odin, Norse myths are full of contrasting ideas working in tandem to bring about success. Through examining various historical records of Norsemen in Ireland, Scotland, England, and France, it becomes clear that the Vikings had a strong influence on the urban development, political changes, and economic growth of these regions. This resulted from their notorious tendencies for plundering and thieving as well as their complex trade routes, masterful ship building, and tactful battle strategies. This paper demonstrates that the Vikings were not simply warriors, but also builders and craftsmen, and that while their polar climate should have hindered their success, it in fact built them into the strong, wise, fearless people they needed to be to rule the North Atlantic and beyond.

Lily Manne, St. Mary's Academy

The Kraken Wakes: Myth, Science, and the Rise of a Maritime Sensation, from 1750-1900

Since the 1800s, the legend of the Kraken has pervaded literature, but this creature is much older, figuring in Norwegian myths as early as the 13th century. The modern understanding of the Kraken can be traced back to the 1750s writing of Bishop Erik Pontoppidan, who described the monster with fantastical and analytical detail. An interrogation of Pontoppidan's text, as well as novels, poetry, and other media sources from the 19th century—many of which reference the Bishop by name—uncovers Pontoppidan's influence on later stories of the Kraken. Coupled with an analysis of secondary scholarship on the changing dynamics of science and legend during this time period, these sources collectively reveal how Pontoppidan's presentation of both myth and analysis was foundational to the content and prevalence of Kraken tales in 19th-century literature.

Leif Crockett, Riverdale High School

Demonizing Sexuality: Dangerous Women in Folklore

Cross-culturally, women in folklore have been portrayed as dangerous due to their sexuality and influence over men. Clear patterns throughout history emerge through analysis of the following occurrences, which show a link between how sexualized a female figure is and the threat she is considered to pose. The she-demon Lilith in Jewish and Mesopotamian mythology as well as folklore relating to the Scriptures, mermaids in Europe, and fox spirits in East Asia all demonstrate this phenomenon, since they are all overly sexualized and represent broader social norms towards women. These beings all exhibit similarities in being able to exert control over men in some form, and require some type of life-sustaining sustenance from men in order to survive, such as mermaids and fox spirits hunting down male souls and Lilith's and fox spirits' use of semen. Looking at women's role in folklore, particularly dangerous women, gives historians an idea of how women were seen in society at that time, and cultural values relating to women's sexuality.

SMSU 327

Revolution and Resistance: Pushing Back on Power

Moderator: *Dr. Jennifer Tappen*

Revolutionary Resistance in Denmark: The Impact of Grundtvigism on the Danish Resistance to Nazi Occupation

This paper examines the impact of nineteenth century philosopher and theologian Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig on the Danish resistance during World War II. Born in 1783, Grundtvig established a framework that paved the way for Danish national pride, setting the stage for a united resistance effort against Nazi occupation in October of 1943. His beliefs inspired movement towards the common good and allowed the Danes to reconnect with their cultural identity. Nazi Germany invaded Denmark in 1940, initially preserving an image of peace through a model protectorate. However, the image of peace was destroyed in 1943 after Nazi Germany ordered the roundup of Danish Jews. This paper examines how Grundtvig impacted both the initial passive Danish resistance movement founded in song and community and the active resistance movement to assist Danish Jews in escaping persecution. Ultimately, over ninety percent—or 7,00 Danish Jews—escaped death with the assistance of resisters. Through analysis of Grundtvig’s written work, Danish Jew’s firsthand accounts of occupation, and government-published statements, this paper draws parallels between the cultural identities of Danes and Jewish citizens during World War II and examines how this resistance movement should be used as an outline for the future.

Holland Burd, St. Mary’s Academy

Integration as Resistance: How Palestinian Chileans Have Acted as Transnational Activists from 1870-2008

Spurred by violence and persecution, countless groups across the Middle East have engaged in transnational migration across history. One such group, Palestinians, have embraced transnationalism as a cornerstone of their identity as a stateless nation. Beginning in the wake of the Crimean War, and later following the establishment of the state of Israel, many Palestinians immigrated to Chile’s capital, Santiago de Chile. There, they have engaged in cross-cultural interactions with Chileans in order to harness their economic, political, athletic, and artistic customs as unique forms of activism in the absence of proper diplomacy with any Palestinian state. While some Palestinian Chileans have sought elected office and engaged in organization through formal political parties, their engagement with the fight for Palestinian self-determination in the Middle East has been largely symbolic. Thus, the day-to-day resistance carried out by Palestinian Chileans through such cross-cultural interactions merits examination as a framework for new forms of global political advocacy. Additionally, it encourages individuals who are less familiar with the issue to reject mainstream, reductive portrayals of Palestinians by providing tangible examples of their agency, adaptability, and thriving diaspora around the world.

