Dear Friends of the History Department,

It is early June, and the Academic Year 2018-2019 is truly over. I know this because when I arrived at Founders Hall this Monday morning, the massive tent erected for Commencement was already taken down and the campus was eerily quiet. The Yellow class of 2019 has graduated, and we wish them well as they move on to the next challenge. Before they departed, the History Department—faculty, graduating seniors, and families—were able to gather one last time, on the last morning in May when the rhododendron were in bloom, to toast the moment and to wish our graduates well until we meet again.

This past year was my third as Chair, and I will return for one more before yielding leadership to Alejandra Osorio, our outstanding Latin Americanist. For our History Department, as for so many across the nation, these are testing times. Even as our world desperately needs more people who can think critically about the past and present, History majors and enrollments are in decline, victim to a mentality in which an undergraduate degree must result in an immediate payoff, as defined by a starting salary. While it is certainly understandable that students seek a return on their college investment, we lament that so many Wellesley students are now graduating with weaker skills in writing, critical thinking, and historical analysis than their peers at any time in the past.

To push back against these developments, the History faculty continues to develop innovative courses and to invite campus speakers who address pressing issues. This past year, Professor Lidwien Kapteijns introduced a new course on Greater Syria, providing history students with a timely introduction to the history of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan since the fall of the Ottoman empire. Professor Grote organized an outstanding talk by Robert Darnton on governments and censorship. And I invited to campus Rian Thum, a specialist in the history of China’s Northwest, who spoke to us on China’s Muslim internment camps, a shocking development of the past few years.

(Continued on page 2)
All of these events and more were organized by our new Administrator, Sharon Zimmer, who joined us in November. In just six months, Sharon has become an indispensable member of the History Department, expertly managing our office, budgets, and events. Assisting Sharon are Izzy Labbe ’20 and Grace Olson ’21, our incredibly capable student assistants. As a chair, these are the people who make my job so wonderful, and I am ever grateful for their hard work.

I am also grateful for my colleagues, and here I’d like to recognize three of them. The first is our outstanding early modernist, Simon Grote, who earned tenure this year. Simon is a terrific teacher and a leader in his field of intellectual history. The second is Brenna Greer, who earned tenure and published Represented: The Black Imagemakers Who Reimagined African American Citizenship (UPenn, 2019), an original and provocative work that explores how African Americans were represented as consumers, and therefore as U.S. citizens, by entrepreneurs such as the Ebony publisher John H. Johnson. In this work, Brenna challenges all of us, as she challenges her students in a number of her popular courses, to broaden our understanding of the Civil Rights movement. And the third is Lidwien Kapteijns, who published ‘Stringing Coral Beads’: The Religious Poetry of Brava (c. 1890-1975) (Brill, 2018), an extraordinary set of translations that present in English a series of Sufi poems, originally written in a Bantu dialect from the Somalia coast. These poems provide invaluable insight into East African approaches to Islam.

As always, please be in touch. My colleagues and I are always excited to hear from our graduates. To contact us, please send a brief email update to Sharon Zimmer (szimmer@wellesley.edu) or me (cgiersch@wellesley.edu). I also invite you to join us on Facebook.

Best regards,

Pat Giersch, Chair
History Department Faculty

FACULTY AND AREAS OF SPECIALITY

C. Pat Giersch (History of China)
Brenna W. Greer (History of the U.S. in the Twentieth-Century)
Katherine A. Grandjean (History of Early America)
Simon Grote (History of Early Modern Europe)
Lidwien Kapteijns (History of Africa and the Middle East)
Y. Tak Matsusaka (History of Japan)
Alejandra B. Osorio (History of Latin America)
Ryan Quintana (History of the U.S. in the Nineteenth-Century)
Valerie Ramseyer (Medieval History)
Nikhil Rao (History of South Asia)
Guy M. Rogers (Ancient History)
Andrew Shennan (History of Modern Europe, Currently Provost)
Quinn Slobodian (History of Modern Europe)
Nina Tumarkin (History of Russia)
C. Pat Giersch

This was my third year as Chair of the History Department. In addition to teaching courses on China-U.S. relations (a particularly interesting topic at the moment!) and the legacies of China’s last empire (also timely, given the brutal reeducation camps in Xinjiang), I was a member of the search committee seeking the second holder of the Sophia Moses Robison chair in Jewish Studies, I delivered a keynote address at a fascinating conference on frontier history in Taiwan, and I submitted the final manuscript for a book on Chinese business history to Stanford University Press. With a little luck, the book will be out next spring, just in time for a celebration as I complete my final year as chair and prepare for sabbatical.

