

NEWS



of the History Department at Boston University

December 2006



November 2-4 Professor Nina Silber delivered the Brose Distinguished Lectures for the Richards Civil War Center at Pennsylvania State University. Focusing on the general topic of "Gender and the Sectional Conflict," she spoke on "Gender and Political Obligation in the US Civil War"; "The Problem of Women's Patriotism, North and South"; and "Union and Confederate Women and the Memory of the Civil War." Professor Silber also conducted a special workshop on recent Civil War scholarship for faculty and graduate students. The lectures will be published sometime next year by the University of North Carolina Press.

In the photo, Professor Silber stands between Stephen and Janice Brose, the donors for the lecture series.



Professor **Julian Zelizer** had a whirlwind month with the election as he conducted over 50 media interviews. Some of the highlights included appearing on the front page of the *Washington Post* as well as on national television and radio shows for Fox Television, National Public Radio, and the History Channel. He was quoted in numerous publications (such as *U.S. News and World Report* and *USA Today*) and by the Associated Press, among many others. In addition, he delivered three lectures in France at L'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Sciences Po Centre Américain, and the Institute for Political Studies of Lyon. The first of these talks was the keynote address for a one-day conference that honored his scholarship on American political history.

Professor **Jeffrey Rubin** and his daughter, Emma Sokoloff-Rubin, ran a workshop for Teach for America teachers in Miami at the end of October. The workshop was organized by Catherine Harris, who graduated from our department *summa cum laude* with distinction in 2005 and has been teaching in Miami since then. Professor Rubin and Emma presented the curriculum they have designed for middle and high school students, "Music, Land, and Women's Rights: Citizens Making Change in Brazil and the US," giving each teacher a binder with all the information he or she would need to teach the supple-

Coming in the January Newsletter

A guide to the revisions of the concentration in history, approved at the November 15 CAS faculty meeting

mentary course, along with a DVD with video, photos, and music. During the workshop, the teachers themselves did some of the curriculum's hands-on activities, which include debates, writing and discussion based on interview transcripts, and responses to music and art. The teachers pointed out numerous ways in which the issues from Brazil could be related to the lives of their students in Overtown and other Miami neighborhoods, and they brainstormed about involving community artists and grassroots groups in the curriculum's classroom activities. Jeremy Glazer, a past student of Professor Rubin's who taught in Miami schools for ten years and now works in city politics, also attended the workshop and offered pointers about implementing the curriculum and relating it to local issues.

Professor **Allison Blakely** has published a book chapter, "African Imprints on Russia: A Historical Overview," in Maxim Matusevich, ed., *Africa in Russia, Russia in Africa: Three Centuries of Encounters* (Africa World Press). At the recent convening of its Triennial Council in Atlanta, Blakely was also elected president of the Phi Beta Kappa Society for the term 2006-2009.

On November 3 Professor **Jon Roberts** gave a talk entitled "The Long War Between Protestant Theology and Psychology in America, 1830-1940" to members of the Department of the History of Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Professor **Marilyn Halter** gave a paper entitled "Young, Gifted and West African: Transnational Migrants Growing Up in America" at a Russell Sage Foundation-sponsored conference on "How to Help Young Immigrants Succeed," held in New York in early November. The initiative is a collaboration between scholars and immigrant and refugee service providers, and the papers will be published in a forthcoming collection. She also gave a lecture and workshop on "American Kaleidoscope: Immigration and Identity Formation in a Multiethnic Society" for the Bristol Community College Teaching American History "Future History" Program in Fall River, Mass., on November 16 and 17.

Professor **Andrew Bacevich's** op-ed piece on "Who Lost Iraq?" appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* on November 7. He recently made presentations at Rutgers University and Holy Cross College on the topic "Iraq and the Limits of American Military Power."

Retired administrative secretary **Al Sargis** reports that his article "The Chinese Marxism Mainstream and the Mao Ripple" appears in the November issue of the French journal *La Revue Commune*. He has also been invited to teach English writing for the social sciences at Kunming Medical College in Yunnan, China. Al has lots of practice, having edited numerous papers of Chinese scholars for English-language journals and conferences.

Professor **James McCann's** book *Maize and Grace: Africa's Encounter with a New World Crop, 1500-2000* (Harvard University Press) was recently named one of three finalists for the Melville Herskovitz Prize (Best Work of Original Research, 2005) by the African Studies Association. The award was presented at the ASA meeting in San Francisco in November. In spring 2006 *Maize and Grace* won the George Perkins Marsh Prize as best book in environmental history for 2005 by the American Society for Environmental History.

