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Digital History Lab To Open

The History department will open a brand new digital history lab in the spring 2022 semester. We are incredibly grateful to the "Friends of History," whose donations funded the renovations to room 390. Renovations included walling over a superfluous doorway into the back maze of offices to fit more computer desks, and updating electrical service. We created an adjoining printer station in the room that formerly served as Dr. Macaluso's office. Donations and department money further equipped the space with computer desks and chairs. Finally, a U.S. Department of Education International Studies and Foreign Language Program grant won by Dr. Christine Rinne fitted the room with fourteen computers.

The lab will allow us to train our history majors for a variety of careers, whether his-

tory education and museums, related areas like civics and law, or even new fields of data management. When the lab is not in use for digital history

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Digital
History
Lab

classes, it will be open to other departments for scheduling, and to all students.

Going into the pandemic, eighteen percent of Alabama households did not have computers according to the National Center for Educational Statistics. More than thirty percent of Alabama students lacked internet access. We saw the hard truth of these statistics firsthand during the switch to online learning during the pandemic shutdown. Many students relied on tablets to complete complex assignments; some students only had cell phones. The digital lab provides our students fundamental access to critical tools, greatly improving their chances of success.

Moving forward, we hope to grow the number of our computer stations, and to expand the software packages we teach. The History Department is very pleased with this new capability.

History Profs to Lead Study Abroad Trips

History Department faculty are planning to lead two overseas trips in the summer of 2022. From June 1 to June 15, Dr. Harry Miller will take students to Kyoto and Tokyo, Japan, as part of his "Japan Old and New" program. The course of study will focus on the culture of fashion, from the classical world of *The Tale of Genji* to the modern scene of cosplay, manga, and anime.

From July 18 to July 30, Dr. David Meola will embark

with students on his Jewish Studies and History in Germany itinerary. Visiting medieval settlements in Worms as well as metropolitan Berlin, participants will discover how Jews navigated their environments and became German citizens. A contrasting focus will be on failures of coexistence, including the tragic events of the Holocaust. The group will tour two concentration camp memorials and other Holocaust sites, as students learn about Germany's

struggles to master its past.

Interested students should contact the professors for more information, as the programs become finalized. In the meantime, please make sure you have a valid passport! Wait times for passport processing are longer than usual.





Gabriel Gold-Vukson

Letter from an Alumnus: Gabriel Gold-Vukson

I'm going to make a couple of confessions in this paragraph and the first one is that I based my post-undergrad plans on my favorite comic strip, Calvin and Hobbes. After graduating from the University of South Alabama, my first profession was as a private investigator (because as a kid I really liked the Calvin alter-ego Tracer Bullet). Typically, that work is done by people with criminal justice backgrounds, but I tell you that job is made for history majors. I had to observe and report the small-

est details of the lives of everyday people, look for behavioral trends, and use scattered sources to locate people and information, all while remaining an unobserved and impartial viewer. I admit, I was terrible at following vehicles, but I wrote the best reports in the company.

While working as a P.I., I earned my graduate degree in public administration from the University of West Florida. With my background in history and now public administration, I was a good candidate for my current

position as director of Fairhope Museum of History. My education at the University of South Alabama gave me the skills and knowledge to present our unique city's history to tens of thousands of guests a year. It also helped me earn my M.P.A. Work in public administration is ever evolving and requires a good understanding of history and precedents. USA's history program provides a strong foundation for branching out into many unique and adventurous fields and for stepping into public service.

*"History, as we know it, is a record of the wars of the world, and so...a nation which has no history...is a happy nation."
-- Gandhi*

Back to Class, With a Few Twists

BY DAVID A. MESSENGER, CHAIR. With the rest of the University of South Alabama, the Department of History opened up this Fall with more in-person classes during the yet to be ended COVID-19 pandemic.

The campus is under a mask mandate in all indoor spaces, but classes are enrolled at full capacity. The Department takes the health concerns and worries of faculty, staff and students seriously, so the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 schedules do have more online classes than in before pandemic times and also a healthy offering of blended classes, merging online and in-person teaching to varying degrees, alongside a large offering of in person classes.

As an instructor, I'm delighted to be back in front of fully enrolled classes and talking to students about historical documents, interpretations, and debates. Seeing the

students sitting on the benches in the hallway of the third floor of the Humanities Building between classes is



Dr. Messenger

also something I missed seeing in the 2020-21 academic year.

However, it would be wrong to think the pandemic was a lost year. Moving online in the last 18 months led many faculty to innovate

and develop different teaching tools and assignments. And many of those have crossed into the blended and online classes we are still offering students today, in a way we believe adds significant pedagogical benefits to the education of our students.

