The historian’s mission has become more important than ever, as our students, children, and we ourselves receive, in greater quantity, more rapidly shifting and visually reinforced “knowledge” and “impressions” of everything everywhere. The superficial nature of instant and “realistic” media offerings of dramatic situations conceals the deep and complex historical past that has spawned what we see. Thanks to the wisdom and generosity of Kenneth and Frances Eisenberg, we are well endowed to collectively engage in modes of historical inquiry that contribute to a broad understanding of the past and present of humanity and the world that surrounds it.

I am delighted and humbled to assume the directorship of the Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies. I am a historian of pre-modern Japan, a time and place typically associated with the loyal and heroic samurai, an archetype of centuries of multilayered misrepresentation. My current research focuses on the relationship between violence and gender, and formulation of the language of heroism in medieval, war-prone society. From the World War II Kamikaze pilots and Hollywood’s Last Samurai to the “Samurai Blue” on the soccer field, the constructed samurai, whose status was abolished in the 19th century, continue to haunt (remind?) the historian of the need to unravel the twisted ideological thread, whose genesis lies in the pre-modern past.

In our regular lectures and workshops and in our programs on global history and public history, the Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies, in its seventh year, hopes to continue the kind of inspiration that has made it a center of scholarly critique and collegial exchange. This year’s line-up of speakers and their topics, which features the theme, “Taking Place: History and Spatial Imaginations,” is superbly enticing. I look forward to seeing you at our events in 1014 Tisch Hall.
TAKING PLACE:

Thursday Speakers, 1014 Tisch Hall, 4-6 p.m.

September 13    Jay Cook, University of Michigan
“Finding Otria: On the Geopolitics of Black Celebrity, 1770-1930”

September 27    Karl Schlögel, Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder)
“Narratives of Simultaneity: Questions for a Topographically Sensitive Historiography”

October 11      Derek Gregory, University of British Columbia
“Deadly Embrace: War, Distance, and Intimacy”

October 25      Mrinalini Sinha, University of Michigan
“The Abolition of Indenture and the Space-Time of Global History”

November 8      Jennifer Jenkins, University of Toronto
“Weltpolitik on the Persian Frontier: Germany and Iran, 1885-1918”
Presented in conjunction with the Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies.

December 6      Seth Rockman, Brown University
“Negro Cloth, Planters Hoes, and the Geographies of Plantation Provisioning in Antebellum America”

Friday Workshops, 1014 Tisch Hall, 12-2 p.m. (unless noted)

September 14    “EIHS Residency Research Fellows’ Forum”
Jennifer Hart, John McCurdy, Todd Meyers, Tracy Neumann, Ellen Wurtzel, Hitomi Tonomura (chair)

September 28    “Chronotopes: Epistemologies of Time and Space”
Karl Schlögel, Clara Bosak-Schroeder, Adam Johnson, David Spreen, Helmut Puff (chair)

October 12      “The Everywhere War”
Derek Gregory, Eric Schewe, Anna Topolska, Jonathan Marwil (chair)

October 26      “Mapping the Americas”
Martin Brückner (University of Delaware), Jon Parmenter (Cornell University),
Neil Safier (University of British Columbia), Michael Witgen (chair)
Presented in conjunction with the Symposium on the Cultural History of Cartography.

November 9      “Traveling Concepts”
Jennifer Jenkins, Ben Cronin, Ronit Stahl, Susanna Linsley (chair)

November 30     Undergraduate Workshop: “What Are You Going to Do with That?
Building a Career with a History Degree” (10 a.m.-2 p.m.)
Joshua Bilmes, Karen Carmichael, Jim Manganello, Angelica Leveroni, Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof (chair)

December 7      “Race, Space, and Circulation”
Seth Rockman, Patrick Parker, Hillina Seife, Marie Stango, Brandi Hughes (chair)
Fall 2012 Guests

Jay Cook

Jay Cook is an associate professor of history at the University of Michigan. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of California, Berkeley. His publications include The Arts of Deception: Playing with Fraud in the Age of Barnum (2001) and The Cultural Turn in U.S. History: Past, Present & Future (2008). His recent work focuses on transnational dimensions of African-American culture and politics. He is currently writing two books: one on the global circulation of African-American artists, intellectuals, and activists between 1770 and 1920; the other on the many lives of cultural history.

