IN THIS ISSUE

- Message from the Chair
- News from the Undergraduate Program
- Faculty Spotlights
- News from the Graduate Program
- News from Public History
- News from Latin American Studies
- PAT Honors and the GHA
- History Students Abroad: Sarahan Moser’s Trip to Tokyo, Japan
- Latin American Studies Students Abroad: Nashaly Ruiz’s Trip to La Paz, Bolivia
- An Undergraduate Perspective: Casey Aldridge
- A Graduate Perspective: Brenda Paredes Guerrero
- The Dowd Initiative: History of Capitalism

Barnhardt Student Activity Center clock tower, UNC Charlotte
On behalf of the faculty and staff in the UNC Charlotte Department of History, I send my best wishes as the summer of 2017 gets to a close.

Let me begin with a word on faculty transitions. First of all, Dr. Jim Hogue, an Associate Professor of History, retired in June 2016 after seventeen years in the department, the last of which spent on phased retirement. We will miss Jim’s wit and great sense of humor, not to mention his expertise in military and Southern history.

Fortunately, the department got permission to recruit Jim’s faculty line right away, and the department decided to advertise a position in United States history since 2016. After a national search that attracted more than 270 applicants, we were lucky to hire Dr. Randall “Brent” Cebul, who holds a Ph.D. from the University of Virginia. We were also able to hire Dr. Shimon Gibson, a specialist on the archaeology and history of the Levant, as a Professor of Practice on a permanent line. Shimon will anchor our university’s presence in Jerusalem, and specifically the Mt. Zion archaeological dig, which he helps supervise. Please join me in extending a warm welcome to Brent and Shimon!

We also announce two administrative transitions, one of them temporary. We appreciate Dr. Christine Haynes’s many years of service as the History Director of Graduate Studies. She will be replaced by Dr. Peter Thorsheim. Our Director of Public History, Dr. Aaron Shapiro, is taking a well-deserved leave of absence this fall, and he will be replaced by the founding director of our program, Dr. Karen Cox. Many thanks to all four of these colleagues for their efforts on behalf of our graduate students.

Since spring 2016, when the last departmental newsletter appeared, we have been able to confer a number of promotions: Three, associate professors, Drs. Gregory Mixon, Steve Sabol, and Mark Wilson, got promoted to the rank of Professor. Three assistant professors, Dr. Maren Ehlers, Dr. David Johnson, and Dr. Jill Massino, received promotion to the rank of Associate Professor as well as permanent tenure. Finally, one of our Senior Lecturers, Dr. Oscar Lansen, now holds the rank of Teaching Professor. Department faculty also won three significant awards. Dr. John David Smith received the 2016 UNC Charlotte Citizens Bank Scholars Medal. Dr. Gregory Mixon won the 2017 Atkins Library Faculty Engagement Award. This past spring, Dr. Mark Wilson’s book, *Destructive Creation: American Business and the Winning of World War Two* won two different prizes from the Business History Association.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the M.A. degree in Latin American Studies, which has been administered in our department since 2010, along with the B.A. degree in Latin American Studies. The program has experienced significant growth in recent years, and this year we welcome 20 new graduate students.

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Among our numerous student achievements (also noted later on in this newsletter), I would like to focus on admissions to Ph.D. programs, as the graduate students in our two M.A. programs (History and Latin American Studies) have had great success in this area over the last two years. Last year, History M.A. alumni Chris Kinley, Maria Labbato, Marissa Nichols, and Julie Hawks accepted offered funds from doctoral programs at The Ohio State University, Florida International University, Emory University, and American University, respectively, while LTAM alumnus Nicholas Ortiz enrolled in a History Ph.D. program at the University of Illinois with full funding. This year, funded Ph.D. enrollments included Hallie Gillespie (Indiana University) and Christina Thomas (Johns Hopkins University) in History and Paula Andrade (Vanderbilt University) and Noe Pliego Campos (University of Notre Dame). The prestige and geographic reach of these doctoral program admissions speak volumes about the high quality of our M.A. programs, as well as the hard work both our faculty and our students put into their work. It is no wonder that the overall number of graduate students will hit an all-time peak with at least 85 students on campus this fall—45 in History and 39 in Latin American Studies.

It is no wonder that the overall number of graduate students will hit an all-time peak with at least 85 students on campus this fall—45 in History and 39 in Latin American Studies.

We continue to be very fortunate about the private support that we have been receiving to help the education of our students. To begin with, History Department faculty have established a pool of money to fund three small student scholarships named after three former esteemed colleagues: the Jane Laurent Scholarship (for undergraduate students); the Lyman Johnson Scholarship (for graduate students in Latin American Studies and those History graduate students concentrating on a Latin American topic), and the Dan Morrill Scholarship (for graduate students in Public History). In addition, the Pharr-Buchenau scholarship—now in its fifth year—continues to fund research travel for students. In 2016, this fund financed research trips to Berlin, Germany (History student Hallie Gillespie) and Asunción, Paraguay (LTAM student Nicole Hanna). This year, it funded research travel to Athens, Greece (History student Olympia Mastrokoli) and Lima, Peru (LTAM student Brenda Paredes). Finally, the Dowd program in the History of Capitalism, which is discussed elsewhere in this Newsletter, began giving out graduate and undergraduate research scholarships this year and will continue to do so the next two years. New privately funded initiatives that will benefit students in coming years include the Oscar Lansen Scholarship for historically focused study-abroad for undergraduate students, another study abroad fund aimed at cemetery preservation in Eastern Europe, and a new graduate scholarship for research in Southern History. All these funds have helped make up the shortfall caused by declining state appropriations for higher education, which have particularly hurt our graduate students, who have not been able to count on the kind of tuition support available to them in the past.

