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Welcome from the Chair



Welcome to a new tradition in the History Department at UNC Charlotte. We plan to send out our newsletter each semester to keep everyone abreast of what is happening in the Department of History. We have many exciting developments in our department, and I would like to share them with all of you.

This first newsletter gives me a chance to introduce our strong department. As of Spring 2011, the History Department consists of twenty-seven faculty members, including twenty tenured faculty, five tenure-track Assistant Professors,

two lecturers, as well as two staff members who provide invaluable administrative support. In addition, we count on fifteen part-time faculty for our undergraduate instructional mission. We offer a wide variety of programs and serve our undergraduate and graduate students with many different fields of expertise. While our faculty's expertise spans the globe, our department offers particular emphases on Southern history, European history, and Latin American history. Our faculty serve an undergraduate major and minor in these fields as well as a graduate program, which offers our students an MA in History. In addition, we offer a strong program in Public History with a New Media focus. Many of our majors also pursue teacher licensure certification and take advantage of specialized courses in the College of Education designed for future classroom teachers. The department encourages student efforts to study abroad—and particularly our History in Heidelberg program. The History Department also administers a recently revamped honors program and a chapter of the national Phi Alpha Theta honor society, and it annually awards several Davenport academic scholarships and the Patterson prize for best student papers. In addition, the Department of History houses the Latin American Studies program, which offers an undergraduate major and minor as well as an MA program. The LTAM program works closely with departments such as Political

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The Department of History Newsletter is actively seeking both an undergraduate and graduate student to act as Staff Reporters. Each individual will be responsible for publishing one article per newsletter. Qualified candidates please contact:

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Science, Anthropology, Global, International and Area Studies, Africana Studies, and Languages and Culture Studies to serve studies interested in the interdisciplinary study of Latin America. Our department plays a significant role in the General Education program, and specifically the Liberal Studies courses, including several large sections each semester.

Currently our department serves almost 500 majors, 70 minors, and 80 graduate students, when combining the History and Latin American Studies programs. Eleven History M.A. students and four Latin American Studies M.A. students currently hold graduate assistantships. Eight students serve as teaching assistants in large sections, three students are editorial assistants, one student serves the Conference on Latin American History, one student helps administer the CAPES-FIPSE exchange program with Brazil, one student holds the McColl fellowship and works in the History Department office, and one student teaches Portuguese in the Department of Languages and Culture Studies.

It is now April, the end of the Spring semester and the end of an academic year. This year has brought great success to many of us, among them many books and articles, newly hired faculty, conferences organized and presentations given.

At the end of this academic year, it is time to reflect on another successful year. The university conferred a record number of graduate (22) and undergraduate (141) degrees to students in our department, and in November, the History Department played an important role in hosting the Southern Historical Association meeting at the Charlotte Westin. Among many others, individual faculty accomplishments include the publication of several books featured in this newsletter. Future issues of this newsletter will highlight the productivity of both our faculty and our students. We congratulate Cheryl Hicks and Heather Perry on their promotion to the rank of Associate Professor, which includes the awarding of permanent tenure, and Benny Andres and Amanda Pipkin, on their successful reappointment. It is also time to say goodbye to some faculty who are getting ready to retire or move to different places. We congratulate our colleague Lyman Johnson, a member of the department since 1973, on his much-deserved retirement. One of the university's longest-serving faculty members, surpassed in our department only by Dan Morrill, Lyman has seen this university change from a teaching institution to a research university, and he also played an instrumental role in the creation of the Latin American Studies Program. We will also miss Robert Schwaller, lecturer of Latin American history, who has accepted a tenure-track position at the University of Kansas. Congratulations, Robert. At the same time, we are excited about the future. We will welcome three new faculty members in Fall 2011: Maren Ehlers, an assistant professor and a specialist in Japanese history with a Ph.D. from Princeton University; Jill Massino, an assistant professor and an expert in gender and Eastern European history with a Ph.D. from the University of Indiana; and Louise Gammons, a lecturer and Ph.D. candidate from Emory University who will teach colonial Latin American history on a one-year appointment.

