

James W. Cook

Department of History
University of Michigan
1029 Tisch Hall
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1003
Office: (734) 763-7860
Cell: (734)-353-9310
jwcook@umich.edu

Current Position

Professor of History & American Studies, University of Michigan (2014-)

Previous Positions

Associate Professor of History & American Studies, University of Michigan (2004-2013)
Assistant Professor of History & American Studies, University of Michigan (2001-2004)
Assistant Professor of History & Director of American Studies, Butler University (1997-2000)
Lecturer, American Studies Program, University of California, Berkeley (1996-97)

Education

1996, Ph.D. U.S. History, University of California, Berkeley (December degree)
1988-89 Fulbright Fellow, Free University, West Berlin, Germany
1988, B.A. European History, Princeton University, *Magna Cum Laude*

Teaching Awards

2005 LSA Excellence in Education Award, Dean's Selection, University of Michigan.
2004 University Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching Award, University of Michigan.

Books

2008 *The Cultural Turn in U.S. History: Past, Present, & Future*, co-edited with Lawrence Glickman and Michael O'Malley (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).
2005 *The Colossal P.T. Barnum Reader: Nothing Else Like it in the Universe!* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005).
2001 *The Arts of Deception: Playing With Fraud in the Age of Barnum* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

Books in Progress

The Birth of Black Celebrity: A Global History, 1770-1930

- My current book project on the first waves of African American artists, intellectuals, and activists to strategize their careers in global markets—roughly from the seminal poet, Phillis Wheatley, to the actor/singer/activist Paul Robeson. Under contract with W.W. Norton & Co.

The New Materialism: Between Culture and Political Economy in U.S. Historiography

- A second book project that will pull together and expand upon my recent historiographical essays. Under contract with the University of Chicago Press.

Articles in Progress or Forthcoming

“Globalization and its Limits between the American Revolution and the Civil War”

- Invited forum contribution for the *Journal of American History*; forthcoming in September 2016.

“Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield (“The Black Swan”)”

- Invited feature essay (2500 words) for the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

“What Phillis Wheatley Knew About Global Capitalism”

- New essay in development. I wrote the first draft of this essay for the New Materialism Symposium in April 2016.

“Why the ‘New Materialism’ Matters for Historians”

- Introductory essay for an edited volume based on the April 2016 symposium that I organized at the University of Michigan. Under consideration with the University of Chicago Press.

Journal Articles and Book Chapters

2014 “Finding Otira: On the Geopolitics of Black Celebrity,” *Raritan* (Fall 2014), 84-111.
<http://raritanquarterly.rutgers.edu/node/7434>

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- 2013 “William Henry Lane (‘Master Juba’),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (September 2013 release). <http://www.oxforddnb.com/public/dnb/100407.html>
- 2012 “The Kids Are All Right: On the ‘Turning’ of Cultural History,” *American Historical Review*, 117.3 (June 2012), 746-771.
<http://ahr.oxfordjournals.org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/content/117/3/746.full.pdf+html>
- 2008 “Twelve Propositions for a History of U.S. Cultural History” (with Lawrence Glickman), *The Cultural Turn in U.S. History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 3-57.
http://sites.lsa.umich.edu/jamescook/wp-content/uploads/sites/181/2014/10/cook_twelve_propositions.pdf
- 2008 “The Return of the Culture Industry,” *The Cultural Turn in U.S. History*, 291-317.
http://sites.lsa.umich.edu/jamescook/wp-content/uploads/sites/181/2014/10/cook_return_of_the_culture_industry.pdf
- 2008 “Seeing the Visual in U.S. History,” *Journal of American History*, 95.2 (September 2008), 432-441. <http://jah.oxfordjournals.org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/content/95/2/432.full.pdf+html>
- 2008 “Antebellum Cultural History,” Karen Halttunen, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to American Cultural History* (New York: Blackwell, 2008), 65-78.
http://sites.lsa.umich.edu/jamescook/wp-content/uploads/sites/181/2014/10/cook_antebellum_culture.pdf
- 2006 “Master Juba, the King of All Dancers! A Fugitive Story from the Dawn of the Transatlantic Culture Industry,” *Discourses in Dance*, Volume 3, No. 2 (2006), 6-20.
http://sites.lsa.umich.edu/jamescook/wp-content/uploads/sites/181/2014/11/cook_discourses_in_dance_article.pdf
- 2003 “Dancing Across the Color Line: A Story of Markets and Mixtures From New York’s Five Points,” *Common-place*, 4.1 (October 2003). <http://www.common-place.org/vol-04/no-01/cook/>
- 1999 “Mass Marketing and Cultural History: The Case of P.T. Barnum” *American Quarterly*, 51.1 (1999), 175-186.
<http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/stable/30041638?seq=1> -
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- 1996 “Of Men, Missing Links, and Nondescripts: The Strange Career of P.T. Barnum’s ‘What is It?’ Exhibition,” Rosemarie G. Thomson, ed., *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body* (New York: NYU Press, 1996), 139-157.
- 1995 “From the Age of Reason to the Age of Barnum,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 30.4 (1995), 231-257.