Finally, I would like to highlight the ongoing internationalization of our History curriculum. We have long had a special relationship with the University of Heidelberg in Germany. In 2014, we created curriculum-integration initiatives that connected our department to four specific study-abroad programs at Heidelberg, Warwick University (England), University of Limoges (France) and PUC-Rio de Janeiro (Brazil). Last year, we began to create short-term study abroad opportunities by way of spring semester courses that included a one-week study-abroad component over Spring Break. The first such course was Dr. Maren Ehlers’s course in Tokyo in Spring 2016. In Spring 2017, Dr. Carmen Soliz and I added a second course in La Paz, Bolivia, and next year, Dr. Peter Thorsheim will add yet another one in Great Britain. In June 2016, we also took a group of community members on a weeklong trip to Berlin, Germany.

I will close by thanking all of my colleagues in the History Department, and particularly the team in the office, Linda Smith and Gloria Davenport, for all that they do to make the department not only successful, but also a great place to work. As always, we look forward to being in touch!

Jürgen Buchenau,
Professor and Chair
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One learns best by doing. In this annual undergraduate program update, I would like to focus on several initiatives the department has taken to enhance access to experiential learning; and to ensure that our graduates are both equipped with advanced understanding of the historical context of the world in which they live, and the practical analytical and expressive skillsets unique to the profession. Whereas History was one of the first programs to establish a freshman learning community on campus, its residential structure and limited seat available initially prevented that all our students could benefit from its hands-on skill development. Recognizing the tangible benefits of a directed learning environment – many of the learning community alumni have graduated within four years and/or have pursued honors and graduate studies – since Fall 2016 all entering freshmen are now members of the Learning Community and take its Introduction to Historical Studies course. In this seminar, students co-research and co-teach aspects of the Holocaust with the instructor and their peers; as well as meet eyewitnesses and visit historical sites. Through a generous gift from the Charlotte community, this cohort soon will be able to visit the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC for a tour behind the scenes.

To offer more history majors the opportunity for experiential learning abroad, the department has augmented its study abroad program with several new offerings.

Whereas students continue to have the opportunity to study abroad for a semester or a year at one of our dedicated programs in Germany, Brazil, France, or the UK, the department recently introduced several short study programs for the spring and summer terms. Last spring, our majors spent the semester investigating the evolution of Tokyo from a Samurai capital to a modern metropolis, before spending the spring break in Japan under the leadership of the instructor. Likewise, our majors analyzed the complex history and current realities of Bolivia in the classroom and in the country.

“Many of the learning community alumni have graduated within four years and/or have pursued honors and graduate studies.”

For those majors seeking practical experience in the craft of history, the department recently expanded its variety of internships and research practicums. The Charlotte Research Scholars program and the Charlotte Community Scholars program allow advanced majors to engage in direct (paid) research with our history faculty during the summer; either assisting in the latter’s research, or engaging in a community history project. Through a generous gift of the Charlotte community, the department now also offers several undergraduate summer stipends for research in business history. And of course, our history honors program remains one of the most successful faculty-student research collaborative in the humanities on campus. Our department is in the process of welcoming its first Professor of Practice.

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The department also continues to widen its range of applied and interdisciplinary undergraduate course offerings to complement its already diverse topics, era, and area curriculum. Besides introductory courses in public history and its prime track in teaching, the department offers courses on business, legal, environmental, and medical history. Starting next year, it will also furnish two core courses for the newly-established Legal Studies Minor, while continuing to develop joint initiatives with the Belk College of Business and the Cato College of Education.

Over the past years, history faculty have taught courses on children in war and conflict, the new south, and capitalism. Topics have ranged from the constitution and the Civil War to eyewitness perspectives of the Vietnam War and Refugees from Nazism.

Finally, our faculty not only teach in the class-room, but extend their expertise to the benefit of the community at large. The department was a founding member of the Charlotte Teacher Institute, and collaborative initiative where college faculty engage primary and secondary school teachers in innovative content seminars for further development in the classroom. Over the past years, history faculty have taught courses on children in war and conflict, the new south, and capitalism. The department has also developed a series of community salons in which faculty engage with the general public on a wide variety of topics in support of its undergraduate and graduate programs. Topics have ranged from the constitution and the Civil War to eyewitness perspectives of the Vietnam War and Refugees from Nazism.

Despite a challenging climate for the humanities, our undergraduate program continues to be vibrant with well over 300 majors and seventy-five minors; due in large part to the excellence of our faculty, and dedicated work of our administrators and staff.

The History Learning Community is one of the oldest freshmen programs on campus. As the freshman cohort learns, explores, lives, and studies together under dedicated year-long mentorship, HLC members report higher satisfaction in their course and learning experience, outscore their peers on GPA and time to completion data, are more likely to pursue honors and less likely to drop out of college; and form tight friendships that carry through the remaining college years and beyond. The History Learning Community program is funded by the Provost Office.

The HLC program is directed by Oscar Lansen, a social historian of war and conflict and member of the honors faculty, who holds the distinction of Teaching Professor.
Dr. Carmen Soliz published her article “Land to Its Original Owners': Rethinking the Indigenous Politics of the Bolivian Agrarian Reform” at the Hispanic American Historical Review, 97, no. 2 (2017), pp. 259-296. The article reassesses the role of indigenous political organizing on the outcome of the 1952 Bolivian National Revolution, challenging previous revisionist scholars who have argued that the national revolution eroded traditional indigenous systems of authority and organization. Instead, it shows how indigenous political leaders embraced Bolivian nationalism on their own terms and pushed the ruling nationalist party to redefine its agrarian reform program.