I wish you all a productive and relaxing summer and a fruitful Academic Year 2011-12.

Jurgen Buchenau



by:
Oscar
Lansen
 Director of Undergraduate and
 Honors Studies
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With 498 current majors and ninety-five minors, the Department's undergraduate program makes a significant contribution to liberal arts at UNC Charlotte. History is an ideal major for those seeking careers in professions where research, analysis, critical thinking and succinct oral and written expression are of the essence. To best prepare our undergraduates for the demands of the rapidly evolving global workplace and/or the transition to post-graduate studies, the undergraduate program has undergone some significant changes in the past couple of years. As recently elevated Director of Undergraduate and Honors studies, I was privileged to introduce new assessment standards for the program and author subsequent innovations to the curriculum.

A key feature to the History undergraduate program is its graduated core skills curriculum: undergraduates build on and practice a variety of analytical and expressive competencies while advancing in their course of study. To this end, the department slotted an intermediate methods course between the initial skills seminar and the cap stone experience. This new course allows majors to hone their historiography and writing skills before engaging in their senior research project. Similarly, the Department made the University's Communication across the Curriculum Initiative an integral part of the newly reformulated course competency guidelines. The latter sets qualitative and quantitative instructional, reading, and writing definitions per course type and level, to ensure integral and consistent skills progression throughout the major; whether a course is taught by a senior, junior, or adjunct member of our excellent faculty. To further optimize teaching and learning, the Department has adopted a varied set of instructional tools, practices, and online style guides for common use in its undergraduate courses. These will be made available this summer together with the course expectations via the Department's website. Finally, the Department reduced the major requirements from thirty-three to thirty hours to allow the timely graduation of transfer students and those enrolled in licensure and/or dual programs.

Besides Phi Alpha Theta, the Department offers its undergraduates two programs of distinction: History Honors and the War Genocide Human Rights Learning Community; both directed by the Director of Undergraduate and Honors Studies. This fall, ten candidates for honors will start a significantly revised curriculum

that while setting the entry bar higher, offers a better integrated preparation for the thesis. These changes will offer candidates a clearer path to a successful thesis defense while making more effective use of faculty time. To better transition incoming freshmen to the rigors of college academia, The Department's War Genocide Human Rights Freshmen Learning Community program in turn added an Oral goal component to the community's history seminar; part of the aforementioned CAC initiative. Furthermore, in an effort to offer an inclusive, focused, learning experience, the program continues to forge collaboration with cross-constituencies like the Teaching Fellows honors program and the University's ROTC programs.

Finally, within the university community, History serves as the main/dominant preparatory major for secondary social studies teacher licensure; as well as donor for multiple departmental and program cross-lists. The Department has been instrumental in ensuring that teaching licensure candidates pass their Praxis II test and receive licensure in middle and high school education. In addition, the department's didactical experts were selected to teach the inaugural seminars of the innovative Charlotte Teacher Institute, UNC Charlotte's collaboration with Yale and Davidson which allows CMS teachers to collaboratively gain access to specialized teaching and learning.

In short, the Department's undergraduate program continues to offer a relevant, dynamic preparation for its major, minors, and affiliated programs.



by:
**Gregory
Mixon**
Director of Graduate Studies

Graduate Study in History at the Master's Degree level involves all students in a two-year course of study that trains each student broadly in the field of History. Students, whether they are pursuing traditional training in History (preparation for secondary and community college instruction, preparation for doctoral training, seeking disciplined instruction), or training in Public History (delivering history to a broad public by multiple forms of media, museum work, historic site education, preservation and landmark research), will select their course of study within three broad fields: United States, Latin American, and European History. Their work will culminate in either a thesis project or comprehensive examination.

