

# EISENBERG INSTITUTE *for* HISTORICAL STUDIES

Winter 2012 News & Events

From the Director:

## What Ivory Tower?

There really is no such thing as the “Ivory Tower.” The idea that universities, their millions of students, and tens of thousands of faculty, are cut off from the “real world” is a convenient fiction that represents research and teaching as somehow separate and alienated from life as experienced by most people. A fundamentally anti-intellectual and philistine concept (no offense meant to the actual Philistines!), the first usage of “Ivory Tower” may be found in the Song of Solomon, but in the nineteenth century it came to mean the disconnected world of intellectuals. In the United States it evolved into a pejorative code for the academy and its elitist denizens. Some of us might in fact crave the removed space of contemplation and reflection that the term implies, but in our actual lives and scholarly practices historians are very often involved in work that is both affected by outside exigencies and constraints and has an effect on the extramural environment.

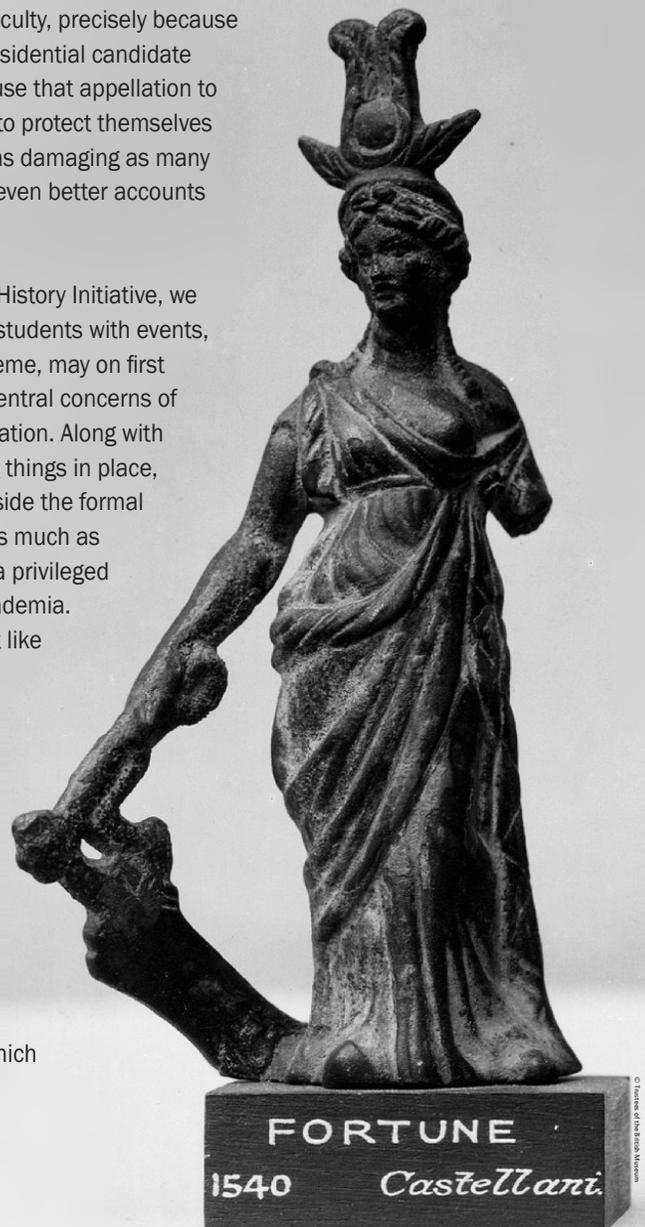
The actual writing of respected, scholarly history is a task of extraordinary difficulty, precisely because getting it wrong is so extraordinarily easy. Who could have imagined that a presidential candidate would elevate himself by claiming to be a historian, with a Ph.D. no less, and use that appellation to propagate the most absurd readings of the past? Sometimes historians have to protect themselves from many who tell us that “history tells us that....” They need to explain that as damaging as many “revisionisms” are, what historians do constantly is revise, hopefully creating even better accounts and explanations of human experience.

At the Eisenberg Institute, through our Public History Initiative and our Global History Initiative, we have been self-consciously attempting to connect the work of our faculty and students with events, interests, and processes going on around us. Place and space, our current theme, may on first hearing sound abstract and otherworldly, but it is foundational to one of the central concerns of historians in their quest to understand the world in which we live: contextualization. Along with other “cons” – contingency, conjuncture, conflict, and contradiction – locating things in place, time, and space links the academy intimately with worlds both inside and outside the formal boundaries of the university. There really is no escape from interest politics, as much as we may try, or the booms and busts of market capitalism. Certainly we live in a privileged sanctuary, to a degree protected from day-to-day impositions from outside academia. And we may treasure that partial separation that allows us to do our work, but like the eye of a storm we are never completely free from the whirlwind around us.

