Winter, when we at Michigan hunker down and huddle together — hopefully around the hearth of our Thursday lectures and Friday workshops — is a good time to think about transitions in our Department of History and the Eisenberg Institute. Despite the ongoing economic downturn in our state, the shifts and adjustments in Tisch and Haven Halls are moving in a healthy direction. The department flourishes intellectually, with remarkable, enviable collegiality, and whether it’s the roster of scholars invited to speak to us or just the coffee machine, the Eisenberg Institute offers a center around which an exceptional cluster of historians can engage one another.

At a moment when the luster of “change” seems to have faded, here at the Institute we can report that this year has brought meaningful changes that have enhanced our mission. Just as we turn to thank Melvin and Janey Lack for their generous commitment to graduate fellowship funding — more than twenty graduate students benefitted from their gift, many of whom are now in tenure-track teaching positions — we can announce a munificent gift from Ken and Francis Eisenberg to continue funding graduate fellowships at the Institute. Our community of Residency Research Fellows is being enriched by several additions this semester, and on January 28, we will have a Fellows Forum featuring the work of four of this year’s fellows. As we thank Farina Mir for her exemplary service on the EIHS Steering Committee and wish her well as she leaves for India, we welcome Kathryn Babayan, Associate Professor of Iranian History and Culture, to the committee.

This is the final semester for our current theme “Paucity and Plenty,” and the Steering Committee has chosen as the next two-year theme: “Taking Place: History and Spatial Imaginations.” In conjunction with our program next fall we are happy to announce that our colleague Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof will be offering an undergraduate colloquium on the theme that will bring students to EIHS events who, it is expected, will be able to interact with invited scholars.

Transitions can lead in unpredictable directions. The latest one in Russia, originally touted as a transition to democracy and even spawning a sub-discipline in political science called “transitology,” has been notably disappointing. To make change come out as one might wish, of course, involves what historians refer to as agency, people willing and working to make things happen. The Eisenberg Institute is a collaboration between those in Haven and Tisch Halls, and the contributions of faculty and graduate students, fellows and donors, are vital to its ongoing success. Join us this semester for exciting programs that will range from the history of childhood and early English cookbooks to uranium from Africa and utopias in Latin America.

Ron Suny
Director
Thursday Speakers

January 13
Steven Mintz, Columbia University
“The American Journey Through Adulthood”

January 27
Gabrielle Hecht, University of Michigan
“Uranium from Africa and the Power of Nuclear Things”

February 10
Dan Segal, Pitzer College
“Economic Knowledge, Capitalist Mythologies - About Supply and Demand, For Instance: How Economic Textbooks Have Come to Teach Students to Not Think about Labor Exploitation”
A collaboration with the Global History Initiative

March 10
Sandra Sherman, Fordham University
“A Pedagogic Revolution: Early English Culinary Texts and the Common Reader”

March 24
Alice O’Connor, University of California, Santa Barbara
“Narrating the Crisis: The Great Recession, the “Money Trust,” and the Politics of Economic Reform”

April 7
Fernando Coronil, The Graduate Center, City University of New York
with commentators Geoff Eley and Margaret Somers

Friday Workshops

January 14
“Why the History of Childhood Matters”
Steven Mintz, Lerna Ekmekeçigolu (History / Armenian Studies), Matt Ides (recent PhD, History) and Sudipa Topdar (recent PhD, History).
Chaired by Davide Orsini (PhD student, Anthro/History and EIHS Eisenberg Fellow)

January 28
EIHS Fellows Forum
Stephen Berrey (University of Michigan), Alexander Day (Wayne State), Christine Evans (UC, Berkeley), and Karen Miller (LaGuardia Community College, CUNY).
Chaired by Matthew D. Lassiter (History / Urban and Regional Planning)

February 11
“Democracy in the Teaching of World History”
Dan Segal, Anne Berg (recent PhD, History), Ian Campbell (PhD candidate, History) and Charles Sullivan (PhD student, History).
Chaired by Monica Kim (PhD candidate, History and EIHS Lack Fellow)