Karl Schlögel

Karl Schlögel is a professor of history at the Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder). He earned his doctorate from the Freie Universität Berlin. With more than a dozen books to his credit, he has emphasized the study of urban space in Moscow, Berlin, and St. Petersburg. His numerous awards include the Sigmund Freud Prize for Scientific Prose (2004) and the Lessing Prize of the Free City of Hamburg (2005). Current research interests include applications of M. M. Bakhtin’s concept of “chronotope” to the study of history.

Derek Gregory

Derek Gregory is Peter Wall Distinguished Professor in Political Geography at the University of British Columbia. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge. His current research interests include the spatial modalities of late-modern war and the cultural and political geographies of bombing. He has reached audiences both inside and outside the academy with lectures and publications relating to post-9/11 warfare, including The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq (2004) and “The Everywhere War” (2011).

Mrinalini Sinha

Mrinalini Sinha is the Alice Freeman Palmer Professor of History at the University of Michigan. She earned her doctorate at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. In 2012 she was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for her project on the development of the Indian nation-state. She served as the co-editor of Gender and History from 1996 to 2000. Her books include Specters of Mother India: The Global Restructuring of an Empire (2006) and Colonial Masculinity: The ‘Manly Englishman’ and the ‘Effeminate Bengali’ in the Late Nineteenth Century (1995).

Jennifer Jenkins

Jennifer Jenkins is an associate professor of history at the University of Toronto and holds a Canada Research Chair in Modern German History. She earned her Ph.D. from the University of Michigan and is the author of Provincial Modernity: Local Culture and Liberal Politics in Fin-de-Siècle Hamburg (2003). Her research focuses on modernism, civil society, transnationalism, orientalism, and imperialism in 20th-century Germany. She is currently writing a book on Germany and Iran, framed as an exploration of global interactions in the age of empire.

Seth Rockman

Seth Rockman is an associate professor of history at Brown University. Born in Indiana and raised in San Francisco, he completed his Ph.D. at the University of California, Davis. His 2009 book, Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore, won the Organization of American Historians’ Merle Curti Award, the Philip Taft Labor History Book Award, and the Southern Historical Association’s H.L. Mitchell Prize. He is currently writing a new book about shoes, shovels, hats, and hoes manufactured in the North for use on Southern slave plantations.
2012-13 Faculty Fellows

Pamela Ballinger is the Fred Cuny Professor of International Human Rights and an associate professor of history at the University of Michigan. She earned her Ph.D. in anthropology and history at The Johns Hopkins University. Her interests encompass refugees and displacement, human rights, memory, fascism, and seascapes, focusing on the Mediterranean and the Balkans. Current projects include: Other Seas: Charting New Courses in History and Forgotten Refugees; Decolonization, Displaced Persons, and the Reconstruction of Italy.

Laura Ferguson earned her Ph.D. in history from the University of Michigan in 2012. Her interests include cultural, urban, and environmental history. Her current project examines the process of placemaking through the lens of 19th-century San Francisco’s evolving waterfront landscape.

Anna L. Fagan is an associate professor and Director of the Science, Technology, and Society program at the University of Michigan. He received his Ph.D., in history (of science) from Princeton University. He specializes in 18th and early 20th-century United States intellectual history and in the history of science. His current work focuses on medical jurisprudence and the development of the concept of “unsoundness of mind” (non compos mentis) in Anglo-American common law during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Christian de Pee is an associate professor of history. He earned his doctorate at Columbia University in New York. His published work contributes to a cultural history of Middle-Period Chotia that accommodates the particularities of period southerns. His first book, The Writing of Weddings in Middle Period Chotia: Text and Ritual Practice in the Eighth through Fourteenth Centuries, recovers the practice of Middle Period weddings. His current work traces the emergence of the cityscape into writing during the 11th century.