Dr. Gregory Mixon organized a panel for the Association for the Study of African American Life and History meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio entitled: "My Brother’s Keeper: African Descendant People Serving the Race" the presenters include: recent UNC Charlotte Master’s graduate Ms. Christina Thomas, now a doctoral student at Johns Hopkins University. He is serving on the Southern Historical Association's Program Committee, Membership Committee, and Minorities Committee in planning for the 2018 SHA conference in Birmingham, Alabama.

Dr. Karen L. Cox’s newest book, Goat Castle: A True Story of Murder, Race, and the Gothic South (UNC Press, October 2017) examines a Depression-era crime that took place in Natchez, Mississippi, and made national headlines. While the book details the murder of one of the descendants of the town's planter aristocracy, it also explores several important historical issues, including the domestic slave trade, post-Civil War race relations, perceptions of the Old South in the 1930s, and Jim Crow injustice. Along the way, Cox’s book examines the decline of the southern elite through the lives of the “Wild Man” and the “Goat Woman,” the pair originally charged with the murder who lived in a crumbling down antebellum mansion that the press dubbed “Goat Castle.

The centenary of the First World War has kept Dr. Heather Perry busy over the past year. In addition to four academic conference presentations on her current research projects, she also organized a Public Teach-In on the history of World War I in the Carolinas and gave invited talks at the University of Portland, Texas State University, and our own Charlotte Museum of History. She also helped organize the city’s 2-day Centennial Commemoration of Camp Greene – Charlotte’s World War I Army Training Camp. To raise funds for the History Department's Graduate Student Research Awards, she offered a four lecture Pharr-Buchenau Salon on the Global History of the First World War in November 2016. Finally, in addition to this, she revised her essay entitled "History Lessons" which analyzes the cultural politics of the John Dillinger Museum for an updated and expanded edition of Defining Memory: Local Museums and the Construction of History in America's Changing Communities (2017) and continues her work as Associate Editor and Book Review Editor of the journal, First World War Studies.
Faculty spotlights

Dr. Oscar Lansen collaborated on the translation into Mandarin of, and wrote the editorial notes and corrections for three monographs: on one Dutch Liberalism, one on Paris in wartime; and one on the social impact of the Rio Olympic Games. Dr. Lansen also assisting in properly subtitling the James Baldwin documentary *I am not your Negro*. He has also served at Exam Leader at the Advanced Placement European History Reading, overseeing the grading of 99,000 essays in addition to serving this year as Chair of the Honors Council and giving three Salons for the Charlotte community at large; one on the Jews of Amsterdam, a two-night series on Jewish refugees in the Dutch West Indies; and a four-night series about the Vietnam War. He presented a a four evening community presentation on the History of the Vietnam War from the Vietnamese and the American perspective. Phi Truong related his experiences of growing up as the son of a Vietnamese Red Cross doctor on the battle field; and his flight as boat refugee after the war. Executive Medical Officer Cpt. John Phillips, Combat Communications Platoon Leader Lt. Murphy Archibald, and UNC Chapel Hill Law Student Tom Ruff discussed the emotions of war from the American side. Donations benefitting the Ruff - Lansen undergraduate history scholarship. He also served as Exam Leader at the annual reading of the Advanced Placement of the European History Exam in June, overseeing the evaluation three questions or roughly 36,000 responses.

Dr. Cheryl Hicks received two grants this year to support her next book project entitled "Black Enchantress: Hannah Elias, Interracial Sex, Murder, and Civil Rights in Jim Crow New York:" a postdoctoral fellowship from the Library Company of Philadelphia, and a Franklin Grant from the American Philosophical Society. She was also a participant in the 2017 National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute - American Material Culture: Nineteenth-Century New York. This program focused on providing engagement with an interdisciplinary group of scholars interested in teaching and research methods.

Dr. Jürgen Buchenau helped lead a group of community members on a study tour of Berlin. Along with Dr. Carmen Soliz, he also led the department's first Spring Break study-abroad trip to Bolivia. Among his scholarly endeavors, Dr. Buchenau continues to work on his current manuscript project, the culmination of 30 years of work on the Mexican Revolution. Tentatively entitled “Blood in the Desert: The ‘Sonoran Dynasty’ in Revolutionary Mexico, 1910-1934,” the manuscript seeks to redefine our understanding of state formation in and after the revolution by providing a close-up portrait of the military faction from the northwestern state of Sonora that first won the revolution, and then spent a decade eliminating one another. He also published an article, “Poder político y corrupción en la revolución mexicana: el caso del General Alvaro Obregón,” in “Dádivas, dones, y dineros:” aportes a una nueva historia de la corrupción en América Latina desde el imperio español hasta la modernidad, eds. Stefan Ruderer and Christoph Rosenmüller (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2016) and secured an advance contract for a book manuscript tentatively entitled “Unequal Neighbors: The United States and Mexico" from Rowman Littlefield.
After serving two terms as Director of Graduate Studies since 2010, I am handing the job over to Dr. Peter Thorsheim, who has been elected by the department as the new director. I thank Dr. Thorsheim for his willingness to serve and wish him much success in continuing to build the program.

During my tenure as program director, I have worked on a number of goals, including increasing graduation rates, clarifying curriculum requirements, implementing Degree Works, developing a database and Google Group for program alumni, and obtaining more research and stipend funding for graduate students.

As I look back on my time in this position, however, I am most gratified by the successes of our students. With each successive class I have admitted and oriented, it has been a true pleasure to watch them move from their initial coursework into their own research for theses and exams. In the last seven years, students in our program have studied everything from the debate over liquor laws in Charlotte (Chuck McShane) to Black Power in international context (Destinee Linker), from Spanish Civil War exiles in Mexico City (Maria Labbato) to refugees from revolutionary Saint-Domingue in Charleston, SC (Chandler Durham), from the memory of the bombing of Hiroshima (Julie Hawkes) to representations of female swimmers in Weimar Germany (Hallie Gillespie)—in traditional theses and exams, but also in a diverse array of public history projects, from museum exhibits to documentary films, from websites to historical reenactments.