Students come to study in the History Department at UNC Charlotte with scholars who have earned national and

international reputations. Our Graduate History Program is known among our peers to have the "best MA program anywhere."

What are students doing who have completed their Master's training in the History Program? Two recent graduates have utilized their training in History as a preparation for admittance to Law School. For example, Michael Champion completed a Masters Degree in European History and then went on to Law School. He is now an attorney in Charlotte, working internationally in environmental law, and a part-time History instructor here. Masters graduates are also pursuing PhDs at Temple University, New York University, University of New Mexico, University of Maryland, University of Georgia, and Emory University. From Public History, Megan Kaylor now works as the Education Coordinator at Historic Ships in Baltimore. Hannah Howard has joined the staff at Pennsbury Manor in Morrisville, Pennsylvania, while Jeff Pruettt serves as Education Coordinator of the Gaston County Museums of Art and History. All are clear proof that one can enter UNC Charlotte's Master's Program, do well, and step up to the next level.

Current students have also been thriving in the classroom. Chuck McShane, a second-year student seeking Master's Degrees in History and Public Administration, is the winner of the 2011 North Carolina Museum of History Student Essay Contest for his essay, "Cocktails and Cultural Conflict: North Carolina, 1965-1980." Hilary Miller, a second-year Public History student, as part of her thesis project, has organized the National Road Bicentennial Conference at Washington and Jefferson College in Washington, Pennsylvania. This academic year 2010-2011, the

following students have met all requirements for graduation: James Harris, Deanna Panetta, Allison Sinclair, Amy Helms, Emma Castle-Grandstaff, Boyd Harris, Tanner Kroeger, Shannon Lalor, Kari Morgan, and Kristin Foster.

The Graduate History Program currently has over fifty active students in the program with a new class of 2011 about to join these students. Our resources to support students are limited to 11 teaching and research assistantships. This is a productive program that produces people who are path setters in the field.



by:
**Karen L.
Cox**
Founding Director of the
Public History Program

The Public History concentration within UNC Charlotte's graduate history program offers students a unique combination of courses, as well as opportunities to learn new skills that will prepare them for the job market. The program began in 2003 with just two students. That number has grown substantially over the past several years and in some years the number of new public history students has represented half of all graduate students earning the M.A. in History.

Our students have held internships with a variety of organizations and institutions including Atkins Library Special Collections (UNCC), Belk, Inc., the Charlotte Museum of History, the Culture and Heritage Museums of York County, the Levine Museum of the New South, the Gaston County Museum of Art and History, the Historic Landmarks