From November 30 to December 2, Professor **Eugenio Menegon** participated as discussant and panel chair in the international symposium "Christianity and Cultures: Japan and China in Comparison, 1543-1644" in Macau, a special administrative region of the People's Republic of China and a former Portuguese colony. The symposium, organized by the Macau Ricci Institute, the Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History at the University of San Francisco, and the Jesuit Historical Institute in Rome, gathered a group of scholars from Japan, China, Europe, and North America to discuss the political, religious, and artistic implications of Catholic activities during the Christian Century in Japan and the late Ming period in China. After the symposium, Menegon spent three days visiting the Institute of Anthropology and the History Department at Xiamen University. Xiamen, also known as

Amoy, is the major city of the southern Chinese province of Fujian. Close to Taiwan, it is one of the earliest special economic zones of the P.R. of China, preserves beautiful European colonial structures from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and historically has been a port of great importance in Chinese-Western relations since the Middle Ages. Last October, a presidential delegation from Xiamen University met with President Brown and a number of other BU officials to initiate possible scientific collaboration, and Menegon hopes his visit will help foster faculty exchanges between BU and Xiamen in the fields of Chinese maritime history, Fujianese religious anthropology, Chinese-Western history, and cross-strait relations, all areas researched by BU faculty in Asian Studies. During his visit, Menegon also did some fieldwork research in nearby villages, first converted to Catholicism in the late seventeenth century.

Professor **Betty Anderson** gave a paper, "The American University of Beirut (AUB): Conflicts of Coeducation," at the Middle East Studies Association Conference in Boston, November 19.

Professor **Houchang Chehabi** went on a lecture tour of the Bay Area in late October. At the annual meeting of the Middle Eastern Studies Association (MESA) in Boston on November 21, he presented a paper titled "Khomeini's More Palatable Fatwa: How It Turned Out That Caviar Is Halal." He was also elected to MESA's Board of Directors. ♦

Notes on Spring Courses

Unfortunately the Armenian history and literature class that was announced last month had to be canceled because the instructor became unavailable. Meanwhile the search for a permanent faculty member in Armenian history continues.

Because the crosslisting of courses in the Writing Program (HI 150 and WR 150, for example) proved difficult administratively, such courses will in the future have "HI" designations only. Professor Blakely is teaching a section of HI 150 in the spring semester.



Devon Hansen

Devon Hansen defends dissertation on suntanning

On October 26 Devon Hansen successfully defended her dissertation entitled “Shades of Changes: Suntanning and the Twentieth Century.” Her first reader was Professor Bruce Schulman, and the second was Professor Nina Silber; other members of the examining committee were Professors Brooke Blower, Marilyn Halter, and Jon Roberts. We are pleased to reprint the dissertation abstract:

This dissertation examines the development of suntanning from the early twentieth century through the present, investigating the ways that suntanning became an enduring American pastime that both shaped and reflected prevailing notions of female beauty and American identity. The experience of suntanning, as well as the fashions and the prescriptive literature it inspired, also participated in ongoing cultural conversations over race, the construc-

tion of gender ideologies, and changing notions of sexuality and health.

As a popular cultural practice, a profitable consumer products industry, and crucial vehicle for innovations in advertising, tanning highlighted many key episodes in the twentieth-century struggle to define a modern American identity. Central to this emerging American ideal, suntanned skin became an indicator of success and happiness. Suntanning brought into focus, however, the paradox of continued racism, leading Americans to try fitting suntanning and race into a larger, century-long struggle to identify what was real, natural and beautiful in a modern, technological civilization. Despite these attempts, a clear dividing line emerged between artificial and natural dark skin and dark-skinned minorities were never fully accepted into the definition of authentic American.

Suntanning also reflected shifting ideas about sexuality in the United States. Advertisers exploited feminist ideology, but never took it seriously. Sexuality—at times defined by a suntan—was not nearly as liberating as many women hoped it might be.

At the same time, suntanning illustrated changing ideas about health and science. This dissertation demonstrates that Americans remained unwilling to accept the health risks of suntanning until viable alternatives emerged.