Kate Grandjean

I was on leave in 2018-19, having received an American Council of Learned Societies Burkhardt fellowship to conduct research for my current book project, a study of murder and violence in the wake of the American Revolution. I was also affiliated with the University of Connecticut Humanities Institute, where I presented research in fall 2018. In March 2019, I delivered the Guy F. Goodfellow Memorial Lecture at Washington College in Maryland. I also gave talks at Harvard University, Massachusetts Historical Society, and other venues. I look forward to getting back to teaching in 2019-20, when I will debut a new class on crime and punishment in early America.

Brenna Greer

It has been yet another busy and fulfilling year, during which I realized two primary objectives. First, I completed my book, Represented: The Black Imagemakers Who Reimagined African American Citizenship (University of Pennsylvania Press), which examines the historical circumstances that made the media representation of black citizenship, good politics, and good business after World War II. Second, I became a tenured faculty member, the obvious and wonderful benefit of which is the privilege to continue teaching, learning, and researching at Wellesley College.

As for teaching, I debuted a new seminar this spring entitled Telling Stories: The Politics of Narrating the Black Freedom Struggle. This seminar grew out of my lecture course on the history of “the struggle,” which revealed students to be as interested in how and why people remember and narrate this particular history. Time constraints of the lecture course prevented digging into these questions: the seminar’s purpose is to consider them deeply. Thanks
Simon Grote

It was of course a great joy to receive tenure this year, and I am tremendously grateful to my colleagues in the department for their support and their arduous contributions to that process. Otherwise, probably the intellectual and pedagogical highlight of the year was my seminar on mental health in European history (HIST 352), which I taught for the first time in fall 2018. Combining the history of psychiatry with science and technology studies, this course relied nearly every week on the riches of Wellesley’s Special Collections, including recent purchases by curator Ruth Rogers specifically for the course. The research that emerged from this seminar includes several extraordinary student research papers and, for my part, elements of a new, collaborative research project on the history of technologies for analyzing the human psyche. In May, I presented to a workshop at Boston College my first forays into the research for this project: on an eighteenth-century French “penitential manual,” a handbook helping Catholics prepare to confess their sins. In addition to seeing one article through the publication process, I also devoted much of my research time to a new project investigating the fate of “Mosaic” (i.e., Genesis-based) physics in eighteenth-century Germany.

Lidwien Kapteijns

This year has been even more teaching-intensive than usual. Apart from teaching my courses on the history of Modern Middle East, Modern Africa, and South Africa, I introduced a brand-new research seminar on “Greater Syria under Ottoman and European Mandate Rule, c. 1850-1950.” I also supervised independent studies about the history of Somalia, Syria, and Islamic law in the recent history of Pakistan. At the end of the summer, the co-edited source publication of Sufi didactic religious poetry from Brava (an old port-city on Somalia’s southern coast) composed in a Bantu language unique to the town came out with Brill under the title Stringing Coral Beads. For Brava’s religious scholars, teaching the people of their town proper Sufi Islamic beliefs and devotional practices in their own vernacular – a wider phenomenon in East Africa at this time – was one among many responses to the beginning of (Italian) colonial rule. My article “Remedying the Legacy of State Collapse: Thinking through and beyond Somali Civil War Violence” came out in the edited volume War and Peace in Somalia (Oxford U.P.). The Wellesley Club of Minnesota hosted me to speak about “History and Song in the Somali Sixties.”
Y. Tak Matsusaka

This year, I have been following up on a project on comparative world history that I began during my last sabbatical leave. This interest is partly an outgrowth of my teaching, but it is also an extension of my research into a group of intellectuals in Meiji Japan who were deeply engaged in the problem of placing Japan at the turn of the twentieth century into a world historical context. In many ways, my subjects were trying to produce a “big history” that would help the Japanese people make sense of the modern world into which they had been abruptly thrust in the late nineteenth century. I am, to a certain extent, following in their footsteps in my time and my world. I don’t know quite where this project will take me, but I have been able to incorporate some of what I have learned into new teaching material for my courses. That alone makes this effort worthwhile.

Alejandra B. Osorio

This was a busy academic year. On the scholarly side, I published an article in Radical History Review titled “Of National Boundaries and Imperial Geographies: A New Radical History of the Spanish Habsburg Empire” (2018, Issue 130, 100-130). I also have two other pieces that will be coming out this summer, “The Copy as Original: A Critique of the Colonial Hybrid from the Spanish Habsburg Political Culture of the Presence of the Absent,” to be published in Renaissance Studies in the UK, and a book chapter titled “Ceremonial y proyección del poder monárquico en el imperio de los Austrias españoles en tiempos de Felipe III,” to appear in an edited volume on the political culture during King Philip III of Spain’s (1598-1621) rule, in Madrid, Spain.