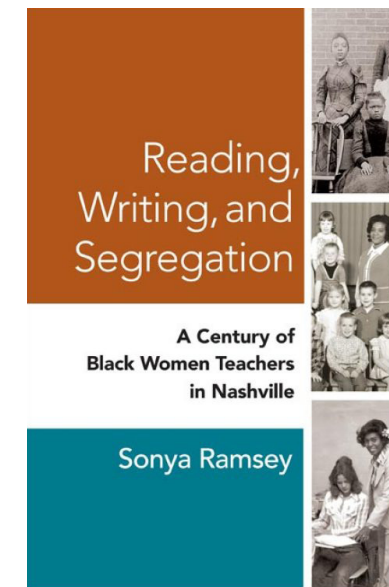
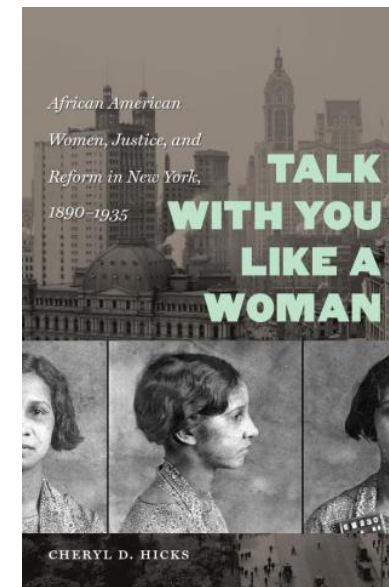
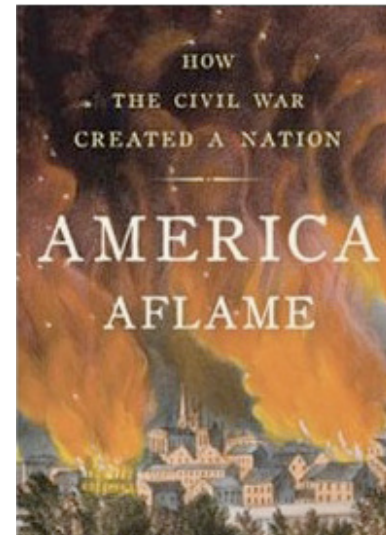
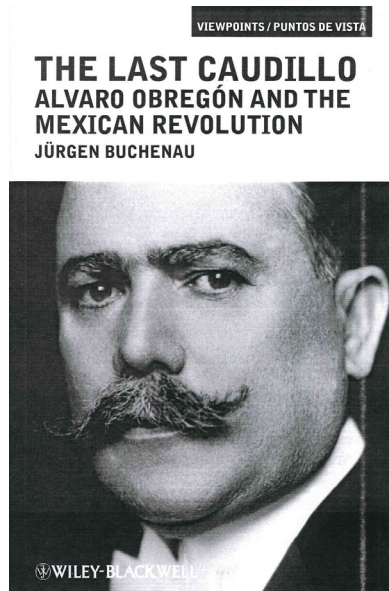
Commission, Historic Charlotte, Inc., Charlotte Trolley, Inc., the Charlotte Area Sports Hall of Fame, Latta Plantation, Lincolnton Downtown Development Association, the North Carolina State Archives, the North Carolina Museum of History, the National World War I Museum in Kansas City, and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

Recently, students in the program have won national awards for their work. In 2008, the museum studies class taught by Karen Cox partnered with the Charlotte Area Transit System for its class project. That project won the prestigious 2009 Student Project Award from the National Council on Public History. This spring one of the program's recent graduates, Nicole Moore, received the New Professionals Award from the National Council on Public History for her work as an African American Interpreter at Historic Brattonsville—a site affiliated with the Culture & Heritage Museums of York County, South Carolina.

Graduates of our program are working in a variety of positions with different organizations ranging from a Preservation Specialist for the State of Tennessee to the Education Coordinator for Historic Ships in Baltimore, Maryland. Some of our students have gone on to Ph.D. programs. Our program's success has meant that students from places as far flung as Los Angeles, California, to New Paltz, New York, have found a home in the graduate history program at UNC Charlotte.

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1 In Jurgen Buchenau’s book *The Last Caudillo: Alvaro Obregon and the Mexican Revolution*, the author presents a concise and revelatory biography of the man whose group succeeded in winning the Mexican Revolution of 1920. Buchenau delves deeply into the life and times of General Alvaro Obregon and also uncovers seminal revelations on the first major social revolution of the 20th century and on the broader issues surrounding the cult of personality and the culture of leadership. In this study Buchenau illuminates the crucial elements of the Revolution including a macho cult of leadership; heroism in war, a clique of passionate loyal followers, and a clientelist system to reward those followers.

2 From the late 19th Century through World War II, popular culture portrayed the American South as a region ensconced in its antebellum past draped in moonlight and magnolias, and represented by such southern icons as Mammy, the belle, the chivalrous planter, white-columned mansions, and even bolls of cotton. In *Dreaming of Dixie*, Karen Cox shows the purveyors’ of this constructed nostalgia for the Old South were outsiders, especially advertising agencies, musicians, publishers, radio personalities, writers, and filmmakers playing consumers’ anxiety and modernity by marketing the South as a region still dedicated to America’s pastoral traditions. Cox argues that until television brought the violent images associated with the Civil Rights Movement into America’s living rooms did this romantic vision begin to change.