Eloise Brentano, Grant High School

The Sliding Scales of Solidarity: How Shared Colonial Elements Have Created Solidarity Amongst the Irish and Palestinians, Despite a Lasting Racial and Religious Divide

In 1982, the Irish Republican Youth Movement painted a mural on the side of a wall in Belfast, Northern Ireland, depicting a Palestinian man and an Irish Republican Army member united in holding a Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) launcher with the caption “IRA [Irish Republican Army] - PLO [Palestinian Liberation Organization] One Struggle.” Art, written documentation, and political speeches further demonstrate a vocal Irish cultural support of the Palestinians dating back decades. Why is it that these two nations, separated by over 2000 miles, have such deep roots of solidarity? Through exploration of mirrored British Imperialism in Palestine and Ireland, a history of solidarity against colonial oppression is revealed. Yet despite historical similarities in shared colonial elements, Ireland and Palestine and corresponding liberation movements have received dramatic differences in international support, particularly from western nations like the United States

of America. This paper uses examination of anti-Palestinian racism and islamophobia report records, as well as trends reflected in popular sentiment to illustrate how a lasting racial and religious divide between solidarity movements in Ireland and Palestine has limited international support for Palestinians and the Palestinian cause.

Glory Bangs, St. Mary's Academy

10:25 – 10:35 BREAK

10:35 – 11:45 **SECOND SESSIONS:** Choose from Three

SMSU 338 **This is my Place**
Moderator: Dr. Brenda Frink

Unapologetic Anger: How Female Punk Musicians Redefined Feminism in 1970s Britain

This paper investigates how female punk musicians in late 1970s Britain acted as radical drivers of feminist revolution both within the music industry and throughout broader society. Throughout economic collapse, punk's DIY ethos combined with already growing feminist consciousness created a unique space which allowed for women like Poly Styrene, Siouxsie Sioux, and The Slits to challenge patriarchal standards of appearance, behavior, and sexuality through music. Despite punk's outwardly masculine energy, female artists fundamentally transformed the movement. Their aggressive attitudes and messaging expanded punk from a working-class youth rebellion into an intersectional feminist platform that addressed women's anger, autonomy, and creative expression in ways previously unseen in popular music. This paper explores the political and cultural dynamics that allowed women to enter the punk scene, the strategies they used to reclaim their bodies and sexualities from the male gaze, and the subsequent backlash they faced as a result of their efforts. By analyzing firsthand accounts from musicians and people within the scene, referencing academic journals, and investigating lyrics from popular punk songs, this paper argues that female punk musicians were among the most influential and underrecognized feminist figures of the twentieth century. Though largely pushed underground by the early 1980s as commercialization and resurgent patriarchal values took hold, their legacy has endured—paving the way for the Riot Grrrl movement in the 1990s, and redefining what feminist expression could look like for generations of women to come.

Quinby Maruna, St. Mary's Academy

Subversive Shooting: How Annie Oakley Rose to Nationwide Notoriety

Annie Oakley was a famous female sharpshooter in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show for over 16 years. Despite being a woman in a largely male-dominated profession, she became a nationwide sensation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, outpacing other female shooters who followed her example. This paper seeks to analyze how specific attributes of Oakley's feminine persona supported her unprecedented success amidst changing cultural values. Photos and videos of Oakley and secondary scholarship focused on Oakley's role in western expansion reveal how Oakley leveraged her femininity to create a name for herself and took advantage of burgeoning new images of the West. In many ways, she deliberately avoided the image of a feminist trailblazer and acted in accordance with gender norms. An interpretation of Oakley's presentation reveals the strategic marketing choices which branded Oakley as non-threatening, captivating, and inspiring, and allowed her to become a lasting Western icon.

Sy Jones, Riverdale High School

From Mogadishu to Minneapolis: Transnational Political and Social Ties in the Somali Diaspora

Beginning in the 1980s, Somalis have fled Somalia in order to escape persecution and political violence, find new economic opportunities, and achieve a better life. One major destination of these migrants is Minneapolis, Minnesota, which is now home to over 80,000 Somalis, making up 18% of Minneapolis' population. Due to this sizable Somali enclave, Minneapolis and Somalia have created and maintained a

transnational relationship. This paper examines that relationship, focusing on the causes of the Somali diaspora, evidence of transnational connections (such as remittances, cultural exchange, and political effects), and the challenges that threaten this tie. Understanding this relationship is crucial to understanding both Minneapolis and Somalia, as it demonstrates how migration can shape not only individual lives, but entire communities, across borders.