Three of these projects were recognized with a M.A. thesis award from the Dean of the Graduate School: Mike Ervin, “‘Public Order Is Even More Important Than the Rights of Negroes:’ Race and Recreation in Charlotte, North Carolina, 1927-1973;” Marissa Nichols; “The Greatest Enemy? Smallpox Elimination and Politics in Mexico, 1942-1970;” and Ian Pasquini, “Tate Street, that Great Street: Culture, Community and Memory in Greensboro, North Carolina.” From all of these projects, I (and, I am sure, other faculty and students) have learned so much.

Although we always miss our students after they graduate, it has also been extremely rewarding to see so many alumni go on to such a wide variety of good professional schools, Ph.D. programs, teaching positions, public history careers, and other work. This past spring alone, two graduates were accepted to Ph.D. programs with full funding: Hallie Gillespie (University of Indiana) and Christina Thomas (The Johns Hopkins University). Other recent graduates have gone on to attend law school (Ross Smith, at the University of Kansas); teach in secondary schools (Matt Chisholm, Bethany Gregory, Sarah Hinkey, Mike Lindquist) or at colleges (Crystal Moore Archer, Chandler Durham, Drew Hill, Mike Sullivan); or work at museums, libraries, or historic sites (Sarah Blanchett, Layne Carpenter, Greg Gann, Kate Moore, Andrew Pack, among others). After writing a book about former Chancellor Bob Woodward, Bill Jeffers was hired by our own University as its Institutional Historian, a job he says he loves; he is now researching another book on University founder Bonnie Cone.

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At least two of our recent alumni are documentary filmmakers: Ian Pasquini and Erin Derham, who is currently working on a project called STUFFED, about taxidermy. Others have already completed Ph.D.'s and are teaching as post-doctoral fellows (Guy Aiken, at Villanova University) or assistant professors (Evan Faulkenbury, SUNY-Cortland). Whether they are mentioned by name on this short list or not, we are so proud of all of our graduates!

In preparation for this column, I asked some of our alumni what they most appreciated about their time in the M.A. program in History at UNC Charlotte. Most said that the program thoroughly prepared them for their chosen educational and career goals by giving them solid analytical, research, writing, and presentation skills. As Allison Steigerwald, who just completed her second year in a Ph.D. program at the University of Iowa and is spending her summer in archives in New York, Boston, and London for a project on twentieth-century British history, put it, “I have found that getting my MA at Charlotte overly prepared me for my time here at Iowa.” Mike Sullivan, who has worked for the Historic Landmarks Commission in Charlotte but recently had a chance to pursue a long-time dream of teaching history, at Central Piedmont Community College, wrote, “Thanks to UNC Charlotte for helping me get another item off my bucket list. And I am not done! I hope to have an opportunity to teach again. Thank you and the other professors at UNC Charlotte for all they did to make that possible.”

In addition, many respondents emphasized that the program provided them with a supportive community. To quote Ross Smith, who after his first year in law school at the University of Kansas is spending the summer working as an extern to a federal district judge as well as a federal magistrate judge in Kansas, “What I appreciated most about the program at UNC Charlotte is the people. With a relatively small student group, it felt very quickly like being part of a little family, and it was nice to be able to grow and develop professionally and academically while bonding with people from all walks of life. . . . And I think what makes UNC Charlotte unique in this regard is that the professors were just as much a part of the family as the students.” This sentiment was echoed by Chris Kinley, who just completed his first year in the Ph.D. program in History at The Ohio State University and is spending the summer learning Albanian (funded by several different grants) for dissertation research on national identity in the Greek-Albanian borderlands between 1900 and 1940: “I appreciated the interaction and advice provided by the faculty. I felt like a family member and enjoyed working with everyone. I also felt as though everyone really cared for the students and wanted us to succeed.”

I could certainly add more examples from other recent—and older—alumni. But these should suffice to demonstrate the community, support, and encouragement we strive for in our program.

But what happens in our graduate program is just a beginning for our graduates. While we thoroughly like getting to know you while you are here and hope that you enjoy your time in the program, our mission is focused on helping you get to where you want to go next. Once you leave, please keep us informed about your every move! You can continue to contact me at chaynes@uncc.edu or, beginning in the Fall of 2017, Dr. Thorsheim at Peter.Thorsheim@uncc.edu. And if you are not already receiving messages from our new alumni Google Group and would like to, please let us know.

Working with so many graduate students has been a highlight of my career so far. I continue to wish you all the best!

Christine Haynes

Alumni Spotlight: Maria Labbato

I'm currently enrolled in a PhD in History program at Florida International, about to begin my second year.

I would like to share how great of an experience I had at UNC Charlotte. I felt I had so much support from my advisor, faculty, and the staff, and enjoyed many invaluable opportunities to be involved in our graduate conference, attend the AHA conference in DC, and receive travel funding for research. I learned so much from my seminars and assistantship and really look up to the professors in the department. And most importantly these experiences gave me wonderful memories I appreciate and cherish.
It is my pleasure to update you on our public history program. One of the major initiatives of the year is the Preserving Memory in the Digital Age: Charlotte Eastern-Europe Cemetery Experience Project. The program received a three-year, $47,500 grant from the Blumenthal Foundation as well as an Impact and Innovation Fund Grant from the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte to support this project. Working collaboratively with existing organizations, students from UNC Charlotte and Queens University will be involved in stabilization, preservation and interpretative work at cemetery sites in Poland and Lithuania. I recently returned from meeting with our partners in Eastern Europe, visiting cemetery sites and studying the changing memorial landscape. Many Jewish cemeteries in Eastern Europe remain under constant threat due to neglect and lack of awareness about their presence and condition. The project integrates community-based historical research into the humanities curriculum and provides students an opportunity to explore global connections in their work and course of study. For the next three years (2018-2020), students will travel to Europe as part of a two-week field experience after completing a multi-campus course during spring semester. In addition to cemetery restoration and documentation work, students will visit Auschwitz, numerous museums and world heritage sites and explore how historians address commemoration and memorialization.