Ryan Quintana

My book, Making a Slave State: Political Development in Early South Carolina (UNC Press) came out in the spring of 2018. Earlier this year I participated in a podcast with Ben Franklin’s World, where I discussed what we mean by “space” and how space relates to the study of history; the ways in which Black Carolinians helped to secure South Carolina’s independence; and, how enslaved men and women built the State of South Carolina. I have also continued to work on my next project, which will look at the early history of state compensatory practices and abolition across the Anglo-American world and aims to illuminate how black lives and deaths were central to the production of the early state and notions of the common good.
Faculty News

Valerie Ramseyer

I have two publications in press: “Rethinking Boundaries between Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Communities in Pre-Lateran Southern Italy,” in Irven Resnick and Marie-Thérèse Champagne (eds.), Religion and Law in Medieval Christian and Muslim Societies (in press, Brepols) and “Questions of Monastic Identity in Medieval Southern Italy and Sicily, c. 500-1200,” in the New Cambridge History of Medieval Western Monasticism, ed. Alison Beach and Isabelle Cochelin (in press, Cambridge University Press)

I am currently working on the following: “Diversity and Mobility in the Beneventan Zone,” in Brill Companion to the Beneventan Zone, eds. Andrew Irving and Richard Gyug (forthcoming, Brill, 2020) and Early Medieval Italy: New Perspectives and Approaches, a book offering an overview of early medieval Italy from the Ostrogoths through the investiture controversy (c. 475-1085) and integrating the histories of different regions of Italy which are generally treated separately: northern and southern Italy (including Sicily), and Lombard, Byzantine, and Muslim territories.

Nikhil Rao

I returned to Wellesley in Spring 2019 after being away on leave. Last Fall, I co-organized a panel at the annual Urban History Association meeting and presented a paper on the changing politics of urban street-vending between the 1960s and the 1980s. Over the Winter break, I was in Mumbai continuing research on my second book project. I had some success learning about the history of the building industry, especially in the crucial period of the 1970s, when the Bombay builder became a prominent actor on the housing scene. I gave two talks on this topic at Mumbai venues. Over the Winter break and continuing over the course of Spring semester, I also completed an article titled “Politics at the Urban Edge: Local and Regional Scales in Bombay’s Expansion”, which I will be sending out to a journal for review. This semester, it was back to teaching at Wellesley after my leave, and I taught my courses on the City in Modern South Asia and on the Political Economy of Development in South Asia.

Guy Rogers

This past year was a very busy one for me. I wrote two articles, one review, and continued my work on my books, one about the great Jewish revolt against Rome (66-74 CE) and the other the Alexander Encyclopedia. I spent most of January in Rome and southern Italy working on my research. I will be on sabbatical during 2019-2020, giving lectures, trying to finish off my book projects, and taking care of the cat herd.
Quinn Slobodian

My most recent book, *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism* was published by Harvard University Press in spring of last year. Since then, I’ve been having a great time discussing the ideas and arguments of the book through podcasts, interviews and public talks. The trade war launched by the current US administration has upset many long-standing assumptions about the world economy, making it an opportune time to revisit the last century of discussions about the politics and ethics of organizing the flow of goods and money over national borders. My ongoing research on the varieties of radical capitalism has led me to my new research topic on the rediscovery of the city-state and the enclave in the late 20th century as a refuge for nervous capital and a potential site of experimentation for a new end of history: capitalism without democracy.

Nina Tumarkin

For me 2018-2019 was studded with conferences, panels and public lectures as well as memorable research trips to Russia. I spent five days with a “detachment” of Russian adolescents in a paramilitary group devoted to exhuming and burying the remains of some of the over two million extant World War II MIAs, and on 22 June, the anniversary of the 1941 German invasion, gave a speech at the burial ceremony in the local village (see photo, pg. 11). I returned to Russia in January to speak at a major politics conference at which the keynote speaker was the Russian Prime Minister, and on the 95th anniversary of Lenin’s death processed with Russian communists to the Lenin Mausoleum. I spoke on US-Russian relations at Boston’s Kennedy Library and the Center for Strategic and International Studies in DC, and participated in three panels at Harvard: on Russian monumental propaganda; on the writer, Alexander Solzhenitsyn; and on transgressive narratives about the past. And in May 2019 I will give a paper in Bologna, Italy at a conference on the mass commercialization of history in Russia. I devoted part of my spring break to lecturing on Vladimir Putin to two Wellesley alumnae clubs. In the fall I taught my Imperial Russia course, which this year included an exploration of the hundredth anniversary of the murder of the Romanov family by the Bolsheviks in July 1918. I also taught my seminar on the memory of World War and my always-animated first year seminar on Vladimir Putin.
New Faculty Books


Tenure News

Celebrating the tenure of Professors Brenna Wynn Greer and Simon Grote, December 2018
New Courses in 2018-2019