There is a tower at Princeton University that is popularly known as the Ivory Tower, probably because it was funded by William Cooper Procter, the entrepreneur who produced Ivory Soap. Certainly towers and universities convey to the public a sense of elitism, of people speaking an esoteric language that those not so engaged do not understand. But I am struck by those academics who try in a variety of ways to translate the passion, pleasures, and excitement of the work that historians do to all those who might want to share in this intellectual enterprise. As much as the Eisenberg Institute is about bringing us together to learn what we in the profession are doing, it is also about reaching out beyond 1014 Tisch to the wider world of which we are an inseparable part.

Ronald Suny

Director, Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies



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# TAKING PLACE

HISTORY AND SPATIAL IMAGINATIONS

Winter 2012

## Thursday Speakers

1014 Tisch Hall 4-6 p.m.

January 12

Geoff Eley, University of Michigan  
“Empire, Ideology, and the East: Thoughts on  
Nazism’s Spatial Imaginary”

January 26

Tim Cresswell, Royal Holloway, University of London  
“Visualizing Mobility in the Work of Eadweard Muybridge”

February 2

Kathleen Canning, University of Michigan  
“Aftermaths and Future Visions: Gender and the Meaning of  
Revolution in Germany 1918-19”

February 16

Sharon Zukin, Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center,  
City University of New York  
“The Social Production of Upscale Cosmopolitanism: Identity  
and Belonging on an Amsterdam Shopping Street”

March 15

Nile Green, University of California, Los Angeles  
“Making Space: Saints and Settlers in Early Modern India”

March 29

Nicholas Purcell, Brasenose College, University of Oxford  
“Becoming Maritime: The Comparative History of Orientation  
Toward the Sea”

## Friday Workshops

1014 Tisch Hall 12-2 p.m.

January 13

EIHS Fellows Forum  
Ethan Blue, Brady G’Sell, Clement Hawes,  
Kevin Jones, Ari Sammartino  
Chaired by Ronald Suny

January 27

“Where Are We in Place and Space?”  
Tim Cresswell, Tapsi Mathur, Anthony Mora, Emma Park  
Chaired by John Carson

February 3

“Dilemmas of the Global: Space and Epistemology”  
Joseph Ho, Ashley Rockenbach, Colleen Woods  
Chaired by Penny Von Eschen  
Sponsored in part by the Global History Initiative

February 17

“Landscapes of Meaning: Urban Culture and Power”  
Sharon Zukin, Nicole Greer, Anthony Ross, Cookie Woolner  
Chaired by Matthew Lassiter

March 16

“Imagining Sacred Space”  
Nile Green, Yoni Brack, Elizabeth Platte, Natalie Smolenski  
Chaired by Kathryn Babayan

March 30

“Comparative Thalassologies”  
Nicholas Purcell, Graham Claytor, Benjamin Hicklin,  
Jonathan McLaughlin, Edgardo Pérez Morales, Joshua White  
Chaired by Sebastian Prange

January 12



## Geoff Eley

is Karl Pohrt Distinguished University Professor of Contemporary History and chairman of the Department of History at the University of Michigan. A graduate of Balliol College, University of Oxford, he taught at Keele University and Cambridge before coming to Michigan in 1979. He is the author of *The Future of Class in History: What's Left of the Social?*, with Keith Nield (Michigan, 2007); *A Crooked Line: From Cultural History to the History of Society* (Michigan, 2005); *Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe, 1850-2000* (Oxford, 2002); *The Peculiarities of German History*, with David G. Blackbourn (Oxford, 1984); and *Reshaping the German Right: Radical Nationalism and Political Change after Bismarck* (Yale, 1980).

January 26-27



## Tim Cresswell

is professor of human geography at Royal Holloway, University of London, and a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His research has focused on mobility, as seen in his books *The Tramp in America* (Reaktion Books, 2001) and *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (Routledge, 2006). He has turned to theoretical and empirical investigations of place and its pivotal role in the constitution of culture and society. He summarized his ideas in *Place: A Short Introduction* (Blackwell, 2004). More recently, he has been exploring the Maxwell Street Market in Chicago to discover how a single place has changed over 130 years, as well as the role of excess and waste in this space.

February 2



## Kathleen Canning

is a professor of history at the University of Michigan and a graduate of Johns Hopkins University. She was director of the Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies from 2006 to 2009. Her research and writing has centered on Germany, particularly questions of gender, sexuality, and citizenship. Her prizewinning book, *Languages of Labor and Gender: Female Factory Work in Germany, 1850-1914* (Cornell, 1996), was followed by the broad-ranging *Gender History in Practice: Historical Perspectives on Bodies, Class, and Citizenship* (Cornell, 2006) and *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects: Rethinking the Political Culture of Germany in the 1920s* (Berghahn Books, 2010). Her current research is aimed at a future book entitled *Citizenship and Sexual Crisis in the Aftermath of War and Revolution in Germany, 1914-1930*.