Kate McFarland, Grant High School

SMSU 328/9

Crafting the Truth: Reconsidering the Stories We are Told

Moderator: Dr. Brian Turner

The Prominent Voice of Cold War Era Radio: The 1968 Soviet Union Invasion of Czechoslovakia

This paper explores the influence of radio and free press during the Prague Spring and subsequent Soviet Union invasion of Czechoslovakia during the Cold War. After the Prague Spring, a brief period of growing freedom stemming from Alexander Dubček's transition out of strict socialist censorship, the Soviet Union orchestrated a military invasion of the socialist satellite state. During this invasion, radio transmitters in Prague informed listeners that the invasion was against the Czechoslovak's government's will and instructed Czech and Slovak citizens to remain calm and protest nonviolently. By analyzing the emergence of the free press from the Prague Spring and the role of radio throughout the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, this paper illustrates the media's role as a critical method in the rapid spread of ideas, opinions, and news across borders and as a voice of liberation to this day.

Zuzana Langer, St. Mary's Academy

Rhetoric, Shakespeare, and Tony Soprano: The Influence of Suetonius's The Life of Julius Caesar in Personalizing the Leader

History has presented a group of leaders who have been frequently studied and written about; Julius Caesar is among these leaders. The common historical narrative which examines his life has brought particular attention to not only his leadership, but also him as an individual. In the 2nd century CE, the writer Suetonius published his 12 Caesars, a collection of biographies that included his biography of Julius Caesar. Throughout this collection, Suetonius would depict his subjects in a manner that was less factual than other biographies which preceded his, yet it became more influential than these other biographies as well. These depictions would change the manner in which the book's subjects were depicted throughout history. This paper focuses particularly on Suetonius's The Life of Julius Caesar and its influence upon the image of a leader as powerful and influential as Julius Caesar. This paper will explore Suetonius's life, education, and style of writing, all of which formed the rhetoric that would influence modern interpretations of the leader, before moving onto his influence upon William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, and finally landing upon the influence of The Life of Julius Caesar upon modern fictional and non-fictional media.

Eben Cole, Grant High School

Division for Profit: 'The Ripper' Created by the London Press

This paper explores how, motivated by commercial interests, the London Press's sensationalist coverage of Jack the Ripper's victims—and the East End—legitimized and intensified social divisions in Victorian society, and they therefore reinforced social hierarchies to otherize the East End from the upper class through morally charged narratives. In autumn of 1888, 'Jack the Ripper' murdered five middle-aged prostitutes in a largely impoverished immigrant-dominated area of London called the East End. The killer was never caught, and the journalistic frenzy around the mystery, its lurid nature, and the severity of the crime inspired hundreds of pieces of media and a field of 'Ripperology' that thrives today. Newspapers turned murder into a fictional saga by degrading the morality of the victims, emphasizing class divisions, and publishing obviously false information. Driven by a desire to capture public attention and extend the coverage of Jack the Ripper, publications walked a tightrope between morality and intrusive shock value to make the most money through exaggeration, even at the compromise of their humanity and the humanity of the victims. Using archival newspaper clippings of informative and investigative articles, speculation on the murders, public opinion

columns, reformation proposals, and illustrated news, this paper illuminates how the press created a media event out of murder while ignoring the societal divisions they were emphasizing. The London Press's choice to capitalize on the public's fear by sensationalizing the tragedy of Jack the Ripper resulted in measurable, and occasionally violent, social repercussions that separated the poor from the rich, the men from the women, and the immigrants from the native-born Londoners.