March 11
“Marketing Self-Help: Print Culture, Capitalism and Commodification”
Sandra Sherman, Aji Alatas (PhD student, Anthro/History), Aston Gonzalez (PhD candidate, History and CAAS) and Sara Lampert (PhD candidate, History).
Chaired by Mary Kelley (History)

March 25
“History and the Political: Interventions in Public Policy”
Alice O’Connor, Robyn d’Avignon (PhD student, Anthro/History), Chelsea del Rio (PhD Student, History / Women’s Studies) and Will Redfern (History / EIHS Post-Doctoral Fellow).
Chaired by Regina Morantz-Sanchez (History/Judaic Studies)

April 8
Eisenberg Institute Symposium: “Thinking Through Paucity and Plenty”
Stephen Mintz

is the director of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Teaching Center at Columbia University. An authority on the history of the family and of children, he is the author and editor of 13 books, including Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life (Free Press, 1988), Huck’s Raft: A History of American Childhood (Harvard University Press, 2004), and Modestats & Modernizers: America’s Pre-Civil War Reformers (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995). A pioneer in the application of new technologies to history, he is the creator of the Digital History website (http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu) and past president of H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online. He is also National Co-Chair of the Council on Contemporary Families and president-elect of the Society for the History of Children and Youth. He chairs the Organization of American Historians Teaching Committee, and is a member of the advisory board of Film & History, the History Teacher, and the OAH Magazine of History, and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

Gabrielle Hecht


Daniel A. Segal

is the director of the Munroe Center of Social Inquiry and Jean M. Piper Professor of Anthropology and Historical Studies at Pitzer College. He is a past fellow of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, the 2001 recipient of the AHA’s William Gilbert Award, and past Secretary of the American Anthropological Association. He has published on race and nationalism in Trinidad, incest in Jane Austen, and the history of undergraduate-level history textbooks. His current research includes a historical study of the fabrication of human-chimp closeness in Jane Goodall’s work. He is a founder of the movement to add the words, “Andrew Jackson Was an Indian Killer,” to the $20 banknote, so that all of us can tell “the truth about history” every time we buy something.

Paucity & Plenty enactments expectations

EISENBERG INSTITUTE

Winter 2011

Sandra Sherman

is a food historian, adjunct professor of English at Fordham University, and an attorney who is the assistant director of the Intellectual Property Law Institute at Fordham Law School. She is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania Law School and earned a PhD in English from Penn. Sandra was formerly an attorney in the U.S. Department of Energy and held legal positions in the Justice Department and State Department. She has taught at the University of Arkansas and Georgia State University, and was President of the South Central Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. She is also the author of four books, including Finance and Fictionality in the Early Eighteenth Century: Accounting for Debt (Cambridge University Press, 1996), Imagining Poverty: Quantification and the Decline of Paternalism (Ohio State University Press, 2001), and Inventing the Modern Cookbook (Greenwood, 2010).

Alice O’Connor

is Professor of History at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She teaches and writes about poverty and wealth, social and urban policy, the politics of knowledge, and the history of organized philanthropy in the United States. Among her publications are Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History (Princeton University Press, 2001); Social Science for What? Philanthropy and the Social Question in a World Turned Rightside Up (Russell Sage Foundation, 2007), and the co-edited volumes Urban Inequality: Evidence from Four Cities, with Chris Tilly and Lawrence Bobo (Russell Sage Foundation, 2001), and Poverty and Social Welfare in the United States: An Encyclopedia, with Owen L. Mink (ABC-CLIO, 2004). Before joining the UCISB faculty, she was a program officer at the Ford Foundation and the Social Science Research Council and a National Science Foundation fellow at the Center for the Study of Urban Inequality at the University of Chicago. Her current research focuses on wealth and inequality in the post World War II United States, and the origins of the second Gilded Age.

