Professor Benjamin Cawthra is preparing to lead a second Study Abroad summer tour to Florence, Italy, from June 14 to July 28, 2013. Italy has deep roots. “I loved studying the art, history, and literature of the Italian Renaissance as an undergraduate, when I focused more on Europe,” Cawthra says. He was again drawn to Italy when he began viewing classics from Italian cinema. “I don’t think I’ve ever recovered from my initial viewings of Bicycle Thieves and La dolce vita,” he says. His Modern Italy and Film class will place these and other films in conversation with postwar Italian history, starting in 1945 with Roberto Rossellini’s neorealist film Rome Open City.

The streets and monuments of Florence will figure prominently in “Italy in the American Imagination,” a course on American encounters with Italy from 1760 to the flood of the Arno in Florence in 1966. “We’ll read Nathaniel Hawthorne’s romance The Marble Faun and discuss it on a walking tour at the villa where he wrote it. The villa plays a key role in the novel as well,” Cawthra says. Visits to the church of Santa Maria Novella and the monastery of San Marco are enriched by readings of Henry James’s essays on Florence. “We get to see what was so special about his favorite frescoes and why they appealed to him as a post-Civil War realist writer.” Art history lectures on American painters, sculptors, and photographers in Italy will chart changing attitudes and styles over time.

Nineteen students, including five history majors, went to Italy in 2012. The 2013 tour will include a day trip to the medieval cities of Siena and San Gimignano and optional weekend tours of Rome and Venice. Students will live in walking-friendly Florence for six weeks, learning how to cook Italian food, going to the opera, using their free passes to dozens of Florence museums, and taking trips on their own to other points in Italy and Europe.

“When it was time go home last year,” Cawthra says, “everyone was trying to figure out how to get back. I’m grateful that I can return so soon.”
History Department Also Studies Itself

If the creativity and ingenuity of the department alone holds so much promise, just imagine what we could do with proper funding…

Five year plans are out of fashion among economists since the death of the Soviet Union, but for academic departments they still make good sense. Ok, make that seven years – that is the interval at which the history department and other programs here and on other campuses, submit themselves to a program performance review.

After surveying the opinions of students and faculty, our own PPR Committee took stock of the department’s accomplishments and improvements, and laid out the major challenges ahead of us in 40 page self-study. No surprise here that the budget is the largest concern.

During a half-day “retreat” in November, the faculty also brainstormed ways in which it could improve its service to students and continue to do “more with less.” And we came up with over forty suggestions. They included expanding our internship opportunities, play a larger role in the college’s pre-law advisement, further expand our strong presence in international programs, and continue the expansion of our public and digital history efforts with COPH. There was a particular abundance of proposals to improve our graduate student experience with tutorial programs, such as allow more interdisciplinary electives to improve our M.A. students career prospects the formation of proposal and thesis writing groups, field-specific learning communities, an online community site for easier access to program rules and resources, updating our professional expectations for M.A. theses to increase their chances for publication in peer-reviewed journals; and emphasizing professional and communicational skills for M.A.s in the private sector. There was also considerably enthusiasm for a further engagement with the public. Building on the leadership role of COPH, faculty suggested curated tours of neighborhoods and sites (at a fee), offer roundtables to share our expertise on current affairs, and further cultivate our engagement with alumni.

If the creativity and ingenuity of the department alone holds so much promise, just imagine what we could do with proper funding…

Dr. Volker Janssen

European Studies Society Event:
“Britain’s Historical Participation in the Olympic Games.”

On October 29, 2012, the European Studies Society hosted “Britain’s Historical Participation in the Olympic Games,” a presentation conducted by Dr. Matthew Llewellyn, an Assistant Professor of Kinesiology. His research encompasses the sporting history of Great Britain, which was the cradle for modern sports. Born on the playground of Britain’s most prestigious schools, modern competitive sports flourished throughout the British Isles. The British embraced sports as a vehicle for the promotion of masculine virtue, Christianity, and an instrument for empire building.

Dr. Llewellyn’s work aims to explore Britain’s rich sporting heritage and its connection to national identity in the modern Olympic Games. He captivated an audience of over fifty people, which included students, faculty and the general population with this powerful historical narrative. The audience also shared memories of the Olympics Games and some intriguing questions that delighted Dr. Llewellyn.

ESS welcomes Dr. Llewellyn to our organization.

Caralou Rosen

College Students Do Vote!
Experiencing American History as It Happens

What better time to teach - or learn – United States history than during an election year? The electoral campaigns and the election itself abound with teaching moments and opportunities to make the past relevant to the present and highlight the ways in which our history is very much alive. And in turn, this history has a way to inspire and motivate good citizenship. From the struggle for suffrage, to the changes in national politics, the role of the media, to the significance of legislation and Supreme Court Decisions – think Citizens United or the Voting Rights Act – these are good reasons and excellent teaching opportunities that guard students against two big challenges for voter turnout among young people – complacency and cynicism.

I offered my section of the 20th century U.S. survey to skip class on November 6th if they went to vote. They had the option of bringing in proof or simply tell me they voted. Hardly anyone took advantage of this honor system. Instead, I received a pile of ballot slips and “I Voted” stickers. Add to that a flurry of smartphone photos with students at the polling stations. Whatever choice they made there, their high turnout is encouraging.

Dr. Volker Janssen

What Do Professors Do When They Aren’t Grading Papers?