The project immerses students in public history, providing them a unique opportunity to consider how historians partner with the public, engage questions of memory and develop material for public audiences—both in Eastern Europe and in Charlotte—using new digital tools. This effort expands on our undergraduate public history offerings, helping undergraduate majors and minors explore opportunities and conduct research in public history in a global context. If you are interested in learning more about the project or in supporting student scholarships, please contact me.

Internships remain a major part of our graduate program with students completing them with the NASCAR Hall of Fame, Levine Museum of the New South, Fredericksburg National Military Park (National Park Service), Charlotte-Mecklenburg Department of Parks and Recreation, Carolinas Aviation Museum, Harpe Historic Preservation Consulting, Cabarrus County Library, Charlotte Museum of History and UNC Charlotte’s Atkins Library.

The program has also partnered with Atkins Library to offer a series of oral history workshops in 2017-2018 that will provide students the opportunity to conduct oral histories as part of the library’s collection and fundraising efforts. Such workshops supplement the standard curriculum and help students gain additional professional experience. Course projects and partnerships continue to connect students, faculty and community, providing opportunities for students to implement projects drawing on their academic studies.

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This year, students in my History in the Digital Age completed a variety of digital projects, including two tied to recently completed MA theses by Hallie Gillespie and Casey Moore that use digital tools to bring their research to a wider audience and encourage engagement (“Historically Accurfit” and “Taboo Tarheels”: historicallyaccurfit.com and tabootarheels.wordpress.com). Other projects, like Emma Hilton’s guide to Historic Wrightsville Beach (historicwrightsvillebeach.wordpress.com) and Tracy Beauregard’s examination and database of historic cemeteries in Newburgh, New York (newburghnyug.com) integrate community history and digital technologies to assist visitors and researchers. And Thomas Tillman, who tragically passed away this past spring, launched a new digital repository of Charlotte African American history (charlotteblackhistory.com). In the fall, students in Museum Studies will be involved in interpretive planning for the Siloam Rosenwald School project in Charlotte in partnership with the Charlotte Museum of History.

“UNC Charlotte students are learning how to be historians in the classroom and beyond, finding their footing in the field and engaging the public in meaningful discussions about the past.”

Congratulations to recent graduates Brianna Dancy, Lucas Ross, Casey Moore and Denise McClain, who completed their MA theses and public history projects this past academic year. Denise is still working with the Eastern Cabarrus Historical Society (https://montamoena.org/) and is on staff at the Cabarrus County Library. From the local to the global and from undergraduate studies to our MA concentration in public history, UNC Charlotte students are learning how to be historians in the classroom and beyond, finding their footing in the field and engaging the public in meaningful discussions about the past.

Aaron Shapiro, Associate Professor and Director of Public History.
It has been a pleasure to serve as the LTAM program director since 2012. For the last five years, the program has maintained an average of 30 majors per semester; this is an increase compared to the average of 8-12 majors in 2008-2009. Thanks to the efforts of program faculty, and especially graduate program director Jurgen Buchenau, the M.A. program has also seen a dramatic increase from 12 students in 2013 to 39 students in Fall 2017.

Our program is of high quality. Our students have been accepted to PhD programs around the country at UC-San Diego, Emory University, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Arizona State University, Notre Dame University, and Vanderbilt University. Our M.A. students have presented their research participating in several conferences such as the William Brown Conference and the Southeast Council of Latin American Studies (SECOLAS). In the workplace, graduates have found employment in teaching, non-profit organizations such as the Charlotte Latin American Coalition, and jobs in the corporate sector catering to Charlotte’s large Spanish-speaking population.

The program has emphasized the importance of working with the community. I have worked closely with Dr. Erika Edwards, our outreach coordinator, to create links and partnerships with the Charlotte business community and with nonprofit organizations such as LAWA (Latin American Women Association) and the Latin American Coalition. LAWA has offered scholarships at UNC Charlotte for Latino students. LTAM Hispanic Outreach established contacts with Hispanic Business people in the community to find ways for LTAM students to have internships at these businesses.

The LTAM program continues to encourage students to participate in study abroad programs and to hold internships with local organizations that help the Latin American community as part of the major’s requirement. Our students have traveled to countries like Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Paraguay, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Brazil. Most recently, in Spring 2017, we inaugurated a new Spring Break program in Bolivia open to both graduate and undergraduate students.

During these last five years we have created the MBA/LTAM dual masters’ program and the new LTAM/SPAN Dual Degree M.A., which was launched as a pilot program last fall. As of Fall 2017, three students are enrolled in the LTAM/SPAN program.

The LTAM website at latinamericanstudies.uncc.edu has gone through very important changes through the years. The undergraduate portion of the website now has a Spanish version to make it easier for those whose first language is Spanish. The graduate portion has detailed information about M.A. theses and careers pursued by recent graduates.

The challenges for the future include recruiting more majors for the B.A. program, the number of which is lower than it has been in the last five years. In the near term, we hope to get back to our historical average of 30 students; the long-term goal is a robust program of 45-50 students. In addition, the M.A. program must follow up on its recent success attracting new students by retaining that momentum and translating the higher number of students into a higher number of graduates. We also wish to create additional dual-degree M.A. programs as appropriate.
Phi Alpha Theta Honors

Phi Alpha Theta is a nationally recognized honor society for history students. Members of this society have the opportunity to present their work for local conferences and national prizes. New members will receive a year’s subscription to the Phi Alpha Theta publication, The Historian. Finally, members are entitled to graduate with the Phi Alpha Theta honor cord.