Marlo Dabareiner, St. Mary's Academy

SMSU 327

Truth Illuminated: Medicine, Technology, and the State

Moderator: *Dr. Natan Meir*

Chernobyl: How the Government's Response Impacted Health

This paper examines how the Soviet government's response to the Chernobyl disaster negatively impacted civilian health. The USSR's prioritization of maintaining its image, both domestically and internationally, as well as within its own bureaucratic structure, led to secrecy, misinformation, and coverups of the explosion's severity. This, in turn, delayed critical action and exposed civilians to harmful levels of radiation. This paper draws on a range of primary sources, including minutes from the Soviet Accident Investigation Committee, correspondence between scientists and government officials, initial medical reports, structural inspection documents, and firsthand civilian accounts, and is supported by previous research, such as Edward Geist's work in the *Slavic Review*. While the reactor explosion resulted from a failure in the cooling system, the disaster was largely preventable, and its consequences were exacerbated by the government's inadequate response. By analyzing decisions made before, during, and after the accident, this paper argues that both deliberate actions and inaction by Soviet authorities significantly contributed to the long-term health consequences experienced by affected populations.

Alisa Safina, St. Mary's Academy

The Great Plague of Marseille

This paper examines the causes and consequences of the Great Plague of Marseille (1720-1722), which was one of Western Europe's last major outbreaks of the bubonic plague. Although European port cities had developed quarantine systems to prevent epidemics, Marseille's outbreak revealed how these protections failed in practice. This paper argues that the plague became so devastating not because of a lack of institutional systems, but due to fragmented local authority, delayed government intervention, and the prioritization of economic interests over public health. Focusing on the arrival of the merchant ship *Grand-Saint-Antoine*, this paper analyzes how merchant elites influenced quarantine decisions, and allowed for infected goods to enter the city and initiate widespread transmission. It further explores how denial among local officials and conflicting medical interpretations delayed recognition of the disease. Ultimately accelerating its spread among Marseille's dense population. Through evaluating medical accounts, government responses, and contemporary observations, this paper demonstrates how ineffective early response transformed a containable outbreak into a regional disaster. The crisis eventually forced the French monarchy to centralize public health authority and standardize quarantine practices across the kingdom. The Great Plague of Marseille serves as a critical case study in how economic priorities and political fragmentation can undermine disease prevention systems, highlighting the necessity of unified leadership in managing public health.

Lucy Herzig, St. Mary's Academy

Artificial Light: A Conduit of Human Productivity Through the Ages

Throughout history, technology has played a pivotal role in human productivity. From conversation around campfires, to handheld lighting technologies (such as candles, oil lamps, and other such crude— yet compact— lighting devices), to fiber-optic cables that carry information across oceans through the power of light— humanity's productivity has been massively impacted by innovations in light technology. This paper takes a sharp look at all three of these innovations, examining their impact on human productivity through history, and on our global society today.

Elias Henkle, Grant High School

11:45 – 12:35	LUNCH	SMSU 355 (Ballroom)
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12:35 – 1:45	THIRD SESSIONS: Choose from Three	
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SMSU 338	Right on the Money: Transnational Capitalism Moderator: <i>Dr. Joseph Bohling</i>
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Imported Hierarchies: Early European Colonial Feudal Land Regulation, Patroons, and Oppressive Systems of the Dutch Colonial Management

This paper examines the Dutch patroon system in colonial New Netherland as a critical bridge between medieval European feudalism and the development of American capitalist land practices. Drawing on colonial charters, economic records, and contemporary accounts, it argues that the patroon system was not a simple cultural transplant from the Dutch Republic, but a deliberate adaptation designed to maximize profit through land control and tenant dependency. By granting vast estates to elite investors under the Dutch West India Company and enforcing rent-based obligations such as quit-rents and quarter-sales, the system concentrated wealth and power in the hands of a small landholding class while binding tenant farmers to long-term economic subordination. The paper further explores how this combined system of combining feudal hierarchy with market-oriented agriculture, contrasted sharply with the more decentralized and cooperative land practices of the Dutch Republic during its Golden Age. It demonstrates that, following the English seizure of New Netherland in 1664, these landholding structures persisted with minimal disruption, highlighting their adaptability across shifting rulers. The endurance of patroonship practices into the American period, culminating in the Anti-Rent Wars of the nineteenth century, reveals the deep entrenchment of rent-based land relations in early American society. Through this analysis, the paper contends that American economic development was not founded solely on ideals of independence and free markets, but was significantly shaped by inherited systems of land-based privilege. The legacy of the patroon system thus exposes the continuity of medieval hierarchies within American capitalism and underscores their lasting influence on patterns of property ownership, wealth inequality, and landlord-tenant relations in the United States.