**HISTORY 341**
Professor Greer

**HISTORY 366**
Professor Kapteijns

**HISTORY 352**
Professor Grote

---

**New Course for 2019-2020**

**HISTORY 369**
Professor Kapteijns

---

**A crucial aspect of modern international history is the large-scale violence against civilians that has marked recent civil wars throughout the world. From former Yugoslavia to Rwanda, Iraq, Syria, and beyond. Though such violence is often labeled "ethnic" or "religious," its causes are much broader. We will study the causes and consequences of both state-perpetrated and communal violence, and delve into the scholarly (and legal) debates about political/social reconstruction and moral repair in the aftermath of such violence. The ethics of the representations of violence by historians and other authors/artists is also an important theme of the course. Student research papers will deal with aspects of a particular conflict in the Middle East, Africa, and the western Indian Ocean region.**
Professor Tumarkin Organized the Following:

**Russia NOW:**
The Current State of the Former Soviet Union

Professor Nina Tumarkin spent five days with a “detachment” of Russian adolescents in a paramilitary group devoted to exhuming and burying the remains of some of the over two million extant World War II MIAs, and on 22 June, the anniversary of the 1941 German invasion, gave a speech at the burial ceremony in the local village.
Public Programs 2018-2019

The History Department Presents

Yudru Tsomu
Center for Tibetan Studies, Simon University
Guozhang Trading Houses and Tibetan Dealmakers in Dartsedo, the “Shanghai of Tibet”

MARCH 18TH
- 5:00 - 6:30 PM
- PENDLETON EAST 219

This lecture will explore a deeper understanding of the nature of trade on the Tibet-Tibetan frontier and the entrepreneurial role of women in the border town of Dartsedo.

Adam Malka
Assistant Professor of History, University of Oklahoma
Producing and Policing the Black Criminal during the Age of Slavery

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1
- 6:00 - 7:30 PM
- PENDLETON 112

Free and open to the public.

Works on Memory: Reflections & Practices

Julian Bond

Thursday, April 11, 2019 6:00-7:30 pm | Clapp Library Lecture Room

Sponsored by the History Department

The Wellesley College History Department Presents

Dying Before Their Time
Lumumba, Cabral, and Sankara

Panzi Lumumba, Amilcar Cabral, and Thomas Sankara were three young revolutionary African leaders who had their lives cut short due to the cruel intrigues of the Cold War, just as postcolonial nations seemed close to becoming a reality. This talk will examine the concepts of “nation time” to better understand the significance and impact of their deaths.

Speaker: Bhakti Shringarpure, Department of English, Women’s Gender and Sexuality Studies, and the Race, Ethnicity and Politics Program at the University of Connecticut.

Friday, April 5th, 2019
3:00-4:15 pm
Slater International Center

The History Department Presents

A History for China’s Muslim Internment Camps

Directed by Rian Thong

Wednesday, April 17th
5:00-6:30 PM
Clapp Library Lecture Room

Co-sponsored by the Department of East Asian Languages & Cultures

When the Chinese government was estimated to exile millions of predominantly Muslim minority groups to internment camps in 2017-2018, the world looked to China. Rian Thong’s film examines the camp’s impact on both local and international scales.

Rian Thong is a specialist in the history of religion and international relations, focusing on the intersection of religion and politics in the Asia-Pacific region. He is currently a Visiting Fellow at the Daedalus Institute for Global Public Policy Research.
Commencement Breakfast May 2019
Honors Seminar Program and Scholarships

Each year a small number of outstanding students choose to undertake honors work in History. Candidates for honors in History build upon the knowledge learned and skills developed in their previous coursework by crafting their own interpretations of the past. This experience can be richly rewarding: it offers students an opportunity to work closely with a faculty adviser, to think deeply about a significant intellectual problem of their own choosing, and to grow as a researcher, writer, and thinker. Because of a generous grant from the F.A.O. Schwarz Foundation, honors students in History are eligible for the prestigious F.A.O. Schwarz Foundation Scholarship, established in memory of Professor Henry Schwarz, former chair of the Department of History. The scholarship grants funds for student research activities (including travel to archives and other collections) as well as a student senior year stipend. The Schwarz Foundation grant also funds the department’s Honors Seminar, which brings the department’s honors students together with their advisors and other faculty members throughout the year. In 2018-2019 the Schwarz Honors Seminar was directed by Prof. Slobodian. This year three students earned Honors in History:

**Angela Coco** “Cause, Course, and Consequence: The Punic Wars (264 BCE to 146 BCE)”

**Alexandria Otero** “Building the Lone Star State: State sanctioned confinement of Native Americans, Latinos, and African Americans in Nineteenth Century Texas”


We gratefully acknowledge the generosity of the F.A.O. Schwarz Family Foundation for its sponsorship of the History Department Honors Program.