Shorter Essays (selected)

- 2012 Invited essay on Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield for *Phil Lapsanaky: Appreciations* (Philadelphia: The Library Company of Philadelphia, 2012), 39-41.
- 2005 “Race and Race Relations in P.T. Barnum’s New York City,” invited essay for *The Lost Museum*, a major digital history project co-sponsored by CUNY Graduate Center and the Center for History and New Media, <http://chnm.gmu.edu/lostmuseum/lm/117/>

- 2003 “Luck, Pluck, and the American Character,” *Chicago Tribune* Sunday Book Review (Review of Jackson Lears, *Something for Nothing*, February 9, 2003).
- 2003 “Towards A History of Sound,” *Reviews in American History*, 31 (2003): 47-52.
- 2001 “Magic and Magicians,” *Encyclopedia of American Studies* (New York, Grolier Press, 2001). <http://eas-ref.press.jhu.edu/view?aid=231&from=browse&link=browse%3Fmethod=alpha%26letter=M%26type=>

Prizes & Fellowships

- 2015 *Nineteenth Century Studies Association* Annual Article Prize for “Finding Otira: On the Geopolitics of Black Celebrity” (for best article published in 2014)
- 2014 NEH 10-Month Fellowship at the New York Historical Society
- 2014 NEH 10-Month Fellowship at the American Antiquarian Society (declined)
- 2014 National Humanities Center Faculty Fellowship (declined)
- 2010 Visitor, School of Social Science, The Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ.
- 2010 Howard Foundation Fellowship, Brown University.
- 2007 The Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers, New York Public Library.
- 2007 Visiting Faculty Fellowship, All Souls College, Oxford University, England (declined).
- 2007 Barra Faculty Fellowship, McNeil Center for Early American Studies, University of Pennsylvania (declined).
- 2003 ACLS Faculty Fellowship.
- 2003 John Rich Professorship, Institute for the Humanities, University of Michigan
- 1990 Jacob Javits Graduate Student Fellowship, U.S. Department of Education.
- 1988 Fulbright Fellowship to West Berlin.

Research Grants (selected)

- 2016 University of Michigan Humanities Collaboratory Project Development Grant
- 2015 University of Michigan Office of Research Distinguished Seminar Grant
- 2012 Associate Professor Support Fund Grant, University of Michigan
- 2011 Office of the Vice President for Research, Faculty Grant, University of Michigan
- 2004 Everett Helm Fellowship, Lilly Rare Book Library, Indiana University
- 2002 Joyce Tracey Fellowship, American Antiquarian Society
- 2002 Mellon Research Fellowship, Library Company of Philadelphia
- 2002 Newberry Library Research Grant
- 2002 Rackham Faculty Research Grant, University of Michigan
- 2001 Gilder Lehrman Institute of U.S. History Fellowship, New York Historical Society
- 2001 Albert J. Beveridge Research Fellowship, American Historical Association

Professional Papers & Invited Lectures (selected)