Fernando Coronil

is Presidential Professor of Anthropology at the CUNY Graduate Center. Previously, he was a professor in the anthropology department and the history department at the University of Michigan, where he also directed the doctoral program in anthropology and history and the Center for Latin American Studies. His first book, The Magical State: Nature, Money and Modernity in Venezuela (University of Chicago Press, 1997) received widespread praise. With Julie Skurski, he recently coedited States of Violence (University of Michigan Press, 2006). From 2004 to 2005 he was a fellow of the David Rockefeller Center of Latin American Studies at Harvard. In 2004 he guest-edited a special issue of the Hispanic American Historical Review, entitled “Can the Subaltern See? Photography as History.” His current projects include a book on the 2002 coup against Hugo Chávez, entitled Crude Matters, and a collection of essays, Beyond Occidentalism: Towards a Critical Academy: A citizen of Venezuela, Coronil earned his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago.
TAKING PLACE: HISTORY AND SPATIAL IMAGINATIONS

The dimensions of historical inquiry are as much spatial as temporal. The subjects of history inhabit space and move across it; they shape space, and are shaped by it. It is hard to imagine historical work that does not in some way contend with the dialectic of space and place—interrelated yet distinct concepts—whether in the territorial claims of nations, the making of cityscapes, the crossing of boundaries, the limits and possibilities imposed by mountains and oceans. Whether “chosen peoples” have the primary right to settle and rule in a given place and others are fated to migrate and live as exiles, refugees, or diasporas, both the settled and the mobile contend with their relationship to space. And yet, while disciplines from geography to anthropology long ago turned to thinking about space as both analytic and metaphor, historians’ contributions to this theoretical literature have thus far been muted.

Taking Place: History and Spatial Imaginations seeks to focus inquiry on space and place in both history and historiography. Our theme seeks to bring temporality and context to questions of space and movement. We aim to do this by focusing on two analytical axes: mobility and scale. Mobility has been central to historical narratives, in the stories of travelers, traders, slaves, and diasporas, for example. And if mobility is in some ways about thinking laterally, scale allows us to think vertically: from the individual body to the global. Both scale and mobility challenge spatial concepts; they disrupt and support the immobile structures of history, society, and culture, forcing reconsiderations of the traditional places of historiography.

Taking Place therefore pushes us to articulate the centrality of space to the writing of history with more clarity. Indeed, one goal is to show how the discursive spaces of historical narrative—the spatial imaginations of history itself—can be opened up to critical examination. The “spatial turn” surely started a vital conversation. But space—particularly in its relationship to mobility and scale—must be addressed with renewed vigor. We at the Eisenberg Institute hope to provide the space, as it were, for that conversation to take place.

The Legacy of the Janey and Melvin Lack Fellowship

The Eisenberg Institute and the History Department would like to thank Janey and Melvin Lack for their generous contribution to graduate education at the University of Michigan. Since 2005, the Lack Fellowships have been awarded to more than twenty graduate students. Many of these graduates now hold tenure track positions throughout the country, and across the globe:

Guillermo Bustos - Universidad Andina Simon Bolívar (South Ecuador)
Edin Hajdarpasic - Loyola University (Chicago, IL)
Andrew Highsmith - University of Texas (San Antonio, TX)
Clapperton Mavhunga - Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Cambridge, MA)
Roberta Pergher - University of Kansas (Lawrence, KS)
Aleksandra Pfau - Hendrix College (Conway, AR)
Deborah Solomon - Otterbein College (Columbus, Ohio)

Off-Calendar Events

As part of our collaboration with the Public History Initiative, Steven Mintz (Columbia) will join Michelle McClellan for a workshop focused on the use of technology in teaching.

“A New History for a New Century”
Friday, January 14
10:00 - 11:30 am, 1014 Tisch Hall

Sandra Sherman (Fordham University) will visit the Ann Arbor District Library to discuss her new book Inventing the Modern Cookbook

Friday, March 11, 2011
7:00 - 8:30 pm
Multipurpose Room, Main Branch
343 South Fifth Avenue