Solène Curren, St. Mary's Academy

Little Africa in Global China: Transnational Nigerians in Guangzhou and the Making of Xiaobei

This paper will examine the history and development of transnationalism fostered by Nigerians in Guangzhou, China after the late 1990s. Spurred in part by the Asian Financial Crisis, Nigerian men flocked to Guangzhou's thriving import-export economy. They established the ethnic enclave of Xiaobei where many lived and engaged in the informal wholesale economy. Nigerians existed between cultural boundaries in Xiaobei and back in Lagos—where they constantly returned. Both the export economy in Guangzhou and the resale economy in Lagos' street markets were deeply influenced by one another due to the entrepreneurial migrants. This paper will provide a general overview of the many facets that contribute to Nigerians' transnationalism in Xiaobei from multilingual signage to interracial families and argue the value in "low-end globalization." Strict immigration crackdowns reduced the scale of transnationalism in Xiaobei, but even through the COVID-19 pandemic, the ethnic enclave never vanished. This case of transnationalism illustrates how informal economies, adaptability, and mobility are the beating heart of global economic connections despite structural strife.

Tess Nestel, Grant High School

From Silver to Smoke: Britain's Economic War on Qing China

Opium, a highly addictive substance containing the potent painkiller morphine, can be found at the center of the downfall of China's last dynasty and "Century of Humiliation." When the British East India Company began smuggling opium into China as a medium to exchange, it became a currency of trade, overtaking silver bullion and fueling return profits to the British. However, the illicit opium trade resulted in tumultuous conflict that fueled the breakage of economic and political tradition in China. This paper explores the impact of British-Indian opium trade on the economic structure of Qing-era China. Making a case for economic imperialism, this paper utilizes a range of primary sources from both China and Britain to help explain how, and why, the East India Company and British Empire caused the Opium War, a conflict that would result in a century of political subjugation and economic devastation for China.

Charlotte Osenar, St. Mary's Academy

SMSU 328/329

The Role of Aesthetics in Rebellion

Moderator: Dr. Jennifer Kerns

Practicing Vice: Successful Homosexuality Within the Frameworks of the Medieval Church

The Medieval European Church was broadly disapproving of most forms of human sexual expression, and any same-sex expression was discouraged as a form of sexual sin. This paper examines the writings of Medieval monks, nuns, mystics, and theologians as well as their life stories and the social and physical environments they inhabited to argue that, despite the absolute attitudes of the Church against homosexuality, the frameworks of the Church provided outlets for both abstract and concrete expressions of homosexual longing and desire. This paper explores sexual expression as a form of union with the divine in Medieval Christianity and how homosexuality appeared within erotic visions and devotional practices, analyses the social correspondence of Churchmen and women for expressions of same-sex desire, examines the influence of abbeys and monasteries as single-gender spaces on medieval homosexuality, and considers the lives of specific Christian figures of the medieval era in the context of broader medieval theology as expressed through the theological writings and doctrines of the time. Altogether, this paper posits a variety of modes of same-sex sexual expression and mutual affection present in the Medieval Church and the ways in which the frameworks of the church made them possible.

Portia Trabue, St. Mary's Academy

"A Deliberate Sense of Propaganda:" The Enduring Activism of Picasso's Guernica

This paper explores the activist intentions behind and messages communicated in Picasso's Guernica piece. It presents Picasso's guidelines for Guernica's exhibitions, contemporary reactions to the painting and appropriations by modern artists. To Picasso, the Guernica bombing typified the brutality of modern warfare and the artist utilized his Guernica piece to immortalize and condemn the attack. Its initial display in the 1937 Paris World Fair and subsequent displays in Europe were met with controversy, but as Guernica toured America and found a home in the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), celebration overwhelmed criticism. Throughout exhibitions, Guernica's image preserved the memory of its namesake bombing and garnered support for the Republican cause. It was only returned following the restoration of democratic rule in Spain in accordance with Picasso's wishes. The research focuses on Picasso's statements about the nature of his painting and its display alongside first- and second-hand accounts of contemporary reactions. This paper places special emphasis on the lasting impact of Guernica in the political landscape in and beyond the United States. It also describes Guernica's lingering influence on art activism, specifically shown in pieces responding to conflict. Guernica is both a powerful portrayal of modern brutality and a force for change, remaining an effective piece of art activism to the present day.

