

# HISTORY NEWS

HISTORY DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

Fall 2018



Dr. Joseph Crespino

## Stallworth Lecturer Searches for the Real Atticus Finch

Dr. Joseph Crespino of Emory University delivered this year's Stallworth Lecture on October 3, regaling a full house at Laidlaw about "Atticus Finch and American History." Seeking to reconcile the two portraits of Atticus in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Go Set a Watchman*, Dr. Crespino found the keys to the mystery in Ms. Lee's relationship with her father, Amasa Coleman Lee.

Dr. Crespino reported that A.C. Lee was largely self-taught and fascinated by the tradition of self-government. As editor of the *Monroe Journal*, A.C. Lee wrote in praise of institutions like trial by jury; and he warned also of the dangers of mob rule. Here is the Atticus of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, with law book in hand, staring down a lynch mob. However, Mr. Lee's moderation also made him wary of labor organizers -- and civil

rights activists. Hence, the Atticus of *Go Set a Watchman* appears as a Citizen's Council member, standing against the tide of racial progress.

Ms. Lee, living in Monroeville in the late 50s, witnessed a political circus in which demagogues exploited white anxiety. She despaired at her father's alignment with the reactionaries. Their father-daughter argument informed *Go Set a Watchman*, written first. Realizing that *Watchman* lacked profundity, she recalled her younger, adoring vision of her father and made him, as Atticus, the hero of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, published in 1960 (*Watchman* was not published until 2015). It is this Atticus, with his moral strength, that earned the honorable mention of Martin Luther King; and it was with this Atticus that Dr. Crespino closed his well-received talk.

### INSIDE:

- Letter from an Alumnus
- History Club News
- Tips for History Students
- Faculty Achievements
- New Faculty
- Personal History
- Spring Courses



## History Faculty Plan Study Abroad Trips

Two history professors will be taking students abroad next summer. Dr. Claire Cage is offering a four-week program in London and Paris, planned for June of 2019, which will focus on the history of the body in society as well as on crime and punishment. Students will visit the Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, the Conciergerie, the Catacombs of Paris, and Versailles, among other destinations, and will conduct research at the British Library.

Dr. Harry Miller will be taking students on a three-week tour of Taiwan, from May 29 to June 19. Students will view the Chinese art at

the Palace Museum in Taipei, learn about Taiwan's indigenous people along the island's eastern coast, and visit other historical sites from the Dutch, Japanese, and Nationalist Chinese periods.

Students in both programs will receive six hours of upper-division credit, and no foreign language training is required. Financial aid and scholarships are available.

The History Department is in the vanguard of USA's commitment to international education. Interested explorers should contact Dr. Cage or Dr. Miller for details.



UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTH ALABAMA



Ken Simon  
Class of 1976  
Arbiter, Judicial Arbiter Group  
Chair Pro Tem, USA Board of Trustees

## Letter from an Alumnus: Ken Simon

Many years ago I had the privilege of working as a White House Fellow. Throughout the selection process, I was evaluated on my capacity to serve as a future leader. The questions were challenging: Did I have a sophisticated sense of American democratic institutions? Was I a critical thinker? Did I have the capacity to operate on a larger stage?

I survived the interviews because the USA history faculty had opened my mind to the value of both in-depth thinking and taking broad views. As a Fellow, from 1983 to 1984, I met with leading Administration figures, senators, representatives, journalists, mayors, ambassadors, and world leaders such as King Hussein of Jordan. The education I received on the 3rd Floor of the Humanities Building equipped me to engage with them all.

Since my time in Washington, I've worked for law firms, non-profits, and universities. At every step, I have relied on the lessons provided by USA's History Department. In classes on American political and intellectual history, Southern history, the Soviet Union, the Weimar Republic, and the British Empire, I was trained in new ways to look at the world, to think about complex problems, to respond to the unexpected.