The campus chapter of Phi Alpha Theta under the direction of Dr. Robert McEachnie continued to grow and take on new roles in the life of the college. During the 2016-17 school year, the honors society added twenty-two new members who fulfilled the high academic requirements of the group. PAT produced a UNC Charlotte history t-shirt which they sold to raise funds. The shirt sold out three times and had to be re-ordered repeatedly due to popularity. The fundraising allowed the group to offer all of its activities free of charge to students. During the fall, the group partnered with Dr. Thorsheim and Dr. Ehlers to offer supplements to their classes of movie nights on Cold War and Japanese cinema respectively. The group also repeated the popular “How To Apply To Graduate School” workshop in October where Drs. McEachnie, Haynes, and Shapiro spoke to students about useful tips for applying to any graduate school. In the spring, the group funded a trip to the Carolinas Aviation Museum to trace the history of technology and flight in the region. Between the two semesters, PAT had 20 members graduate with honors, privileged to walk with honors cords at the fall and spring graduation.

Current Phi Alpha Theta officers include Anna Culbreath (President), Jackson Petro (Vice President), and Christine Marolda (Treasurer).

Graduate History Association

The Graduate History Association is open to all history and Latin American MA students. The GHA strives to build relationships among UNC Charlotte Masters students through social and academic activities. We will be hosting our annual back to school picnic on August 25th at Reedy Creek Park. All faculty and students are invited. We will also be hosting our annual GHA conference in the spring. The theme this year is war and conflict. We look forward to hearing some great panels and speakers. We have several fun activities planned for this year including trivia night, movie night, sporting events, and possibly a brewery tour. Becoming a member of the GHA is very simple. All it requires is paying $20 and helping out at our annual conference. The GHA is a great place to make new friends and network with colleagues. The GHA officers are looking forward to a fantastic school year and are very excited about all of our upcoming events. If you have any questions about the GHA contact president Emma Hilton or vice president David Hunt.
Over Spring Break of 2017, I experienced a study abroad trip hosted by the History Department that featured a little over a week in Tokyo, Japan. It was definitely one of the coolest, most culture-filled trips I’ve ever taken in my life, and I would love to go back one day. Professor Maren Ehlers and Professor Yukiko Yokono led the trip, and it was filled with hands-on experiences of Japan’s culture, like visiting an Onsen (a.k.a. public bath with hot springs underneath), and thrilling adventures, like visiting an ancient Edo-themed amusement park and watching live ninja shows, dressing up in traditional kimonos, and viewing a geisha parade while there. I learned so much about the history and culture of Tokyo, how it transformed from the Samurai capitol that it was to the modern city that it is today.

Each day we got to travel to museums, shrines, temples, and other historical sites that were so beautiful. Professor Ehlers had such a rich knowledge of Tokyo, the former Edo, the military history of Japan, the traces of samurai life and politics, and the formal feudal system before the Meiji Restoration. We had two days where we traveled outside of Tokyo to Kamakura, where we saw the Engakuji Zen Temple and a nice view of Mt. Fuji, and Nikko, where we saw the Toshogu shrine, which was the most beautiful shrine we saw on the trip, in my opinion. It houses the famous three monkeys—"see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil." Professor Ehlers had coincidentally planned our day trip for the exact day after 10 years of renovations to the shrine, so we got to witness the curtain dropping and revealing the new shrine. It was so beautiful that some of the students cried! During the trip, I also had the best ramen of my life at a place called Ippudo, which I miss dearly. If you have the chance to fit this class and trip into your schedule, you should go for it!
During Spring Break of 2017, I was granted the amazing opportunity to join the study abroad program to Bolivia during its inaugural trip. Having never left the United States, I had no idea what I would experience—I did tons of research on all of the places on the itinerary, but nothing could have prepared me for reality.

My trip to Bolivia is, so far, one of the best experiences of my life. There’s nothing quite like stepping out onto the streets of La Paz and hailing down a taxi or trying to run past incoming traffic—Charlotte drives have nothing on drivers in La Paz! Even just the people on the street, selling food, dancing, and having fun, have a way of making you feel like you’ve found home away from home. While we were in La Paz, we were able to ride the cable cars that go through the city and look at all of the parts of La Paz that we wouldn’t be able to experience first hand—it was an amazing experience with an amazing view which allowed us to see a lot of diversity in housing throughout the city. We got to go to different museums, watch the city from the top of the Church of San Francisco, experience different restaurants, and the nightlife of the city—people breakdancing in the plaza and Michael Jackson impersonators doing the “thriller!”

I was able to experience not only the fast-paced city life of La Paz, but also the ruins of Tiwanaku, the tranquility of the Island of the Sun, and the heat of Copacabana during my trip, which made me feel like I had the chance to experience a little bit of everything during my first trip abroad. The bus ride to Copacabana was a long one, but everyone on the trip made it fly by and it became almost like a road trip with family would be. While we were there, we were able to dip our feet in Lake Titicaca—which has freezing water—and take pictures with alpacas, which we didn’t see in La Paz.

I’m really glad that my trip to La Paz was my first experience abroad—I was able to meet so many new people and the other students and faculty, which I still keep in touch with, I travelled with made the trip memorable. I’ll always consider La Paz a home away from home, and I’m looking forward to returning as my studies progress and I have another opportunity to. If you’re on the fence about applying for the program, I suggest that you go ahead and speak to the facilitator—La Paz won’t let you down!
When I came to UNC Charlotte in the Fall semester of 2013, I was motivated by two primary drives: to continue my education, and to deepen my commitment to an activism that prioritized community and collaboration with the marginalized people of our society. For me, these two drives have always been intimately tied to one another; rather than two distinct or competing interests, it was important to me that the real work of justice shape the nature of my scholarship, and that my academic work—in turn—sharpen and reinforce my activism.