- 2016 “What Phillis Wheatley Knew About Global Capitalism,” written for *A New Materialism? Rethinking Global Capitalism at the Nexus of Culture and Political Economy* (conference at the University of Michigan)
- 2015 Keynote lecture for “Cultural History and its Publics,” a national conference in honor of John Kasson, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
- 2015 “The Lost Global History of Black Celebrity, 1770-1930,” New-York Historical Society
- 2014 “Ira Aldridge’s Perpetual Exile,” New-York Historical Society
- 2014 “Finding Otira: On the Geopolitics of Black Celebrity,” Brown University
- 2014 Roundtable Discussant with Michael Zakim and Jonathan Levy, “Fictions of Finance” Conference, University of Michigan
- 2014 “Global Capitalism at the Nexus of Culture and Political Economy.” Roundtable (solicited by the program committee) for the *Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting*, Atlanta.
- 2013 “Star Power: African American Cultural Production and the Politics of Global Positioning,” *Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting*, San Francisco.
- 2012 “Finding Otira: On the Geopolitics of Black Celebrity, 1770-1920,” Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies, University of Michigan.
- 2012 Comment for “State of the Field: Roundtable on Cultural History,” *Society for Historians of the Early American Republic Annual Meeting*, Baltimore.
- 2012 Chair and Commentator for “Methods of Visual History: Analyzing Nineteenth-Century Images,” *Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting*, Milwaukee.
- 2011 “The Kids Are All Right: Some Reflections on our Cultural Turn-Talk,” Center for Cultural Analysis, Rutgers University.
- 2010 “The Cultural Turn in U.S. History,” *American Historical Association Annual Meeting*, San Diego.
- 2010 “The Birth of Modern Cynicism,” *Talk Show Democracy* conference, co-sponsored by the Knight-Wallace Journalism Program and the Institute for the Humanities, University of Michigan
- 2009 “Towards a History of U.S. Cultural History,” Scherer Center for the Study of American Culture, University of Chicago.
- 2009 “Literature, History, and the Stakes of Interdisciplinarity,” A Seminar and Dual Lecture (with Mitch Breitweiser, UC-Berkeley), Northwestern University.
- 2009 “Talk Show Democracy,” Institute for the Humanities Spring Seminar, University of Michigan
- 2008 “The Cultural Turn in Atlantic History,” *Atlantic Emancipations* Conference, University of Pennsylvania.
- 2008 “Master Juba, The King of All Dancers!”, American History Workshop, New York University.
- 2007 “The Structural Transformation of ‘Black’ Popular Culture,” *Rethinking Modernities* Conference, Rutgers University.
- 2006 “How U.S. Mass Culture Became Global,” Department of History, University of South Carolina.
- 2005 “Talk Show Democracy,” Institute for the Humanities Fall Seminar, University of Michigan

- 2005 “Master Juba and the Invention of Black Popular Culture,” Institute for the Humanities Brown Bag Lecture Series, University of Michigan
- 2004 “Master Juba: A Black Dancer’s Journey Through the Transatlantic Culture Industry,” *American Studies Association Annual Meeting*, Atlanta.
- 2003 “Some Cracks in the White Republic,” Department of History, Michigan State University.
- 2003 “Dancing in New York’s Five Points: A Contested History,” *American Historical Association Annual Meeting*, Chicago.
- 2002 “Visual Culture and the Problem of the Voiceless,” Roundtable on “New Work in Visual Culture,” *Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting*, Washington, D.C.
- 2000 “Humbug Universal: P.T. Barnum and the Perils of Artful Deception,” *American Studies Association Annual Meeting*, Detroit.
- 1997 “P.T. Barnum’s “What is it?” Exhibition and the Social Meanings of the “The African Nondescript’,” *African Studies Association Annual Meeting*, Columbus.

