

The History Department in the Past Lane

It can be exhausting hanging out in the past lane. History is in the news all the time these days and with instant communication, the 24/7 news cycle, and (shall we say) an unconventional political culture, historical perspective is hard to come by but enormously important. In some ways, it has never been more exciting to be a historian, since history is now so often invoked by newsmakers and pundits. People want perspective. They want to know if what is happening today has a history that can help us make sense of things.

It is this sense of urgency that has inspired the History Department to take a closer look at our curriculum. Many of you will remember taking our introductory survey courses in World History or Western Civilization and United States History. While those courses are still a part of our curriculum (at least for now!) we will be experimenting in the fall with a new model for our introductory experiences. We will be offering two new courses called *Why United States History Matters* and *Why Global History Matters*. Our goal with these courses is to help our students see how history operates in today's civic conversations. This is an exciting innovation, and we hope it helps introduce non-history majors to the study of history.

In addition to some curricular changes, the department has experienced some personnel changes. Dr. Randi Storch has stepped down as chair after having served for nine years. Succeeding her as chair is both daunting (she was an excellent leader for three terms) but also relatively easy because the department she handed off is such a good one. The department was fortunate in hiring Dr. Jared McBrady who joined our history-social studies team. Dr. McBrady taught for several years in the K-12 world and received his doctoral degree from the University of Michigan. He has been involved in the Big History project and researches and publishes in the field of SOTL (the Scholarship on the Teaching and Learning of History). We are now engaged in a search for an Ancient Mediterranean World historian to begin in the fall 2020 semester. This new hire will enable us to build our pre-1500 curriculum and enhance our course offerings in Global and Transnational history. I look forward to introducing you to our new colleague in a future newsletter.

Many of you have contributed financially to the History Department and your generosity enables us to provide exceptional opportunities for faculty and students. Each year, thanks to the financial support of alumni and friends, the Department is able to defray expenses faculty incur when they undertake research trips to archives in Europe, Africa, Asia, South America, and throughout the U. S. (Many of you probably do not realize that faculty receive only a modest reimbursement to cover expenses when we present research papers at conferences. To pay for these trips, most faculty members have to dip into their own personal funds and seek the ever-elusive grant.) Because of many of you, the Department is able to help by offering History Department-Research Enrichment and Development Initiative (HD-REDI) grants. These funds help faculty undertake research in distant archives, present their research, initiate new lines of inquiry by exploring new research libraries, and develop new curricular materials and programs. Much of this work ultimately results in publications, scholarly collaborations, and new programming for students. The Department also uses funds to support faculty-student activities and programs, including trips to Camp Huntington, our historic Raquette Lake camp in the Adirondacks, student participation in history conferences, and field trips. We are truly grateful for your support and your confidence in the Department to be good stewards of your generosity. It makes a difference!

As always, it is a joy to hear from you. We are always eager to hear from alumni. Drop us a note to tell us how and where you are. If you are on Facebook and Instagram, follow the History Department, leave us a comment, post a photo, and share some memories.



Kevin B. Sheets
Professor and Chair

Professor Scott Moranda Travels to Cuba

Quinci Chapple
Senior History Major



Havana Vieja – A local school holding its physical education classes in the square.

In 2017, Dr. Scott Moranda received the Rozanne Brooks Internationalization Award. The grant he received as part of the award provided Dr. Moranda with funding for a trip to Cuba in January of 2019. His first goal for this trip was to research and gather content for the development of a new course on the history of tourism, which is offered for the first time in the spring of 2020. In Cuba he spent time researching eco-tourism, a type of tourism designed to promote sustainability.

His second goal was to scout locations for the history department to offer a study abroad opportunity in Cuba, a trip that will debut in the winter 2022 session. In Havana, he visited with faculty at San Geronimo College, a college that has a relationship with SUNY Cortland, to learn about opportunities with them. He visited the Museum of the Revolution, a site that presents the history and story of communism in Cuba from the point of view of the state, as well as monuments around town that memorialize heroes of the revolution. He traveled outside of Havana to visit Las Terrazas, a nature reserve that was an environmental restoration project sponsored by Fidel Castro's "green revolution" in the 1960s. With these locations, the study abroad trip to Cuba will allow students to study topics such as environmental history, the history of communism, the Cold War, Latin American history, the African Diaspora, and public history.

Along with pursuing these goals, Dr. Moranda explored the countryside of Cuba, visiting Valle de Viñales national park, and learned about agriculture in Cuba by observing the process of tobacco farming. He also took a hiking tour led by a guide who acted as a translator, and he took a guided bird tour. Fortunately, throughout the trip, which was his first visit to the country, he did not find it too difficult to get around Spanish-speaking Cuba.