Society cannot be understood without History. Careful analysis, deep research, and relentless objectivity are all tools in the historian's toolbox. The Department of History taught me to employ those tools to shape and influence society. The history faculty showed me the way forward so that neither the world nor any challenge would be too big.

**"Only the history of a free people is worth studying. The history of a people under a tyranny can be nothing more than a collection of anecdotes."**

**-Nicolas Chamfort**

## History Club Keeps Moving

The History Club and the Rho Theta Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta have planned a big semester. Returning History Club President Shelby Brashaw was the only remaining History Club officer after several members graduated last spring. Fortunately, Shelby was quickly joined by a talented and enthusiastic cabinet. Chelsia Davis was elected interim Vice President, Courtney Jones was elected Secretary, and Alyssa Brown was elected Treasurer. Courtney Tittle will take over as Vice President in the spring, after Chelsia graduates and Courtney returns from studying abroad in Ireland.

The new officers agreed upon a full agenda of meeting topics and special events for the upcoming semester. Topics covered at this semester's regular History Club meetings include the history of food, mass murderers (for Halloween), the World War I Centennial, and Winter Solstice Celebrations around the World. Plans are also in the works to revive the ever popular History vs. Hollywood event. A full schedule of meetings, topics, and events can be found on the History Club bulletin board on the third floor of the Humanities Building.

The University of South Alabama History Club and Rho Theta chapter of Phi Alpha Theta invites you to join them.

## 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.

# History Faculty Record Many Achievements

History faculty have been very productive in publishing and other scholarly endeavors. Timothy Lombardo released his book, *Blue-Collar Conservatism: Frank Rizzo's Philadelphia and Populist Politics*, together with an assortment of newspaper and journal articles (and C-SPAN appearances) on the history of his home city. Mara Kozelsky's new book, *Crimea in War and Transformation*, adds to her reputation as expert on that region. Harry Miller contributed a chapter on the late Ming dynasty to the *Routledge Hand-book of Imperial Chinese History*. David Messenger published a chapter on the French response to the Spanish Civil War in the edited volume *Spain 1936: Year Zero*. More books by USA historians are due out next year.

Marsha Hamilton and Kelly Urban attended or presented work to the Gulf South History and Humanities Conference in Baton Rouge,

and Claire Cage spoke at the International Society for the History of Medicine, in Lisbon, Portugal. In November, Dr. Lombardo will participate in the Urban History conference in Columbia, South Carolina, and Rebecca Williams will present her research on Islamic thought at Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany. Dr. Messenger will join panels on Spain and Nazism at the American Historical Association and the Modern Language Association annual meetings, both in Chicago; and Dr. Kozelsky will present at the Association for the Study of East European and Eurasian Studies conference in Boston.

Finally, Drs. Urban, Cage, and Kozelsky will be developing courses in global health and medical history, as recipients of a grant from the US Department of Education. USA history professors continue to embody the best traditions of the historical profession.

---

## New Faculty: Dr. Kelly Urban

Kelly Urban is a native of Texas and received her BA in History from Texas A&M in 2007. She earned her PhD in History in 2017 from the University of Pittsburgh, with a Graduate Certificate in Latin American Studies. Her dissertation won the 2016-17 Eduardo Lozano Memorial Prize for the best dissertation in Latin American Studies at Pittsburgh. Her teaching specialties include the history of Latin America and the Caribbean, race relations and slavery, and the history of medicine.

Dr. Urban's current book project, *Politicosis: Tuberculosis, Public Health, and Politics in Cuba, 1925-1965*, explores disease and state-building in mid-twentieth-century Cuba. She has articles published in the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, *Cuban Studies*, and *Recommended Dose*.

Dr. Urban is thrilled to be back on the Gulf Coast and is eager to explore the connections between Mobile and Havana.