3 The *New York Times Sunday Book Review* described David Goldfield’s book *American Aflame* as “riveting, often heartbreaking.” Goldfield contention is that America’s Civil War was not inevitable. But the prevailing political culture made it difficult to resolve deep-seeded issues peacefully. The War’s overt failure is evidenced in the deaths of over 620,000 young men, the suffering of the loved ones left behind to mourn their loss. Goldfield does not argue that the Civil War’s deaths and destruction eclipse the altruism of abolition, “but there may have been other means to achieve that noble end.” “My book is neither pro-southern nor pro-northern,” Goldfield writes, “It is anti-war, particularly the Civil War.”

4 *Talk With You Like a Woman: African American Women, Justice, and Reform in New York, 1890-1935* brings to light the voices and viewpoints of black working-class women, especially southern migrants, who were the subjects of urban and penal reform in early-twentieth century New York. Hicks compares the ideals of racial uplift and reform programs of middle-class white and black activists to the experiences and perspectives of those whom they south to protect and, often, control.

Drawing on extensive archival research, Hicks explores the complexities of black working-class women’s lives and illuminates the impact of racism and sexism on early-twentieth-century urban reform and criminal justice initiatives.

5 The *Journal of American History* described Sonya Ramsey’s book *Reading, Writing, and Segregation* as a “well researched and well written... Ramsey has produced a study with important insights applicable not only to black female teachers in Nashville, but to other African Americans who faced the challenges of segregation and integration during this volatile era.” In this work, Ramsey reveals how educators in an urban southern environment respond not only to rigors of desegregation and integration but also to critical moments in American history such as world wars, the Great Depression, the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, as well as the civil rights and women’s movements. Ramsey’s study contributes to the historical debate regarding problematical intersections of class and race and how they change over time.

Why History?



The year was 1969 and after several failed attempts to complete my freshman year as a Business major, I was admitted to the History program at Niagara University. When I informed my father that history would be my major field of study he

asked: "Why history, are you going to be a historian?" Of course my young, immature mind could not, or would not process his question and I immediately found myself in a state of complete mortification. "Me... a historian?" I shot back indignantly. You see, to me I visualized a historian as a craggy old man, who wore eye glasses attached to a chain around his neck, with elbow patches of the sleeves of his sweater, and who toiled in a musty archive of a museum.

At this point in my young life I was not aware of the fact that the study of history is a window into the past that provides understanding of the present-day and further how individuals, nations, and the global community might develop in the future. Historical study educates the student about how societies came to be and examines cultural, political, social, and economic influences across time and space. It additionally builds personal understanding of how we as individuals are the sum of a vast range of past experiences; veritable actors within the framework

of historical change. In short, the study of history is a journey into a greater personal insight and comprehension of each person's place in the grand sweep of the human story.

The study of history instructs the student in the skills that have universal application, no matter what one's life work might entail. Students of history learn valuable habits associated with the thought process. They analyze ideas and data, and develop original interpretations of an immeasurable amount of information. They are also schooled in expressing themselves well, both verbally and in writing, essential skills whether one becomes a teacher, doctor, lawyer, businessperson, consultant, nurse, or whatever calling one may choose.

History is *magister vitae*, "teacher of life." History prepares us to live more humanely in the present and to meet the challenges of the future because it provides us with the understanding of the human condition. History is a means of disseminating and comprehending the wisdom and folly of our forbearers'. History is fun. It fulfills our desire to know and understand ourselves and our ancestors. History allows one to vicariously experience countless situations and conditions, which stimulates our imagination and creativity. Furthermore, it trains its students to read intelligently, think critically, and write effectively. Remember, when your father asks; "Why history, are you going to be a historian?" Stand up, throw your shoulders back, take a deep breathe and say; "Yes, how else can I discover the meaning of life."

Patrick J. Pelosi, Editor

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