Jennifer Hart is an assistant professor of African history at Wayne State University. She received her Ph.D. from Indiana University Bloomington. She is currently working on a manuscript project that explores the social and cultural history of motor transportation, citizenship, and development in 20th-century Ghana.

Ben Graham is a Ph.D. candidate in history at the University of Michigan. His dissertation will investigate changes in the perception, cultivation, and consumption of olives in Italy from roughly 600 to 1000 CE. His project analyzes how the olive entered into the nutritional economy of this re-imagined landscape from antiquity. Going beyond its alimentary role, he examines how the olive figured in the negotiation of identity.

Anna MacCourt is a Ph.D. student in anthropology and history at the University of Michigan. Her dissertation will combine archaeological, inscriptive, and literary sources to study the transition between the early historic and early medieval periods in Central South Asia, as well as the emergence and spread of classical Sanskrit cosmopolitan culture. In addition, she is exploring links between Sasanid Persia and South Asia, especially those pertaining to court culture and the imaging and enacting of kingship.

Emma Park is a Ph.D. student in history at the University of Michigan. She traces the roots of her current research to her experience in Kenya, where she traveled the country in a matuset (privately run minibuses). She is examining the ways in which the Kenyan post-colonial state has conceived of and strategically developed road networks as technologies of modern state surveillance.

2012-13 Residency Research Fellows

Ananda Burra is a candidate for dual Ph.D. and J.D. degrees in history and law at the University of Michigan. Her research focuses on early 20th-century international law and its relationship with imperial forms of power. He is interested in tracing the development of anti-colonial legal subjectivities between 1920 and 1955, as colonized peoples used international forums to frame a rights-based critique of colonial rule. His dissertation will trace the creation of transnational publics that articulated new forms of international protests.

Jennifer Hart is an assistant professor of African history at Wayne State University. She received her Ph.D. from New York University. She is interested in interdisciplinary and transnational approaches to studying social, spatial, and economic transformations in United States metropolitan areas after 1945. Her current work examines how the international circulation of urban policy and planning ideas shaped local responses to urban and economic crises, and how national political cultures affected workers and residents in deindustrializing cities.

Edgardo Pérez-Morales is a Ph.D. candidate in history at the University of Michigan. He is the author of La obra de Dios y el trabajo del hombre: Percepción y transformación de la naturaleza en el virreinato del Nuevo Reino de Granada (2011). He has published research articles in journals from Ecuador and Colombia and is currently writing a doctoral dissertation entitled, “Itineraries of Freedom: Revolutionary Travels and Slave Emancipation in Colombia and the Greater Caribbean, 1791-1824.”

2012-13 Postdoctoral Fellows

Susanna Linsley is a candidate for dual Ph.D. and J.D. degrees in history and law at the University of Michigan. Her research focuses on religion and politics in the early national United States. She is currently revising her dissertation, “The American Reformation: The Politics of Religious Liberty, Charleston and New York, 1770-1830,” into a book manuscript. Other projects include articles on religious pluralism in South Carolina and on the American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews.

2012-13 Eisenberg Graduate Research Fellows

Laura Ferguson earned her Ph.D. in history from the University of Michigan in 2012. Her interests include cultural, urban, and environmental history. Her current project examines the process of placemaking through the lens of 19th-century San Francisco’s evolving waterfront landscape.

Ben Graham is a Ph.D. candidate in history at the University of Michigan. His dissertation will investigate changes in the perception, cultivation, and consumption of olives in Italy from roughly 600 to 1000 CE. His project analyzes how the olive entered into the nutritional economy of this re-imagined landscape from antiquity. Going beyond its alimentary role, he examines how the olive figured in the negotiation of identity.

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