Student Essay Prizes

Each year the History Department awards essay prizes:

The 2019 Ralph H. Bollard Essay Prize in the field of United States history was awarded to:

**Angela Coco, Class of 2019**

The 2019 Erasmus Essay Prize for the best essay on a historical subject was awarded to two students:

**Paige Calvert, Class of 2020**

**Esa Tilija, Class of 2019**
The following history students presented at the Tanner and Ruhlman Conferences 2018-2019:

**TANNER CONFERENCE:**

- **Dominiki Kurz ’20**
  “From Peshmerga to Parliament: My Experience at a British Think Tank” (James Messina, Freedom Project)

- **Hazel Wan Hei Leung ’20**
  “Serve the People! Community Lawyering in Boston’s Asian American Communities” (Prof. Greer)

- **Lydia MacKay ’19**
  “Making History in Cambridge” (Prof. Kapteijns)

- **Violet Sulka-Hewes ’21**
  “Racially Motivated Police Violence in World War II-Era Georgia” (Prof. Greer)

- **Maddie Taylor ’19**
  “How Museums Write History: The Case of the Lobkowicz Palace” (Prof. Grote)

**RUHLMAN CONFERENCE:**

- **Samantha English ’19**
  “The Caged Bildungsroman: Feminist Avian Narratives in Victorian Literature” (Prof. Matsusaka)

- **Catherine Gooding ‘19**
  “Proud Union Redneck: History, Identity, Narrative in the West Virginia Teacher Strike” (Prof. Quintana)

- **Rebecca Rudolph ’19**
  “The Wrath of Medea: Medea as Achilles in Greek Tragedy” (Prof. Rogers)

- **Maddie Taylor ’19**
  “The Banner of Conservatism: Reinventing Divine-Right Kingship in 19th C. Prussia” (Prof. Grote)

- **Esa Tilija ’19**
  “Cushioning Restraint: The Padded Room in Mid-19th Century England” (Prof. Grote)
**Student and Alumnae News**

**Beth Daniel Ibish ‘99** (History) Since 2013, Beth has led the National Defense University-based National Security Policy Analysis Forum. She and her team prepare and execute strategic- and policy-level tabletop exercises for the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (OUSD(P)) on national security topics ranging from multilateral cooperation to homeland defense to cyber preparedness, bringing together senior-level government and military participants. Beth lives in Washington, D.C. with her husband Hussein and their sons Yusuf, 5, and Kamal, 1.

**Rukmani Bhatia ‘12** (IR History) Rukmani is a policy analyst for Gun Violence Prevention at the Center for American Progress, and published “Guns, Lies, and Fear,” comparing the NRA’s messaging tactics to those of authoritarian political regimes.

**Ikuno Naka ’12** (IR History) Ikuno is still in Oxford, UK chipping away at her dissertation which she hopes to submit by this coming fall. The research looks at the ‘speculative urbanism’ driving the urban growth of an emerging South Indian city, Cochin. She spent much of this past year presenting at academic conferences from Stockholm to Washington D.C, all of which is a huge excuse to just travel, eat good food and see the world.

**Maria Prebble ’12** (IR History): Maria left the International Union on the Conservation of Nature after close to five years in their Global Gender Office, and co-authored a new USAID/IUCN report on gender and fisheries.

**Rebecca Turkington ’12** (IR History) Rebecca is the Assistant Director of the Women and Foreign Policy Program at the Council on Foreign Relations, and recently presented her research on criminal justice and female extremists at the United Nations and the Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence.

**Oluwapelumi Botto ’16** (IR History) Oluwapelumi has completed two-thirds of her MSc in African Development at the London School of Economics and Political Science. For her thesis she is continuing the research she did for her History Honors thesis on planned African cities. She expects to finish her degree in September this year.

**Johana Mata ’17** (IR History): Johana graduated in 2017 as an IR-History major with a concentration in Latin American history. After a Princeton in Latin America Fellowship in the Dominican Republic, she has returned to the United States to work for Congressman Lloyd Doggett of Texas in Washington, D.C.

**Ashley Baker ‘19** (History): In addition to her History major, Ashley also received her Massachusetts teaching license from Wellesley. Next year, she will likely be teaching government and history at a public high school in Ayer, MA.

**Emma Olivia Carter-La Marche ‘19** (History): Emma will be a field artillery officer in the US Army. She’s stationed at Ft Bragg, North Carolina with 82nd Airborne. She’s excited to apply her knowledge of military history to her future career.
**Angela Coco ’19** (History): After graduation, Angela Coco will be heading to Law School. In focusing on narrative history at Wellesley College, Angela has come to understand that people (who they are and why they do the things they do) are an integral part of the law. While continuing to pursue her love of ancient history and utilizing the skills she gained in the History Department, Angela intends to become a criminal or civil litigator.