At some point after confirming my intent to enroll at Charlotte, I received an email from Dr. Oscar Lansen about what was at that point called the History, Politics, and International Affairs (HPIA) Learning Community. As a Political Science major at that time, the program seemed like a relevant opportunity to wrestle with questions of human rights, war, and conflict in historical contexts, surrounded by a group of peers who shared some of my interests. However, I was unsure that I would be allowed to participate in the program; as a Levine Scholar, I was required to spend my first year on campus in Witherspoon Hall, even though the learning community was based in Lynch.

I nevertheless reached out to Dr. Lansen, who to my benefit made an exception on that residential requirement. The HPIA community presented history in a way that was critical and alive—history began to feel not merely as past but also as present. The courses I took with Dr. Lansen were the most engaging and gripping of my freshman year.

And yet I continued to think of myself as operating firmly in the world of politics, rather than in the realm of history. What I was missing, of course, is that politics happens in history. An interest in revolutionary movements compelled me to register for Dr. Steve Sabol’s *Russian History: 1801-1917* in Fall 2014, where Dr. Sabol stressed again and again the competing themes of reform and revolution in pre-Soviet Russia. For the third semester in a row, my most stimulating class at UNC Charlotte had been a history course, and though I continued to resist declaring a history major, the implications of that simple but important idea—that politics does not occur outside of history, but rather within it—were becoming clear to me.

I knew that I would be studying abroad in South Africa in the following summer, so I decided to take Dr. Brenda Tindal’s Spring 2015 course on *Apartheid South Africa*. Now four semesters in, I had taken at least one history course each semester, and consistently they were among the most gripping and relevant courses I had taken at UNC Charlotte. Professor Tindal routinely conducted class in the form of student-driven Socratic seminars, where I was able to experience a real critical and academic depth in the classroom. By the end of that semester, I had not lost my interest in politics, but was no longer certain that my study of politics had to be through one particular lens or method. Still driven by my commitments to academic rigor and justice work, I declared majors in History and Religious Studies.

I

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As a new major, I registered for a methods course on *Violence in the Roman Empire*, directed by Dr. McEachnie. Up to that point I had focused almost exclusively on modern history, unnerved by what I perceived as the radically esoteric terrain of the ancients; it was only my emerging interest in religion that brought me to that classroom in the Fall of 2016. In Dr. McEachnie’s course, my writing improved dramatically. Even more importantly, that course demystified the work of “doing history” for me. For the first time, I was able to see myself not only as a student of history, but as a historian.

That semester, my research focused on voluntary martyrdom in the early Christian movement and in the writings of Tertullian, for which I was awarded the department’s scholarship in memory and honor of Dr. Jane Laurent. Building upon that work, with a keen interest in the revolutionary roots of early Christianity, I set out to outline an Honors History Thesis that would interrogate the different messianic movements of Second Temple Judaism.

I spent much of the summer of 2016 with the Maccabees, the Essenes, and the New Testament sources. With the support of the Levine Scholars Program, I traveled to Jerusalem and the West Bank with a delegation organized by Interfaith Peace-Builders. Though my experience there was predominantly about understanding the modern political conflict through the eyes of occupied Palestinians and refugees, I was able to get some idea of the geography of my thesis research. But the names and streets that would ultimately become the subjects and setting of my Honors History Thesis were much closer to home.

“Charlotte was thrown into the national spotlight for its mass demonstrations in the same way that Ferguson, Baltimore, and other cities previously had been.”

On September 20, 2016, I saw friends sharing a couple of livestream videos from Old Concord Road, where a CMPD officer had shot and killed 43-year-old Keith Lamont Scott. That night, students and community members gathered to mourn and to protest, and the rest—as they say—is history. For weeks, protesters demanded justice for Keith Lamont Scott and, later, Justin Carr. Charlotte was thrown into the national spotlight for its mass demonstrations in the same way that Ferguson, Baltimore, and other cities previously had been.

Advised by Dr. Christopher Cameron, Dr. Brenda Tindal (now at the Levine Museum of the New South), and Dr. Sean McCloud of Religious Studies, my thesis addressed how a theology of property shaped the protests and their response.

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A fixation on property was used by the police and the media in order to dismiss protesters, as well as by demonstrators to challenge and reject police narratives surrounding the death of Mr. Scott. In every instance, the employment of property conceals certain elements (the debate over whether or not Scott had a gun or a book, for example, conceals the larger debates over whether or not Scott was killed for his skin color, or whether or not the police should ever have the right to use deadly force). My thesis moved from the primary sources of the uprising (press conferences, photographs and livestreams, and media coverage) to theory, and back to the protests again. In its final form, it presented a theory of theologies of property that dominate discourse in our neoliberal world, which varies in form: ruling class v. insurgent, conscious v. unconscious, illusory v. revelatory.

Again with the support of the Levine Scholars Program and Atkins Library Special Collections, I have been able to turn my thesis into a small, six-panel exhibit on the first floor of Atkins Library. It has been a privilege to work on questions of historical importance to the city I’ve called home my entire life; it has been quite another privilege to rethink history entirely, working through the challenges of writing history on an event so recent, in which I and many of my friends, comrades, and neighbors are so invested.