Camille Friess, St. Mary's Academy

Golden Age or Gilded Cage? The Rise and Dissolution of the Olympic Art Competitions, 1912–1948

In 1912, Baron Pierre de Coubertin's modern day Olympics celebrated not only its five year anniversary, but the first inclusion of the Olympic Art Competitions. Resembling a neo-Renaissance, Coubertin envisioned a "balance of the muscle and the mind" through the unity of the physical and intellectual. By 1948, however, the art competitions had collapsed, leaving the social experiment forgotten by future generations. Drawing upon personal testimony from Coubertin and his loyal successors, and records from the International Olympic

Committee, this paper explores how Coubertin's extreme dedication to a pure and sanctified Neoclassical ideal led to the art competition's demise. Olympic history informs both Coubertin and his staff's resolute dismissal of the avant-garde and unwavering commitment to the amateurism ideal. Pierre de Coubertin's attempt to foster a neo-Renaissance, further limited by his successors' loyalty to amateurism, ensured that the Olympic Art Competitions were inevitably doomed to fail.

Stella Gatziolis, Riverdale High School

SMSU 327

Building and G(u)ilding: Creating Communities

Moderator: Dr. Richard Beyler

"To Live and Die with Each Other Like Brothers": Guilds and the Growth of Urban Community in the Medieval and Early Modern Low Countries

This paper explores the impact of the craft guilds on the creation of urban community in the medieval and early modern Low Countries (the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg). By the end of the Middle Ages, the craft guilds were powerful organizations that dominated the economies of many European towns and cities, and they were especially prevalent in the highly urbanized Low Countries. At their peak, the guilds controlled who could work in a particular industry within a city and organized a complex web of social support for their members. But at their beginnings, the guilds were small organizations of merchants seeking protection from crime and the feudal powers that dominated the newly-forming medieval cities. This paper traces the evolution of the guilds as an antidote to the disintegration of the pastoral family unit. When working-class Europeans began moving from manor farms to cities and finding work in the trades, the bonds of the European family unit weakened as family members found work outside the home. The early merchants' associations, then, developed not only out of economic necessity for protection, but also from the workers' need for new sources of community support. Through primary-source documents and evidence of community events and rituals, this paper illustrates how the guilds created an environment of brotherhood and close connection between guildsmen. And as the guilds gained power and became more hierarchical in nature, they continued to act as family-like systems of support both to their members and to the non-guildsmen of the cities they occupied. Evidence of hospitals built for guildsmen, funding for burial and funeral rites of guildsmen, and monetary support for guildsmen's orphans and widows reveals the support systems guilds built for their own members, while charity boxes for the non-guildsmen poor show the guilds' power to build webs of community across entire cities. Finally, evidence of city-wide events like parades and theater festivals put on by guilds further illustrates their impact on community-building in European cities. Ultimately, the guilds were one of the most important contributors to a sense of community in the cities of the medieval and early modern Low Countries.

Isabel Fogel, St. Mary's Academy

Blueprints of City Planning: How Function and Symbolism Have Shaped our Cities

Today, more than half of the world's population lives in cities. While that wasn't always the case, cities have existed for millennia, and humans have been planning them for just as long. This paper examines the history of urban planning, from the Indus Valley civilization to Washington DC and New Orleans, into the future of planned cities like the NEOM project in Saudi Arabia. It examines the commonalities between cities across time and establishes a timeline of the emergence of different patterns in city planning history. Among the examples discussed are the Indus Valley civilization, the Ancient Greek city of Thouria, the Sasanian city of Ardašīr-Xwarrah, and Washington DC. Archaeological evidence can help to untangle the history of these cities, suggesting important information about their religion, government, and connection with other cultures. While common motifs like the grid and certain architectural designs are important to the history of urban planning, this paper also challenges the idea that there is one correct way of building a city and reinforces the importance of looking at ancient cultures as well-rounded and capable of designing for multiple purposes. Instead of focusing solely on the symbolic or functional reasoning for the plan of a city, it is ideal to examine both, to create that more developed view of these cities.

Elinor Stoll, Grant High School

Nation-Building on Pillars of Fascism: How Italian Fascist Ideals Have Remained Alive in Eritrean Identity Through the Asmaran Urban Landscape

Roughly a third of Eritrea's time as an Italian colony was spent under fascist rule, during which the Italian colonists dramatically changed the Asmaran urban environment, as well as its relationship with the rest of the Eritrean colony, to reflect fascist principles. After the fall of the Italian colonial empire, Eritrean political leaders sought to use the physical landscape to justify their claims to sovereignty, reapplying those pre-existing fascist principles to Eritrean nationalism. By examining Italian-Asmaran buildings, roads, and legal structures in their contexts, common threads between past fascist beliefs and the modern Eritrean military state emerge, offering a better understanding of one of the world's most unknown countries.

Caspian Green, Grant High School

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