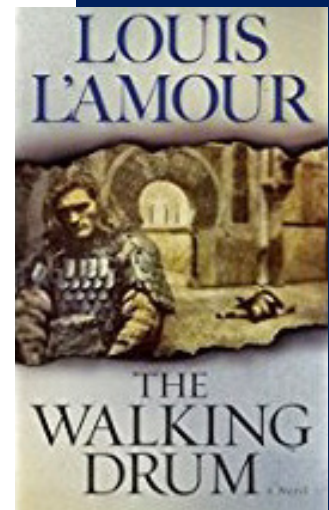
---

## The Book that Launched my Career

BY REBECCA WILLIAMS. While I was a student at Ohio State University, my husband convinced me to read a book by Louis L'Amour called *The Walking Drum*. Although L'Amour is best known for his Western novels, this book was about a young man in search of his father, who had been captured by Corsairs in the 11th century CE. His journey took him across Medieval Europe, the Byzantine Empire, and the Islamic Near East.

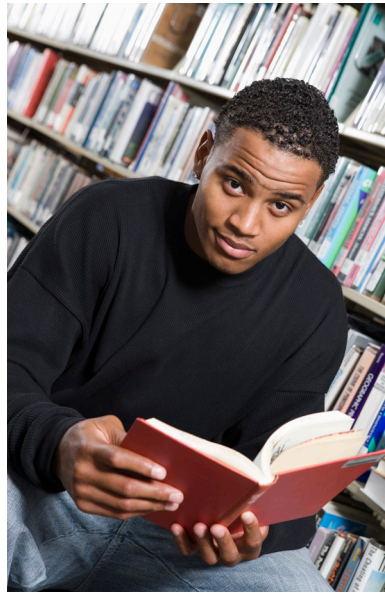
I was stunned. L'Amour had portrayed Medieval Europe as a backwater and the Islamic Near East as perhaps the most advanced civilization on the planet. This conflicted with my own preconceptions of

Europe and the Middle East. Later, after I changed my major to History at Northern Michigan University, the seed planted by L'Amour took root as I signed up for the University's first-ever course on the History of the Middle East. That course, taught by Kenneth Schellhase, followed by a course on the European Middle Ages, convinced me that Louis L'Amour had not steered me wrong. The civilization of the Islamic Near East was a beacon of intellect and culture, when Europe was still suspicious of such dangerous activities as reading and bathing. While my understanding of both cultures has deepened, I still credit Louis L'Amour with introducing me to the love of my life.



# Spring 2019 History Courses

- 101.....HY of Western Civilization I (9 sections)
- 102.....HY of Western Civilization II (5 sections)
- 104.....HY of Asian Civilization II (Miller)
- 135.....US History to 1877 (12 sections)
- 136.....US History since 1877 (11 sections)
- 288.....History of the Mass Media (Moody)
- 347.....The Holocaust (Meola)
- 348.....Hitler and Nazi Germany (Messenger)
- 365w.....Islamic Civilization (Williams)
- 367w.....Modern China (Miller)
- 390.....Special Topics: Disease, Health, and Power in Latin America and the Caribbean (Urban)
- 390.....Special Topics: Historical Fiction (Miller)
- 401/501.....Colloquium in History: Race in Another America (Urban)
- 431/531.....Studies in US History: The Supreme Court and American Life (McWilliams)
- 432/532.....Colonial America (Hamilton)
- 442.....Research Seminar in European History: Empire and Migration in the British World (Strong)
- 457/557.....Studies in European History: History: Stalin and Stalinism (Kozelsky)
- 478/578.....The New South (McKiven)
- 498.....Internship in History
- 590.....Special Topics: Modern American Political History (Lombardo)
- 598.....Comp and Thesis Preparation (Brazy)



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 even 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!**



5991 USA Drive N., Room 344

Mobile, Alabama 36688-0002

Phone: (251) 460-6210 | Fax: (251) 460-6750

E-mail: [history@southalabama.edu](mailto:history@southalabama.edu)

<http://www.southalabama.edu/colleges/artsandsci/history/>