**Jordan Dervishian ’19** (History): After graduation, Jordan is planning on returning to her hometown of Charlotte, North Carolina, where she looks forward to catching up on her reading and reuniting with her two cats. In the fall, she will be starting her first year teaching middle school social studies.

**Adeline Du Crest ’19** (IR History): After graduation, Adeline will be participating in a six-month internship at NATO SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe) in Belgium. She will be working in the Comprehensive Crisis and Operations Management Center, researching capacity building in Afghanistan’s defense and security institutions, as well as the military’s role in Afghanistan’s long-term development. She’s delighted to build on the academic and critical skills she has gained taking history courses at Wellesley to pursue her interest in international security with this opportunity.

**Chika Egbuzie ’19** (IR History): Chika will spend the summer in Nigeria, extending her research about the history of African fashion she pursued in a History independent study this past semester.

**Anna Hunter ’19** (History Minor): Following graduation, Anna will start immediately at UW Madison pursuing a Masters of Science in Curriculum and Instruction. The program will prepare her to teach social studies and English as a Second Language in high school. One year later, she will begin her dream job as a high school history teacher!

**Mariah Lin ’19** (IR History): After graduation, Mariah will be heading home to Los Angeles for a few months to spend time with family and reconnect with friends. She will also be working with local youth from the East LA area through a summer program geared towards digital mapping and community activism. In the fall, she will be heading to Ginling College in Nanjing, China through the Wellesley-Yenching Fellowships program, where she will be teaching English for a year.

**Mary Meisenzahl ’19** (History): Mary will spend the summer after graduation working as an assistant to magazine publisher Tutul after attending the Oslo Freedom Forum. She will also continue freelance writing for publications like Boston Magazine and Curbed Boston, and hopes to find a writing job in the fall.

**Julia Monaco ’19** (History): Julia is planning on staying in Boston this summer to continue to work for Harvard Business School. She’s worked part-time as a history research assistant on the Case Method Project this year, and will be staying on with them to finish up her current project while she applies for full-time jobs! She’s hoping to be able to stay in New England, but may end up back home in California.

**Naomi L. Whitney-Hirschmann ’19** (IR-History): Naomi won a fellowship to spend next year studying Arabic in Amman, Jordan at the Center for Arabic Studies Abroad.

**Siena Wise ’19** (History): In July, Siena will be starting a nine-month theatrical lighting apprenticeship at Actors Theatre of Louisville in Louisville, KY. She’ll be working as an in-house electrician and assistant to the theater’s guest designers, while also serving as the lighting designer and master electrician for all shows produced by ATL’s Professional Training Company.
Laura Yan ’14 (History)

Can you tell us something about your current work and personal life?

I am currently a doctoral candidate in the History department at Columbia University, where I am researching the changing everyday life of port workers in Indian Ocean port cities (specifically comparing Singapore to Hong Kong, Bombay, and Dubai) after World War II as the Indian Ocean world grappled with decolonization and the emergence of new nation-states. After completing coursework and working as a teaching assistant for two years, I am now in the research phase and I have been traveling to London, Singapore, and Hong Kong over the past year to conduct archival research, with plans to travel to Mumbai and Dubai in the fall. I have family and friends in all these cities, so I am lucky to be able to sample local food with them while I am not in the archives. I have also managed to catch up with some Wellesley alums in London and Singapore! If there are any history students or alums in these cities, I would love to say hello.

How did you experience your Wellesley College education?

What I loved most about my Wellesley education was the flexibility and breadth that came with the focus on the liberal arts. It was incredibly fun to walk from an astronomy class at the science center to a history class at Founders. Now, when I am in the middle of reading dozens of books, I often long for a simple math equation that can be solved very quickly! In addition, I think that the liberal arts requirements strengthen the history education because they encourage more creative approaches to historical analysis. Growing fields like history of science require a strong foundation in both arts and science, and I think Wellesley students are well-equipped in this respect. I also enjoyed the history seminars very much. I always felt like the class was working together to solve some problems (or at least make some progress with answering questions) and that is to the credit of the fantastic teaching by the professors. The challenging but safe classroom environment that I experienced at Wellesley is something I actively try to recreate in my own classrooms as a TA. Finally, I was always extremely grateful for the knowledge and curiosity of the other Wellesley students, and how willing everyone was to buckle down and work together. It wasn’t until I started working in other environments that I realized how special Wellesley students were in that respect.

How has your Wellesley College experience, broadly speaking, figured in what you did afterwards?