Spotlight on History Faculty: Dr. Vanessa Gunther

Vanessa Gunther came to world of academia in a round-about fashion. She started her professional career as a registered nurse first dealing with psychiatric emergencies in California’s penal system and later in intensive care. History was a relaxing pastime but one that persistentlybeckoned. She pursued her BA and MA in history at CSUF under the exacting tutelage of Gordon Bakken and finished her PhD at UCR. Her focus of study was nineteenth-century American History with an emphasis on Native Americans, California, women and the law. However, knowing about the past paled in comparison to teaching about history. Each class offered new opportunities and avenues to explore unconsidered nuances in the historical past.

Since completing her Ph.D., Dr. Gunther has expanded her interests and teaching to include classes that focus on the American Civil War and Sports History. After writing two books on Native Americans, the most recent a 2010 biography on Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce, as well as contributing to several compilations, her current project is an examination of crime in California as an impetus for the formation of the state. Dr Gunther also works with the homeless in Fullerton as part of the Family Promise program. When not occupied with academics or community work, she can be found regularly prowling the streets of Disneyland, fruitlessly, but happily searching for any inkling of historical accuracy.

Outside the Classroom: Fair Trade Chocolate

Students from Dr. Zacaïr and Dr. Neufeld’s Latin American history classes attended a seminar on Environmental and Social Justice in the Fair Trade of Ecuadorian chocolate on November 15 in the TSU theater. The event, co-sponsored by the History Department, Latin American Studies, and Women and Gender Studies, brought together a hundred students from across the campus to sample the various organic fair trade chocolates sold by the village cooperative Kallari.

According to their website, the “Kallari Association is a self-governed coalition of Amazon artists and organic cocoa producers. Our cooperative began in 1997 with less than fifty families and has now grown to over 850 families.”

To learn more about the Kallari cooperative, visit their website at www.kallari.com. To sample Kallari chocolate, go to www.KallariChocolate.com.
Near Monarch, Montana, is located the first Minuteman Launch Facility to go on alert fifty years ago. It was Alpha-06 and was followed in the next few days by the nine other Minuteman sites in Alpha flight. Within the next year they were joined by the other 14 missile flights in Montana and a then in the next few years the rest of the 1000 Minuteman missiles around the country came onto alert. This event, 50 years ago, came near the end of the Cuban Missile Crisis and President Kennedy referred to it later has his “Ace in the Hole.”

I had been a maintenance team chief very first place I tried skiing. Yes, snow can be fun also.

Richard Hartman
History M.A. Student
Faculty Publications, Presentations, and Awards

- Assistant Professor Stephen Neufeld presented a paper entitled “Modern Game: Hunting, Animals, and Man in Porfirian Mexico City” at the 2012 American Society for Ethnohistory conference in exotic Springfield, Missouri, held November 7-10. Also participating at the conference was graduate student Tom Fujii who presented “Cash, Gold Dust, and Credit: California Indian Economic Advancement: 1542-1870.” Both papers were well received by an international audience from Mexico, Canada, and across the U.S.

- Dr. Leleua Loupe is celebrating the publication of her chapter "From Perris to Sherman School," which was coauthored with Cliff Trafzer in The School on Magnolia Avenue: Voices and Images of Sherman Institute (First Peoples: New Directions in Indigenous Studies), which was recently published by Oregon University Press.

- Dr. Volker Janssen is celebrating the publication of his edited volume, Where Minds and Matters Meet: Technology in California and the West (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012). “Where Minds and Matters Meet calls attention to the convergence of Western history and the history of technology, showing that the region’s politics and culture have shaped seemingly placeless, global technological practices and institutions.”

- Dr. Lynn Sargeant received the 2012 Deems Taylor Bela Bartok Award for Outstanding Ethnomusicology Book from the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) at an annual awards ceremony in New York City on November 14. In addition, she presented a paper, “Porous Borders: Language, Culture, and Identity in Late Imperial Kharkov” at the annual meeting for the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies in New Orleans, LA.

Phi Alpha Theta News:

The Department of History is delighted to announce that our student journal, the Welebaethan, has won – now for the 26th time in a row – first prize in the national History student journal competition sponsored by Phi Alpha Theta, the national History Honor Society. The award is formally known as “first prize, 2012 Gerald D. Nash History Journal Award.”

Special thanks are due to the journal’s indomitable faculty advisor, Dr. Wendy Elliott-Scheinberg, and to the co-editors-in-chief, Mike Matini and John Belleci (pictured).

The 2013 CSUF History Banquet will be on Friday, April 12, starting at 6p, at the Phoenix Club in Anaheim. Tickets will be $45.

The 2012 edition of the Welebaethan included articles by Thomas Sprimont, Jay Buteyn, Albert Ybarra, Grant Marx, Matt Snider, Abby Dettenmaier, Matt Pahuta, Delany Johnson, Samantha Guzzi, Clark Silva, Andrea-Marie Gomez, Mark Sanchez, Breanna Watsek, Michael Matini, Natalie Nakamura, Scott Thompson, John Belleci, Donald Hickey, Kathleen Gronnerud, Weston Mathews, John Carl, Maryam Sullivan, Kin Leong Seong. Congratulations to all of the authors, as well as the editors and staff of the Welebaethan!
The History Department needs you to contribute to the Department Newsletter. Send in pictures and short items (up to 200 words) that would be of interest to the departmental community to:
lsargeant@fullerton.edu.

http://hss.fullerton.edu/history/

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