Tobacco farming inside Vinales National

Raquette Lake Experience

Nasro Sheikhaden

Junior History Major



Every September History majors and faculty visit Raquette Lake where they spend the weekend learning what it means to be a historian and about the career opportunities that are available for history majors. Students who participate gain one experiential learning credit. This past September I joined twenty-two other history majors on a trip to Raquette Lake. An essential thing I learned from this weekend is that not all things can be taught with words. A component of life is experience, to live, see and feel things, even better if they are outside one's realm of exposure. Reading Thoreau, Emerson,

and Whitman can only get you so far. It's what you do with that knowledge that matters. This was a perfect weekend to not only learn about the past but to learn how history lives amongst us, to learn that history isn't just understanding the past but that history is the prerequisite for the present.

After our arrival on a sunny beautiful Friday afternoon, we had a tour of the camp, learned about the culture and then had lunch. We each volunteered to help wait tables at meals. Volunteers arrived five minutes before each meal to help set the tables, serve the meals, and then clean up after. This created a communal and sharing atmosphere. The first day's activities were a series of games and icebreakers to get us comfortable with each other and to know each other better.

Each day, we had several hours to explore the camp. We could hike, kayak, and canoe. We all took advantage of this remarkable weekend to enjoy the Adirondacks. Watching the sunset, singing by the camp fire, or kayaking at the crack of dawn were memorable experiences and the weekend gave us the chance to experience the beauty of nature. We learned about the history of Camp Huntington and the surrounding Adirondack Park. This was a unique way to live amongst the history we examined.

History is the art of piecing together evidence from the past to get close to the truth. We did this by trying to understand why this camp exists, why it was built the way it was, and what we can take from what's left behind. The lodging and what they contained inside were original artifacts. We had an artifact project, where in small groups we picked an object and learned the significance of the object. We then tried to discern what this object said about the owners, through the themes of capitalism, imperialism, nationalism, romanticism, and conservation.

We got the chance to discuss and discover all the things one can do with a history major, focusing not just on the rich history of the camp but also paying attention to the skills we acquire as history students. Our ability to inquire, collect, interpret, and contextualize information are transferable skills that are useful beyond the history profession and can be applied to a plethora of career paths.

This was a wonderful weekend, spent discovering the importance of the possibilities of our future, performing a play, going on hikes, kayaking, playing cards, doing rope obstacle courses, or learning about the families who built the camp. This experiential learning weekend has proven its importance to our education. Our access to the camp is a rarity that has given us an extraordinary opportunity.

Dr. Ukelina in Ghana with Cortland Students

Jennifer Mitchell
Junior History Major



In May of 2019, Dr. Bekeh Ukelina from the History Department, and his colleague Dr. Jessica Carrick-Hagenbarth from the Economics Department took Cortland students to Ghana in West Africa. The students gained six credits for two classes they took with them: The History of Development in Africa and Africa's Economic Development.

While in Ghana, the students spent the majority of their time in Accra, the Capital of Ghana where they took daily classes taught by local faculty affiliated with the University of Ghana, Legon. During their time in Ghana, students lived at the International Hostel of the University of Ghana where they roomed with Ghanaian students. By staying with Ghanaian students, the Cortland students were able to immerse themselves further in Western African culture and build bonds of friendship with the locals. The students were in Ghana to learn about African history and cultures. The total cost of the trip was about \$6000 and it

covered flights, room, board, insurance, etc. It is important to note that while the trip price may seem pricey, students are able to use financial aid and there are also scholarships available to assist students. Students going to West Africa in 2019 was also significant because of the 1619 commemoration. This year was the four-hundredth anniversary of the arrival of the first African slaves in the United States. The first slaves who came to America traveled through "The Door of No Return" into the gruesome Middle Passage and arrived in the United States. 2019 is also commemorated as the Year of Return.

On this trip, Cortland students were able to walk through those doors at Elmina Castle and the Cape Coast Castles, two major slave castles in West Africa. As Professor Ukelina, who is from West Africa, has said, "It is a very powerful moment to walk through those doors. Each time I walk through the doors, I recall the torture my ancestors experienced, the disorientation they felt, the dehumanization they lived through, and I feel sad that the evil of slavery remains with us today." For "The Year of Return," people of African origins are encouraged to travel to Africa to see where their roots began.

In Ghana, students also went to the Manhyia Palace in Kumasi, the Akosombo Dam, W.E.B. Dubois Center, and also enjoyed some of the pristine beaches that lined the coast of West Africa. The students enjoyed the sumptuous West African dishes and learned Ghanaian cultural dances. The next trip to Ghana is in May of 2021. Students and alumni are encouraged to apply now through the International Programs Office.