For most of my time at Wellesley, I did not plan to enter a PhD program in history and most of my non-academic experience has been at non-profit organizations. I think Wellesley’s focus on service and leadership shaped my interest in working at non-profits, and I definitely benefited from opportunities like the CWS Global Engagement Internship and the Wellesley in Washington program. My approach to teaching students has also been shaped by my experience at Wellesley – not only do I consult my old notes to see how my Wellesley history professors asked questions about sources and taught writing techniques, but I also learned about dialogue facilitation from my experience as a first-year mentor and as a student representative in the Diversity Initiative. My senior thesis, which I wrote under the supervision of Professor Kapteijns, was one of my best experiences from Wellesley and was the key
Interview with Laura Yan, continued

factor in my decision to enter graduate school. I loved the process of formulating my own research questions, reading various secondary sources on the subject, shaping my argument, and working closely with Professor Kapteijns to rethink and hone the project. I also had the opportunity to conduct archival research in London for the first time with the Schwarz fellowship that is available to history seniors writing theses, and this was such a fantastic experience that I decided I would probably enjoy making a career out of historical research.

Can you reflect on your choice to major in History? What’s it like to be studying and training to become a historian yourself?

I entered Wellesley thinking that I would major in English so graduating as a history major was a surprise to me. In fact, I only took my first history class (Professor Kapteijns’ History of the Modern Middle East class) because I had started studying Arabic. But I realized that I enjoyed thinking critically about sources, questioning our own assumptions about the past, and creating arguments and narratives. To me, history as a discipline is the perfect mix of humanities and social science as we can ask big questions while maintaining focus on the human actor. Wellesley’s history classes were also formulative to my approach and methodology as a historian. I first encountered studies of the Indian Ocean world in Professor Kapteijns’ and Professor Rao’s Port Cities in the Indian Ocean seminar, and my final paper for this class inspired my eventual dissertation. The history professors at Wellesley taught me how to ask questions of sources, how to place primary and secondary sources in relation with each other, and how to write a clear, persuasive research paper. Graduate school classes supplemented this education with classes that had a larger focus on theory and historiography. I learned to differentiate between various approaches to history like social history or cultural history and to place my work in larger scholarly conversations. PhD programs are also very much focused on professional development in that you are expected to start networking, attend conferences, and plan workshops and so forth that further your career and contribute to scholarship. You become very specialized and although you end up learning bits and pieces about many different regions, I do miss the process of beginning a new history class on a region or time period about which you know very little.

Anything you feel you would like to see changed about the History department or about Wellesley College?

I would love to see the history department continue to introduce new courses that focus on international, global or transregional history. Not only do I think these fields will be of interest to students but they are also becoming increasingly popular in academia. The Port Cities in the Indian Ocean seminar introduced me to Indian Ocean studies and I am always extremely grateful for that.

Is there anything more you can share about your non-working life?

Part of my dissertation is focused on urban history so I always enjoy taking long walks throughout each city that I am researching. Aside from walking by myself or with friends, I also like to join free walking tours partly to listen to the tour guide’s perspective on the city. I have always loved reading fiction and my Kindle is a lifesaver during long research trips. I am also hoping to start getting more involved in public history and I plan to start volunteering at museums in the US once I return from archival work.
Diana Abouali ’93 (History)

Can you tell us something about your current work and personal life?

I’m the director of the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, which is the only museum in the nation dedicated to preserving, documenting and promoting the Arab American story. I’ve only been in this position for about two and a half months, and I’m loving it so far. As a museum director, I’m responsible for shaping the museum’s strategic vision and goals, supporting and enabling staff to achieve those goals, fundraising, liaising with board members, engaging with the local and national Arab American community, and seeking out and partnering with local and national arts and culture organizations. Before working in the museum and cultural heritage sectors, I taught Middle Eastern studies at Dartmouth College for eight years. I have a PhD in History and Middle Eastern Studies from Harvard University.

My personal life revolves around a solid group of friends that I have here in the US and abroad, many of whom I met when I was at Wellesley. It’s strange to think that I have known some of them for 30 years. I also am very close to my immediate and extended family here in North America and in the Middle East. I never married or had children… I think I forgot to put those on my to-do list! In my 20s and 30s I was juggling a lot of things professionally and personally, and I didn’t make it a priority to find a husband or have children. I don’t necessarily regret that; without the responsibility that comes with having a family and children, I’m able to travel, or move around internationally for work, at a moment’s notice. But I do wish I had learned to balance life and work/career better.

How did you experience your Wellesley College education?