For example, Dr. Kelly Urban uses her blended class to host synchronous online discussion boards, which allow students who do not like speaking in front of others a chance to more confidently share their opinions. The format also pushes students to practice referencing specific portions of primary sources, and it allows Dr. Urban to get a broad view of how each class understands a particular topic.

These new ideas and approaches to the teaching of history will not be going away, nor will our online and blended presence go away. Rather, they will continue to develop alongside in-person classes to enhance our teaching of history here at South Alabama.

What We're Working On

History Department professors have continued to make progress in research and writing, even while facing the challenges of teaching during the pandemic.

Dr. David Meola's book, "*We Will Never Yield*": *Jews, the German Press, and the Fight for Inclusion in the 1840s*, has been accepted for publication by Indiana University Press. It is due out in 2023.

Dr. Harry Miller is developing a piece of experimental fiction, based on a seventeenth-century Chinese manuscript. He has transplanted the setting to modern-day Baltimore and has titled it *Meet Me at the RASCAL*.



Dr. Kelly Urban is revising her manuscript, *Politicosis: Tuberculosis, Health Activism, and the State in Twentieth-Century Cuba*, which is under advance contract with the University of North Carolina Press.

Dr. Rebecca Williams is writing a book chapter that explores how the miracles of Jesus were understood in medieval Islamic texts. It will be included in a volume edited by Stephen Burge of the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London and will be published sometime next year by The Society of Biblical Literature Press.

Please watch this space for news of your professors' ongoing projects!

Local History at USA

Examining local history is a growing part of the work that the History Department engages in across the city of Mobile. Over the past three years, working with History professor and Dean of the Honors College Dr. Kathy Cooke, with a grant from the David Mathews Center for Civic Life, the Honors College has offered a class combining practices of civic engagement with short-term internships for students with local history organizations.

In the summer of 2021, this model was expanded upon in a grant from the Alabama Humanities Alliance held by USA's Center for War and Memory. Liam Hodges, HY graduate student, worked with undergrads Sara Clark and Marley Russell (non history majors) over the summer on a paid internship in a project led by Drs. David Messenger and Susan McCready (Modern Languages) on the history of Confederate street names in Mobile.

Work continues on this project to document when streets in Mobile were named for Confederate generals and leaders and who was involved. A public website with interactive map is the desired outcome.



How to Get the Most out of your History Courses

Short answer: Meet with your advisor!

Long answer: The History curriculum at South is a program of graduated instruction. You will do best if you complete your survey classes early, gain experience in two or three upper-division courses, complete a writing-intensive (W) course in your junior year, and take

the Research Seminar in the first semester of your senior year. Following this path will help you master the historian's – and the critical thinker's – skill set: gathering, evaluating, organizing, and communicating information. It may be frustrating and wasteful to take a W class or a Research Seminar too early or to need surveys as a senior.

All history students – majors, minors, double-majors, and lovers of history – should get an advisor who will guide you through the program to maximize your growth and enjoyment.

This article ran in the Fall 2018 issue.

Spring 2022 Courses

HY 101 – History of Western Civilization I (7 sections)

HY 102 – History of Western Civilization II (3 sections)

HY 104 – History of Asian Civilization II (Miller)

HY 135 – US History to 1877 (10 sections)

HY 136 – US History since 1877 (8 sections)

HY 228 – Latin America (Nouwen)

HY 357 – Europe Since 1945 (Messenger)

HY 364 – Islamic Civilization to 1453 (Williams)

HY 382W – Jews & Modern American Culture (Meola)

HY 384 – Japanese History in Film and Literature (Miller)

HY 401/501 – Colloquium in History: Anti-Semitism (Meola)

HY 431 – Studies in US History: America's Rise to World Power (McWilliams)

HY 433/553 – The American Revolution (Hamilton)

HY 442 – Research Seminar in European History: The British Empire (Strong)

HY 457/557 – Studies in European History: Digital History Training (Kozelsky)

HY 461/561 – Studies in Asian History: Japan at War, 1931-1945 (Miller)

HY 478 /578– The New South (McKiven)

HY 590 – Special Topics: The History of Modern France (Cage)

HY 597 – Professional Studies: Directed Field Research (Hamilton)

HY 598 – Comp and Thesis Preparation (Hamilton)

HY 599—Thesis (McKiven)



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***The History Department welcomes donations!
Please contact the Department office.***

The USA History Department offers a wide variety of exciting courses, covering the histories of Eastern and Western Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, as well as the history of the United States and the South. Faculty are committed to teaching research and writing skills and the critical thinking that is becoming ever more necessary for survival in the information age. Now, more than ever, a history education is a prerequisite for an informed global citizenry.

Please visit us online or in person and see what History has to offer!

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