Alumni Spotlight

Robert Bookman (History Degree, 1976)

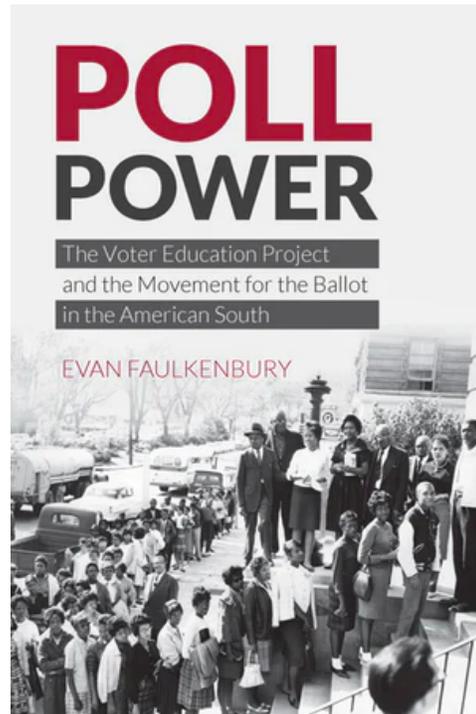


Why did you choose history as your major at SUNY Cortland? "I started out as a Political Science Major (and did eventually minor in that) but as I took some history classes in my Freshman and Sophomore years, I realized that history was where my true interest was. So I switched. Classes in the American Presidency, Early Jewish History, the Civil War, US Labor Movement History...were fascinating to me. I was learning so much more than I had in High School...and being challenged by an excellent faculty every step of the way."

How has your degree in history impacted your life and career(s)? "I knew I wanted to become a lawyer...and directly after Cortland did just that. While I did not realize it at the time I switched majors to History, it was the best pre-law move I could have made. All of the qualities needed to be a good lawyer...analytical thinking, knowing how to research, processing a large quantity of reading, and finally, excellent writing skills (exam essays and papers)...are required of and learned as a History Major. It made the transition to Law School effortless for me. I credit that decision in helping me be a successful lawyer 40 years later."

If you could give current SUNY Cortland history students advice, what would it be? "As an engaged citizen, it is incumbent upon you to be well informed. That is especially true today when all sorts of outrageous and untrue statements of alleged fact are made in support of dubious political positions. You cannot have an informed position about 'building a wall' without knowing about our history as a beacon of immigration. You cannot understand income disparity arguments without knowing US Labor history. You cannot know what to think about current trends towards isolationism and 'U.S. First' without knowing about World War II and the success of the postwar alliances that were formed. And you certainly cannot form an educated opinion about so called 'entitlements' without learning about the New Deal and the Great Society. All of this you will learn as a History Major. It will make you a better citizen the rest of your life."

Faculty Book Showcase



Dr. Evan Faulkenbury's book, *Poll Power*, was published by the University of North Carolina Press. The book successfully captures how the civil rights movement evolved from one of demonstrations to one that influenced and registered voters. The civil rights movement required money. In the early 1960s, after years of grassroots organizing, civil rights activists convinced nonprofit foundations to donate in support of voter education and registration efforts. One result was the Voter Education Project (VEP), which, starting in 1962, showed far-reaching results almost immediately and organized the groundwork that eventually led to the Voting Rights Act of 1965. In African American communities across the South, the VEP catalyzed existing campaigns; it paid for fuel, booked rallies, bought food for volunteers, and paid people to canvass neighborhoods. Despite this progress, powerful conservatives in Congress weaponized the federal tax code to undercut the important work of the VEP. Though local power had long existed in the hundreds of southern towns and cities that saw organized civil rights action, the VEP was vital to converting that power into political motion. Evan Faulkenbury offers a much-needed explanation of how philanthropic foundations, outside funding, and tax policy shaped the southern black freedom movement.

Faculty Updates

Dr. Gigi Peterson

Gigi Peterson has been at work this fall on some innovations for the “Foundations of Social Studies” (AED 315) course. She redesigned the course’s “Community Action Projects” (CAPs) that have teacher candidates gaining experience for their future work as teachers. With the goal of taking “informed action” and learning how to design such experiences for their future students, SST students in that class took part in voter registration and education, environmental lobbying, winterizing Camp Huntington, food and clothing drives, youth programs, and other arenas. Some students designed original projects on topics ranging from historic preservation to education on toxic masculinity. They shared their experiences at “CAP poster session” and some will present at Transformations next spring. One team of students assisted Peterson in organizing a professional development event on “Teaching About Migration” that served over 85 teacher candidates, area teachers, and faculty. Held in Old Main on October 10, it offered a panel discussion, breakout sessions, and an extensive resource packet. The semester ended with a combined AED 315-AED 310 “Mini-Lesson Gala” in which candidates taught a portion of the lessons they designed for AED 310 (Dr. Jared McBrady’s “Writing in the Social Studies”), and built community by discussing their collective work and enjoyed the mentorship of SST faculty and area teachers like award-winning alumna, Caitlin Goodwin. Peterson has also been continuing her history course design and research in migration issues and immigration rights activism, and is part of a team (with Drs. Ukelina and Moranda) working on a pilot course and study abroad option titled “Cuba’s History and Place in the World: Beyond Cars and Cigars.”