The study draws its conclusions from a thorough examination of popular magazines, both the advertisements and the editorial content. In addition to assessing the images Americans saw regarding suntanning, the study relies on the archives of the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency to detail the influence advertisers believed they had on consumers and the influence consumer trends had on advertisements. Advertising not only showed the pervasive influence of suntanning in twentieth-century America, but also the changes women made in shaping and reshaping their consumer, gender, sexual, public, health and aesthetic identities. ♦



Two students passed their qualifying oral examination:

On October 2, **Katherine Jewell**. Examiners in the major field of American history were Professors Louis Ferleger, Jon Roberts, and Bruce Schulman; examiner in the minor field of international relations was Professor William Keylor.

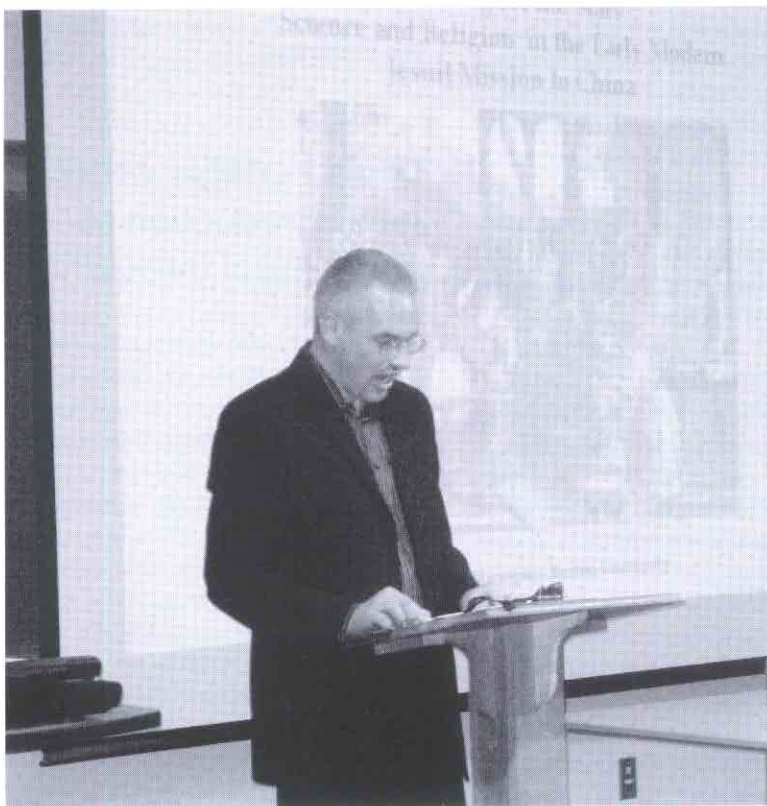
On November 17, **Andrea Mos-terman**. Examiners in the major field of American history were Professors Brendan McConville, Bruce Schulman, and Nina Silber; examiner in the minor field of Atlantic history was Professor John Thornton.

Louis Ferleger writes new introduction to agricultural classic

Professor Louis Ferleger has written a new introduction to Avery Odelle Craven’s 1926 work, *Soil Exhaustion as a Factor in the Agricultural History of Virginia and Maryland, 1606-1860*.

Ferleger states, “At first glance the title of Avery Odelle Craven’s masterful book...might lead one to believe that the work is an obscure, esoteric, potentially tedious work similar to the dusty tomes in the library of a super-specialized academic. Titles, of course, are often misleading, and that is especially so in this case. While Craven’s title is precise, it does not convey the breadth and depth of the work. *Soil Exhaustion* is useful and important not only for the student of soil and agricultural history but also for the environmentalist, for the student of land use and economic development, for the student of frontier societies and sustainable agriculture, and for the general reader.”

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Professor Eugenio Menegon delivered one of the East-West Lectures at the faculty forum of the East-West Institute of International Studies at Gordon College (Wenham, Mass.) on October 25. He presented a talk entitled "'Shooting for the Stars': Science and Religion in the Early Modern Jesuit Mission to China," detailing the scientific and religious dimensions of the work of the Jesuits at the court of the Manchu Qing emperors between the seventeenth and the late eighteenth centuries.

Department Seminar

The next History Department Seminar will be held on Wednesday, December 6, at 12 noon in Room 504, 226 Bay State Road:

Jonathan Karp, Assistant Professor of History, State University of New York at Binghamton, will speak on "'How Profitable the Nation of the Jews Are': The Rise and Fall of Mercantile Philosemitism in Early Modern Europe."

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