Two History Faculty Named Distinguished Professors

Congratulations to AU’s new Distinguished Professors
Richard Breitman and Allan Lichtman

“AU reserves this recognition for only a very few faculty, those whose scholarship has, over the long arc of their careers, been so deeply influential that it has remade their fields of knowledge. This rings true for both Distinguished Professors Richard Breitman and Allan Lichtman,” says Pamela Nadell, chair of the Department of History. “The Department of History celebrates their appointments, and takes great pride in becoming the only department on campus with two Distinguished Professors.” College of Arts and Sciences Dean Peter Starr calls Breitman and Lichtman “extraordinary scholars, brilliant teachers, and—each in his own way—lifelong advocates for social justice.”

Lichtman has written numerous books, including five editions of his critically acclaimed The Keys to the White House, detailing his system for predicting American presidential election results. His formula has correctly predicted the winners of every presidential election since Ronald Reagan’s re-election in 1984. Lichtman’s most recent book, White Protestant Nation: The Rise of the American Conservative Movement, was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award for non-fiction. He is also widely recognized for his political commentary on NBC, CNN, VOA, and other U.S. and foreign networks and for his expert testimony in landmark voting and civil rights cases.

When Breitman came to teach at AU, then department chair David Brandenberg told him he could teach anything he wanted as long as he could get students, but that he had to teach a course on Nazi Germany. Preparing for that class led him to write about Nazi Germany and the Holocaust. He discovered in the National Archives a substantial collection of materials related to Nazi Germany, and wrote, with American University Professor Alan Kraut, American Refugee Policy and European Jewry, 1933-1945. Continued on page 8....

Distinguished Professors Richard Breitman and Allan Lichtman
Chair’s Letter

A banner year

Readers of university department newsletters, like this one, know that the news from the chair often opens by proclaiming that the year just past was a great one. While I hate to be trite, in the case of American University’s Department of History, this is abundantly true. The academic year 2011-12 was a banner year for our department.

Numbers tell the story. One faculty member was appointed to a brand-new endowed chair (Eric Lohr). Two were promoted to Distinguished Professor (Richard Breitman, Allan Lichtman). Three new tenure-line faculty arrived (Anton Fedyashin, Pedram Partovi, Gautham Rao). Four won prestigious fellowships (Anton Fedyashin, Kathy Franz, April Shelford, Katharina Vester). Five published new books (Laura Beers, Anton Fedyashin, Max Paul Friedman, Peter Kuznick, Eric Lohr). Five have new books in press (Richard Breitman, Kate Haulman, Alan Kraut, Allan Lichtman, Pamela Nadell). Our graduate and undergraduate students and our alumni have won so many prizes, awards, and scholarships that we cannot possibly list all here. The pages ahead tell these stories and more.

Sadly, there were losses too. We remember fondly Associate Professor Emerita Valerie French and Distinguished Historian-in-Residence Anna Nelson. We miss both. I like to think that they would have shared my exuberance about the year behind us.

We also welcomed to our front office Rose Chou and are ever grateful for Lauren Pav’s steadying guidance and smiling face behind her desk.

Finally, we took our second annual department photo. I hope you can find familiar faces on the steps of Battelle.

Our department sponsors an array of lectures and symposia, including our well-received Holocaust Studies Forum. In the new year ahead, we invite you—students, alumni, and friends—to join us as we in the Department of History continue writing and telling stories of the past.
Making Russia Real

A year ago, thanks to a generous grant from Susan E. Lehrman, AU kicked off its Initiative for Russian Culture (IRC). Now, Lehrman, convinced, of “the importance of building lasting connections between Russians and Americans,” has generously endowed the Susan E. Lehrman Chair in Russian History and Culture. AU has named History Professor Eric Lohr its inaugural holder. As AU president Neil Kerwin reflected: “The Lehrman Chair will enhance American University’s academic strengths in Russian studies, history, and international affairs while laying the foundation for the university to establish a world-class center for Russian history and culture.”