Teaching (1997-2016)

Undergraduate Courses:

U.S. History Survey (both halves)

The Harlem Renaissance

The Emergence of Modern America

Black and White Images: Race, Representation, and Power

Introduction to American Studies

The Emergence of Mass Culture: From Minstrelsy to Hip Hop

Black Cultural Traffic: The Geopolitics of African American Art and Ideas, 1770-1920

African-American Cultural and Intellectual History: From the Atlantic Slave Trade to the Harlem Renaissance

New York Modern: The Cultures of the Great Metropolis

P.T. Barnum’s America

Antebellum America: The Birth of Mass Society

The Civil War Era in U.S. History

Slavery and Anti-Slavery in U.S. History

Graduate Courses:

U.S. Cultural History (History 686)

The Literatures of U.S. History (History 611, with Howard Brick)

Research Seminar in American Studies (AC 698)

Research Seminar in U.S. History (History 771)

Seminar in Comparative Historiography (History 615, with Geoff Eley)

Other Professional Activities

2013 Consultant for PBS *American Experience* documentary on Ripley’s *Believe it or Not*

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- 2013 Interview subject (with Edward Ayers) for “Deception in American Culture,” a program on *Back Story*, a nationally syndicated public radio show. First aired on March 30, 2013.
- 2012- Member of the Advisory Board for the book series, *Social and Cultural History*. Sponsored by the Social History Society and Continuum Publishers, UK.
- 2012 Interview subject on race and antebellum print culture for the video documentary accompanying the *Proclaiming Emancipation* exhibition, Hatcher Graduate Library, University of Michigan, October 2012 through January 2013.
- 2008- Fellowship Selection Committee, The Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers, New York Public Library.
- 2007- Member of the Advisory Board for the journal, *Cultural and Social History* (UK, Berg Publishing).
- 2007 Faculty consultant and on-air interview subject for “William Shakespeare in America,” 12-hour Radio Documentary, Folger Shakespeare Library and Richard Paul Productions. Broadcast nationally on NPR stations, Spring 2007. www.shakespeareinamericanlife.org
- 2005 Co-organizer with Roy Rosenzweig, Lawrence Glickman, and Michael O’Malley for “The State of Cultural History,” a national conference with over 300 registered attendees, George Mason University, Arlington, Virginia.
- 2001 Interview subject on P.T. Barnum for “Late Night Live,” the top-rated program on Australian Radio National. First aired December 5, 2001.
- 2000 Principal Consultant for “The Lost Museum,” a NEH-funded internet history project, Center for Digital History, CUNY Graduate Center. Developed between 2000-2005. www.lostmuseum.cuny.edu/home.html
- 1997- Manuscript referee and reviewer for The University of Chicago Press, The University of California Press, The University of North Carolina Press, The Ohio State University Press, *The Journal of American History*, *American Quarterly*, *Reviews in American History*, *American Studies* (among many others)

Professional Service at the University of Michigan (selected)

- 2015-16 African American History Hiring Initiative, Search Committee & Executive Committee Liaison
- 2015-16 History Department Executive Committee Member
- 2013-14 Undergraduate Committee Member and Faculty Advisor for History Students
- 2013 Undergraduate Studies Steering Committee, Department of History
- 2011-2013 Steering Committee, Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies.
- 2011 Tenure Committee Chair for Professor Anthony Mora.
- 2010 Lecturer IV Reappointment Committee Chair for Professor Julius Scott.
- 2009 Tenure Committee Member for Professor Kristin Hass.
- 2008 Undergraduate Curriculum Reaccreditation Report Co-author, Department of History.
- 2008 Third-year Review Committee for Professor Lori Brooks
- 2007 Tenure Committee Member for Professor Tiya Miles.
- 2004-2007 Director of Graduate Studies, American Culture Program.

2004-2007 Faculty Executive Committee Member, American Culture Program.
2006 Latino/a History Faculty Search Committee Chair.
2005 Principal Author of the American Culture Program's Internal and External Review Documents on the Graduate Curriculum.
2005 College Nominating Committee, College of Literature, Arts, and Sciences.
2004-2006 Faculty Executive Board, LSA Undergraduate Honors Program.
2002-2003 Atlantic Studies Program Planning Committee
2001-2003 Job Skills Coordinator for History and American Culture
2001-2003 Graduate Committee, American Culture Program

Professional Memberships

American Historical Association
Organization of American Historians
American Studies Association
Society for Historians of the Early American Republic
American Antiquarian Society