At my graduation ceremony in May 2017, I shook Dr. Lansen’s hand on the way to receive my diploma. At that moment, I felt I had come full circle. I will leave Charlotte in September for Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey, where I’ll pursue an M.Div. degree; beyond that, I hope to pursue a Ph.D. in Religious Studies, Theology, or History of Religions. But I leave greatly indebted to UNC Charlotte’s History and Religious Studies programs, which allowed me to stay true to those two predominant drives of academia and activism. The History Department has not only trained me to write well and to research thoroughly—it has taught me a new, more complex and holistic approach to understanding human relationships, politics, and conflict not as abstract experiences, but as interactions within history.

"It has been quite another privilege to rethink history entirely, working through the challenges of writing history on an event so recent"
Growing up in Lima, Peru, I could not imagine that my future would include the amazing opportunity to study in the United States. Having always loved languages, I began learning English as a young child after begging my father to send me to Saturday morning classes. As I grew, I discovered American music and the lyrics provided more, perhaps questionable, learning opportunities.

I started my college experience in Lima studying Spanish-English translation and interpretation, but quickly learned that this college was not going to provide the level of education I desired. I had an opportunity to spend my three month semester break in 2008 living in Greensboro, NC with an American family and I was hooked. Once back in Peru, I volunteered to translate for an American mission team traveling to the Peruvian Andes in 2009 and my path took an exciting turn. Two Charlotte families in this group offered to host me for my semester breaks in 2009 and 2010. Just before returning to Peru in December, 2010, I talked with my host mom and expressed my desire to study in the US. I immediately registered for the TOEFL exam and applied to colleges in the Charlotte area where I had a home away from home. I was accepted by both Winthrop University and UNC Charlotte.

I chose Winthrop because of the extensive international student program and the significant scholarship offered. Unfortunately, after the 2011-2012 academic year I returned to Peru where I had a health crisis and had to delay my return to the US. When I was healthy again, I transferred to UNC Charlotte in 2014 because of the broader academic opportunities the university offered. I continue to be grateful that my journey led me here.

I proudly earned my Bachelor of Arts Magna Cum Laude in Spanish, as well as a Spanish Business Language Certificate in December, 2016. Being the first in my family to earn a degree, I have been able to set an example for my brothers and sisters on the importance of education. As I was nearing graduation, I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Jurgen Buchenau through friends in the Masters of Latin American Studies program. Once again, I was hooked. A Master's degree had never seemed a possibility for me, but this program seemed to be exactly what I needed to set an example that Latin American women have significant value, can learn at a high level and contribute equally in helping a family rise above poverty. Opportunities for women in Peru are severely limited by the male-centered culture and extreme poverty. A woman with an advanced degree is very rare in Peru, but is respected and given opportunities to impact lives in ways other women simply can't.

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Since I joined the LTAM program, even though it has been a short period of time, I have had the pleasure to meet outstanding professors who care about my progress and help me improve in the program. For instance, I am grateful to learn how to develop my research. Dr. Benny Andres’s class, LTAM 5600, equipped me and my classmates with important information on how to conduct research, and in my case, historical research.

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While enjoying the learning process and starting to work on my thesis, I have found many difficulties and stressful times. Thankfully, I have advisors in the program such as Dr. Carmen Soliz, Dr. Carlos Coria, and Dr. Jurgen Buchenau, who have played important roles in helping me craft my thesis. They support me and remind me that this process is difficult, but worth the stress and sacrifice.

Having been awarded the Pharr/Buchenau grant for my thesis research, I was recently able to travel to Peru to conduct interviews and archival research on the role of the church in the recent Time of Terror (approximately 1980-2000). This violent and bloody period began when a University professor formed the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) and confronted the military in efforts to make Peru a Communist country. As part of my own history, I am excited to explore this subject in detail and develop new angles.

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For life after graduation with my UNC Charlotte M.A., I have a passion to help my Peruvian brothers and sisters rise above their pervasive poverty and to gradually eradicate the cultural limitations imposed on women. Being well trained during my time at UNC Charlotte, I plan to eventually start a non-profit organization that will focus on helping and empowering low income Latin American women to reach their full potential.

I am so grateful for my time at UNC Charlotte and to all of my professors who have encouraged and challenged me. My time here has made me believe that I can make a difference back in Peru.
The Dowd Initiative:
History of Capitalism

During the 2016-17 year, the department’s history of capitalism, sponsored by the Dowd Foundation, continued to grow. Over the course of the year, the department offered three Dowd-supported courses. In the fall semester, Dr. Gregory Mixon and Dr. Akin Ogodirin (Africana Studies) co-taught a new liberal studies course, “Capitalism, Africa, and the African Diaspora.” In the spring, Dr. Benny Andres taught “Food Production, Marketing, and Consumption in the USA,” a revised version of a history of capitalism-themed liberal studies course that he had taught previously, in Fall 2015. Also in the spring, Dr. Jill Massino offered a new Dowd-sponsored course: “From Marx to McDonald’s: The Changing Face of Eastern Europe and Russia.” As usual, among the highlights of these courses were presentations by visiting speakers. In 2016-17, these included Marlene and Glen Jones, of Main Street Management Group, LLC; Dr. Peter Kopp, a historian of the American beer industry; and Dr. Michele Rivkin-Fish, an anthropologist whose research examines the effects of the transition to capitalism on Russian families.

In early 2017, the Dowd program launched a new research grant initiative, which supports summer research by students working on projects related to the history of capitalism. The first two grant recipients of this program are Mr. Dustin Gloor, a BA candidate in history, and Mr. Bryan Gable, an MA candidate. Mr. Gloor is using his grant to complete an original study of the use of eminent domain by municipal governments in Mecklenburg County. Mr. Gable, who also holds a summer internship at the NASCAR Hall of Fame, is working on a new history of the development of the stock car racing industry in the Charlotte region.

Reporting and editing by Latin American Studies Graduate Assistants: Nashaly Ruiz Gonzalez and Melissa Castañeda
Photographs courtesy of the History Department

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