“The Lehrman Chair,” says Prof. Anton Fedyashin, executive director of the IRC, “not only complements the IRC, but also reinforces the academic commitment that AU has made to developing a robust Russian cultural studies program that we hope will become a national landmark.” Pamela Nadell, history department chair, says that the appointment of Eric Lohr to the endowed chair “justly recognizes Prof. Lohr as one of the leading scholars of Russian history of his generation.”

Lohr reflects: “The Lehrman Chair and the IRC come at a time of crisis in Russian studies in the U.S.,” referring to the federal government’s cuts in grants supporting Russian studies in the United States. “Thanks to Susan Lehrman, we at AU have a unique opportunity to move in the opposite direction from these national trends as we meet and stimulate interest in Russian culture on campus and beyond.”

Lohr made his mark on the field of Russian history with his book Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign Against Enemy Aliens during World War I (Harvard University Press, 2003). His newest book, Russian Citizenship: Empire to Soviet Union, was published by Harvard in October 2012. He is currently working on another book entitled Russia’s Great War: 1914-1918. Lohr epitomizes AU’s scholar-teacher, and is not only involved in the world of scholarship, but is also an active participant in discussions of U.S.-Russian relations, including service on the Russia/Europe advisory group for Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign.

Lehrman hopes the chair will serve as a catalyst for the creation of a center for Russian Studies based at AU. “We are in a unique position at the IRC,” Lehrman says. “We have the opportunity to work closely with the Embassy of the Russian Federation and Ambassador Kislyak to provide Washington, DC consortium students with authentic connections and a rare insider’s look at Russian perspectives.”

Adapted from web article by Josh Halpren.
Peter Kuznick, Oliver Stone:
The Untold History of the United States

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In the fall of 1996, Peter Kuznick first met Academy-award winning director Oliver Stone. Kuznick had begun teaching the class “Oliver Stone’s America.” The class contrasted Stone’s films and their interpretations of topics like the Kennedy assassination, U.S. invasion of Vietnam, and Nixon’s presidency with what historians had written about these events. When Stone heard about the class, he asked to come and meet with the students, and has continued to do so over the years, joined by other leading figures, historical actors, and journalists, like Daniel Ellsberg and Bob Woodward, who have wanted to share their perspectives on these events.

Meanwhile, Kuznick began kicking around with Stone ways the two could collaborate. The fruits of that collaboration are about to burst out from your television. Kuznick and Stone have completed a 10-part documentary film project, The Untold History of the United States, on the history of the American empire and national security state, and co-authored a companion volume. Tune into Showtime starting on November 12 to view it.

\section*{In Memoriam}

\subsection*{Valerie French}

The Department lost two treasured colleagues this past year.

Valerie French, Associate Professor Emerita of History, passed away on December 8, 2011.

Valerie French earned her Ph.D. at UCLA. She first came to American University in 1969 and taught until 2005, when she retired. Valerie single-handedly sustained the study of ancient history at AU. She was the co-author, with Allan Lichtman of Historians and the Living Past: The Theory and Practice of Historical Study, published in 1978 and still in print. She pioneered the study of women and children in the ancient past. “An ancient historian,” Valerie once said, “needs the imagination of James Joyce and the inferential skills of Sherlock Holmes, because the sources are so sparse and enigmatic.”

In her long career at American University, she won numerous awards for outstanding teaching and service, including the University’s Outstanding Teaching Award in 1986. She also held several administrative positions, including Chair of the Department of History from 2001-03. Valerie was married for thirty-five years to History Professor Emeritus Robert L. Beisner.

\subsection*{Anna Nelson}

Anna Nelson, Distinguished Historian in Residence, died on September 27, 2012.