Tomb of Emperor Babur, Kabul (photo by Nile Green).

## Sharon Zukin

is professor of sociology at Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York. A graduate of Columbia University in political science, she has investigated consumer society and culture, especially shopping, gentrification, and ethnic diversity. Her *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World* (California, 1991) won the C. Wright Mills Award. Her latest book, *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places* (Oxford, 2010), explores the dynamics of change in her own hometown, New York. Other works include: *Point of Purchase: How Shopping Changed American Culture* (Routledge, 2004); *The Cultures of Cities* (Blackwell, 1995); and *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change* (Johns Hopkins, 1982).

February 16-17



## Nile Green

is professor of history at University of California, Los Angeles and a specialist in the history of modern Islam, particularly in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran. He graduated from the University of London. He is the author of the prizewinning *Bombay Islam: The Religious Economy of the West Indian Ocean, 1840-1915* (Cambridge, 2011), as well as *Islam and the Army in Colonial India: Sepoy Religion in the Service of Empire* (Cambridge, 2009), and *Indian Sufism since the Seventeenth Century: Saints, Books and Empires in the Muslim Deccan* (Routledge, 2006). His edited works have explored religion, language, and power, as well as diaspora and national Afghan literature. His current research and writing looks at Sufism, both globally and in early modern India.

March 15-16



## Nicholas Purcell

is Camden Professor of Ancient History and a fellow at Brasenose College, University of Oxford. A graduate of Worcester College, he went on to become a fellow at All Souls College, University of Oxford. His work has centered on the Mediterranean, ancient Rome, and economic and cultural history. He is a recognized authority in the growing field of thalassology, the scientific study of the sea. His groundbreaking book, *The Corrupting Sea: a Study of Mediterranean History* with Peregrine Horden (Blackwell, 2000), preceded a series of important articles on sea studies, the diet of ancient Romans, and colonization in the Mediterranean region.

March 29-30



# Giving: Support the Institute

The Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies relies heavily on the generosity of its many friends and former students. Gifts support the speaker and workshop series, fellowships, and other Institute programming.

All contributions are fully deductible from both federal and state taxes. Many employers in Michigan and elsewhere also provide matching contributions if asked to do so.

Contributions may be mailed directly to the Institute or processed online: [www.lsa.umich.edu/eihs/giving](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eihs/giving).

Please address any questions or inquiries to Institute director Ronald Suny ([rgsuny@umich.edu](mailto:rgsuny@umich.edu); 734-615-7400) or Department of History chair Geoff Eley ([ghe@umich.edu](mailto:ghe@umich.edu); 734-763-2289).

# Funding and Fellowships

The Eisenberg Institute offers internal fellowships for faculty, graduate students, and post-doctoral scholars, along with residency research fellowships for external scholars. The call for fellowship applications occurs in mid January. Applicants should demonstrate how their work fits with the theme, "Taking Place: History and Spatial Imaginations."

The Institute also provides funding for on-campus events and programs. Applications are due at least six weeks prior to the proposed event and must not conflict with existing Institute programs.

The Institute's steering committee will review all applications and provide the final funding decision. Link to [www.lsa.umich.edu/eihs](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eihs) for fellowship and funding announcements, deadlines, and applications.

## EISENBERG INSTITUTE *for* HISTORICAL STUDIES

The Frances and Kenneth Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor advances historical research and teaching with powerful new tools for supporting visiting scholars, enriching the intellectual climate for faculty and graduate students, and extending knowledge across campus. Through lectures, workshops, and other programs designed to foster scholarly exchange, the Eisenberg Institute promises to transform the teaching and study of history at Michigan. All events are open to faculty, students, and visitors.

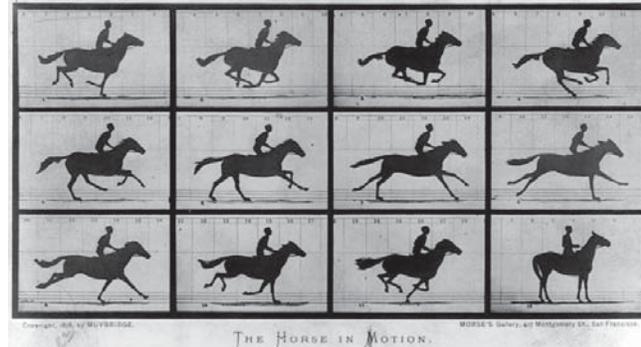
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 Jay Cook  
 Ian Moyer

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 Shelly Rettell,  
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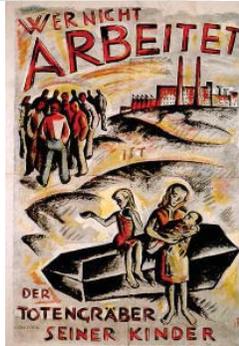
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