I majored in History and Economics (double major) at Wellesley, which was a compromise I reached with my father at the end of my sophomore year. When I started Wellesley, I intended to major in Economics and Computer Science per instructions from my father who had a five-year-plan in place which, if followed, would lead me to a brilliant career as an accountant. My father, who was a CPA, was insistent that I acquire a “profession” that would ensure me a job and income regardless where I ended up living. His experience of displacement and national loss as a Palestinian reaffirmed his belief that a good education was paramount, and it culminated in acquiring a profession that you could practice anywhere you ended up either by your own choice or by force. Now, many years later, I realize that my father was expressing (in his own way) his commitment to ensuring I graduate from college as an independent and self-sufficient woman – and this singled out my father as remarkable for his generation and background. His goals were actually very much aligned with Wellesley’s, even though it didn’t seem that way to me at the time. After many arguments, he acquiesced and let me drop computer science, even though it was my preferred subject of the two. I’m ashamed to admit I approached my economics courses with a sense of resentment and reluctance, and if I could turn back the clock, I would try to be a better student.

I felt much more at home in the History department. I studied most closely with Professor Lidwien Kapteijns; she was a mentor to me, and I think I might have taken all her courses. I also took courses with Professor Andrew Shennan, a wonderfully generous and inspirational professor; Professor Nina Tumarkin, with whom I studied Russian history as the USSR was crumbling in the early 1990s; and Professor Paul Cohen (Chinese history), whose incredibly demanding course and assigned readings I still remember to this day.
Interview with Diana Abouali continued

Wellesley taught me how to think and read critically and how to write and express myself— all skills that have served me well in whichever path I took, job I worked, or career I followed. The four years I spent at Wellesley introduced me to worlds and disciplines I didn’t know existed, and it has made me a life-long learner. But I do wish I had been more adventurous at Wellesley and taken more risks. I think I played it safe because my time at Wellesley coincided with a very difficult period in my family’s life, and I didn’t want to jeopardize the stability that Wellesley offered me. I wish I had done a semester or year abroad. I wish I had participated in more extracurricular activities and clubs that gave me opportunities for creative self-expression. I wish I had the frame of mind to look for a really cool summer internship in New York City, which is what it seemed like my classmates were all doing.

How has your Wellesley College experience, broadly speaking, figured in what you did afterwards?

As I mentioned above, my time at Wellesley was difficult for me for personal reasons, but I now look back on it very fondly. It was where I made some of my best friends. I received a world-class education, and I now recognize how lucky and privileged I was. Not only did Wellesley prepare me intellectually for the world beyond our beautiful campus, but it shaped me in many ways. Even in the early 1990s, Wellesley was a diverse place – I believe 10% of my graduating class were international students—allowing me to meet students and faculty from all over the world. It cultivated my interest in history as a discipline and as a profession. When I myself became a professor, I always thought back to those professors I had at Wellesley, the ones I’ve mentioned here, as well as others like Professors Pat Berman (Art History), Barbara Geller (Religion), and Julie Matthei (Economics) and tried to do what I had admired so much in the way they approached teaching and interacted with me as a student.

Can you reflect on your choice to major in History?

I always enjoyed studying history in middle and high school, but it was at Wellesley that I studied Middle Eastern and Islamic history for the first time. I went to an American high school in Kuwait, and although we studied Arabic literature and Islamic religion, we didn’t learn about those aspects of our past through the lens of history as a discipline. I think I was drawn to it because I wanted to learn more about my identity as an Arab and as a Palestinian. Although I don’t really identify as Muslim (I’m “culturally Muslim”), it was still important for me to learn more about Islamic civilization from a critical and analytical perspective.

Alumnae, we encourage you to send us brief notes (250 words) about how you are and what you are doing. Please email us at szimmer@wellesley.edu.
End of Semester Parties
End of the Semester Parties
Class of 2019

History Majors

Halle R. Arnold
Ashely M. Baker
Emma Carter-Lamarche
Angela A. Coco (Honors)
Jordan M. Dervishian
Lydia MacKay
Mary Meisenzahl
Julia Monaco
Sarah Sophia Natividad
Alexandria B. Otero (Honors)
Iletze X. Porras
Jacqueline A. Sanchez
Madeline C. Taylor (Honors)
Esa Tilija
Jiayi Wang
Siena R. Wise

History Minors

Sofia Buitrago
Anna Hunter
Emily Rominger
Praewa Wattanavrangkul

Departmental Awards for Distinction in History

2019

The Ralph H. Bollard Prize for Distinction in American History
Esa Tilija ‘19

The Barnette Miller Prize for Distinction in International Relations – History
Naomi Whitney-Hirschmann ‘19
Catherine H. Winn ‘19

The Deborah W. Diehl Prize for Distinction in History
Angela A. Coco ‘19
Madeline C. Taylor ‘19

IR-History Majors

Adeline H. Du Crest
Chika D. Egbuzie
Kate E. Harrigan
Mariah Lin
Naomi Whitney-Hirschmann
Catherine H. Winn

History Happened