Anna Kasten Nelson, a tireless campaigner for the public’s right to access government records, earned her Ph.D. at George Washington University. After publishing her first book Secret Agents: President Polk and the Search for Peace with Mexico, her research interests shifted to the post-World War II era. She became a widely recognized expert on the National Security Council, publishing more than thirty articles and book chapters. Nelson, who had also taught at George Washington University, Tulane University, and Arizona State University before joining the AU History Department, testified often before Congressional committees on freedom of information principles. She also received a presidential appointment (with Senate confirmation) to the John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Review Board. Her work to benefit historical scholarship was recognized with numerous awards, including the Troyer Steele Anderson Prize for Advancement of the Purposes of the American Historical Association.

A pioneer in a field where most of the scholars were men, Dr. Nelson took a special pride in mentoring young women at AU and in the many national organizations to which she belonged.
Helping to Write History

For many people, it takes years to figure out what direction they want their life to take. But Sarah Adler, BA ’13, a double major in history and American studies, discovered her lifelong passion in eighth grade.

“During our Civil War unit, we marched from my town in Pennsylvania to Gettysburg and spent the night on the battlefield,” says Adler, “and I really loved it.” In high school she was a docent at the historic Gettysburg train station where President Lincoln had debarked before his Gettysburg Address. She also worked at the Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College.

Now at AU, Adler continues to follow her passion for Civil War research. In Spring 2012, she had an internship with the National Park Service’s National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, where she scoured archives for clues to determine whether any soldiers in the 23rd U.S. Colored Troops came from Freedman’s Village on General Robert E. Lee’s plantation. Preliminary findings suggest that some of the soldiers may have been forcibly recruited as substitutes for white men. Adler finds historical research so engaging that she plans to become a professional historian. She surely took a right step in that direction, when this past year, she presented her paper, “What Shall We Do with a Drunken Sailor?: Alcohol Reform and the Union Navy” at a conference on the Civil War navy. Good luck Sarah!

Adapted from web article by Abbey Becker.
Laura Beers was elected a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and is completing a biography of Labour MP and international, feminist activist, Ellen Wilkinson.

Richard Breitman completed his forthcoming book *FDR and the Jews*, co-authored with Allan Lichtman, and also published “The United States and the Holocaust in Hungary” in *Auschwitz Reports and the Holocaust in Hungary*. He continues to serve as editor of *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*.

Mary Ellen Curtin was the script consultant and appeared on air in the documentary *Slavery by Another Name*. She published “State of the Art: The New Prison History” in *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas*.

Anton Fedyashin, Executive Director of the Initiative for Russian Culture, was interviewed about current Russian politics by Russkoe Radio-Sankt-Peterburg, Voice of America Radio, Russia Today, CTV Network, Voice of Russia Radio, Russkii mir magazine, NBC Nightly News, and Reuters. Over the summer, he participated in the prestigious Likhachev Cultural Fellowship in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Concluding her two-year term as the Clendenen Professor of Women’s History, Eileen Findlay established an oral history collection on gender and immigration from Latin America to Washington DC. She completed a draft of her book manuscript, *We Are Left Without a Father Here: Colonial Populism, Domesticity, and Masculinity in Puerto Rican Post World War II Labor Migration*.

In 2011-2012 Kathleen Franz spent her sabbatical year as a Goldman Sachs fellow at the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC where she is a curator on a new, permanent exhibition dedicated to the history of business in the United States. For more information about the exhibition, visit the website at americanenterprise.si.edu, built by AU doctoral student Jordan Grant.

Max Paul Friedman presented “Simulacra and the Neoliberal Crisis: The Collapse of American Exceptionalism” in Paris at the Association for Cultural Studies meeting. AU grants supported his study of French efforts to end the war in Vietnam in the early 1960s, and a month of research in Buenos Aires on Argentina’s early contributions to international law. He served on two State Department Foreign Service Performance Boards and continues as our Department’s Director of Graduate Studies.

Mary Frances Giandrea continues to teach a variety of the Department’s courses, and serves on the AU General Education Committee. She writes book reviews for a variety of journals, including *Early Medieval Europe* and the *Journal of British Studies*.

Claire Goldstene finished her manuscript “*America Was Promises*: The Ideology of Equal Opportunity, 1877-1905,” to be published by the University of Mississippi Press. She also published “The Politics of Contingent Academic Labor” in *Thought & Action*.