Celeste McNamara

Since arriving at Cortland, Celeste McNamara has been busy designing new courses and continuing her research. Her first book, *The Bishop’s Burden: Reforming the Catholic Church in Early Modern Europe*, will appear later this year from the Catholic University of America Press. In 2019, she had an article entitled “Molding the Model Bishop from Trent to Vatican II” in the journal *Church History*, and she has another article entitled “Schism in the *stato da mar*: the Bishop of Padua and Missions in South-Eastern Europe” coming out soon in the journal *Historični Seminar (Historical Seminar)*. She also wrote a chapter on “Pastoral Care” for the *Cambridge Companion to the Council of Trent*, and published several book reviews. In addition, she continued to present her research to various audiences, including two invited talks at Bowdoin College in Maine and the College of William and Mary in Virginia, a presentation at a workshop at Syracuse University, and talks at conferences in Toronto and NYC. She used her HD-REDI funding to participate in a major conference in Toronto, and her UUP-IDA funding to do research in the UK and Venice over the summer, completing preliminary work for her next book, *Sin in the Serenissima*, focused on the policing of sexual morality in 16th-18th century Venice.

Randi Storch

This past summer Randi Storch had the opportunity to run (with Dr. Sheets) the fifth National Endowment for the Humanities grant for K-12 teachers. Two groups of 36 teachers came from around the country to read, discuss, and explore themes from the Gilded Age while living for a week at a time at our very own Camp Huntington on Raquette Lake. Storch also attended a weeklong training at Barnard College on a newish pedagogy called “Reacting to the Past.” The curriculum has students role-playing various episodes from history in a game-style format. She “played” one game that focused on a textile strike in Patterson New Jersey and another that pitted strikers, suffragists and bohemians against one another in a struggle to win the loyalty of “the people.” Yes, fun was had by all. Stay tuned for an upcoming semester when she may be brave enough to bring these history games to Cortland’s own students.

Scott Moranda

Scott Moranda co-edited an essay collection that was published in September. For their book, *Ecologies of Socialism: Germany, Nature, and the Left in History, Politics, and Culture* (London: Peter Lang, 2019), Moranda co-wrote the introduction and wrote one of the chapters. Over the summer, he used a HD-REDI research grant to travel to archives in Washington, DC., Toronto, and Ithaca for further work on his project about the migration of German approaches to nature conservation from Europe to the United States. Also, this year, Professor Moranda won the Rozanne Brooks Dedicated Teaching Award, which provides \$7,500 for curriculum development and teaching.

Ute Ritz-Deutch

In October, Ute Ritz-Deutch's article, "The Obscure Labors of a Forgotten Anthropologist: A Biography of Bruno Oetteking" was published in *BEROSE - International Encyclopaedia of the Histories of Anthropology*. She also gave a presentation on "How to create a Human Rights Podcast" at the Northeast Regional Conference of Amnesty International at Providence, Rhode Island. Ritz-Deutch was presented with "Amnesty International Keeper of the Flame Activism Award," a prestigious award given to only one person in each region of the country. The award was partly based on her weekly one-hour talk radio show on WRFI community radio in Ithaca, called "The Human Rights and Social Justice Program." You can listen to her podcasts on Soundcloud wrfihumanrightsshow.

Bekeh Ukelina

In May, Bekeh Ukelina took Cortland students to Ghana where they spent three weeks learning about African history, economics, and culture. He also won the SUNY Russia Programs Network Award and traveled to St. Petersburg, Russia where he participated in the New York – St. Petersburg Institute of Linguistics, Cognition, and Culture. In Russia, Ukelina taught a three-week seminar on *The Politics of Migration and Development* and gave a public lecture on the legacies of British colonial development policy in Africa. Ukelina edited a special issue of *Wagadu: A Journal of Transnational Women's and Gender Studies* entitled "Media Activism, Sexual Expressions, and Agency in the Era of #MeToo." In March, he co-chaired an international Conference in Morgantown, WV where he also moderated a roundtable discussion and presented a paper on British colonial education policy in Nigeria. Ukelina took Cortland students, including two History majors [Jennifer Mitchell and Holly Pianosi], to a conference in New York city where they presented to a scholarly audience of Africanists. In October, he attended the African Studies Association of Africa conference in Nairobi, Kenya where he presented a paper on US Cold War nation-building projects in Africa. With the support of the HD-REDI grant and the Faculty Research Program award, Ukelina did research in Nigeria, London, and Oxford on a book project looking at British education policy in Nigeria.

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