Justin Jacobs presented new research on Chinese Communist ethnic policies in Xinjiang during the 1950s, as part of a public lecture for AU’s Washington Asia Forum and at the Association for Asian Studies conference in Toronto. Jacobs is currently...
completing his first book manuscript, *China Preserved: Toward a National Empire in Xinjiang, 1911–64*.


**Lisa Leff**’s article “Rescue or Theft? Zosa Szajkowski and the Salvaging of French Jewish History” will be published by *Jewish Social Studies*. She has also recently completed articles on the restitution of looted books in France after World War II, and on the history of the Jewish oath in France. She continues to serve as the Department’s Director of Undergraduate Studies.

**Eric Lohr** is currently writing a history of Russia during World War I for Bloomsbury and serving as one of the editors of a 15-volume collection of essays on Russia during World War I. He received a fellowship from the National Council for Russian, Eurasian, and East European Research.

**Pamela Nadell**’s new book, *Making Women’s Histories: Beyond National Perspectives*, co-edited with Kate Haulman, is forthcoming. Nadell was recently named a Distinguished Lecturer for the Association for Jewish Studies. She gave presentations last year at Philadelphia’s National Museum of American Jewish History, and at universities in Munich, Germany, and Graz, Austria.

**Gautham Rao**’s first book, *At the Water’s Edge: Customhouses, Governance, and the Origins of the Early American State*, will be published by the University of Chicago Press. His article, “Administering Entitlement: Governance, Public Health Care, and the Early American State” will appear in *Law and Social Inquiry*. It is about the first federal health care system in American history. He has been appointed to the editorial board of *Law and History Review*, the leading legal history journal.

**April G. Shelford** was named the Donald L. Saunders Research / Inter-


**Kimberly Sims** continues to teach courses in African-American History and serves as the Department’s Honors Coordinator.

**Katharina Vester** won a Postdoctoral Fellowship from the American Association of University Women to write her first monograph, *A Taste of Power: Food and the Making of Americans*. She published “The American Table”: Tourism, Empire and Anti-Immigration Sentiment in American Cookbooks in the 19th Century” in *Transnational American Memories* and gave papers at conferences in Paris, Izmir, San Diego, and at the University of Notre Dame.
Two History Faculty Named Distinguished Professors
Continued from cover story...

That led him to the mystery of the German industrialist who had leaked information about Nazi plans for the mass murder of European Jewry. Breitman explains: “That he had done so was known, but his identity was not... I was able to solve the mystery,” a mystery revealed in Breitman’s book, The Architect of Genocide: Himmler and the Final Solution and Official Secrets: What the Nazis Planned, What the British and Americans Knew.

Breitman’s research compelled him to file numerous Freedom of Information Act requests. This disclosed that millions of records hindering historians’ work remained classified a half century after the end of World War II. When Congress created the Nazi War Criminal Records and Imperial Japanese Records Interagency Working Group, Breitman played a major role in declassifying some 9 million pages of government records.

As Breitman scouted about for his next project, he decided to write about President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his policies on Jews and the Holocaust. But, realizing that he needed a specialist in U.S. history to join him, he asked his friend and colleague Allan Lichtman if he would be interested in a coauthored study.

Breitman and Lichtman’s new book, FDR and the Jews, will be published by Harvard University Press in 2013. It is fitting that this will be the first new book each will publish as an American University Distinguished Professor. Adapted from web article by Abbey Becker.

Internships Teach More Than Just Skills

Summer internships provide more than valuable professional experience. As some College of Arts and Sciences interns discovered, they also provide an opportunity to apply classroom knowledge to the real world.

This past summer, internships sent two public history master’s students back in time.

For Jessica Carlton, who worked as a seasonal park ranger with the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park in Great Falls, Maryland, that meant wearing a period costume from the 1870s as a member of a crew on a mule-drawn canal boat. Her job was to help recreate the experience of what riding on the canal in the nineteenth century must have been like.

“In addition to actually helping run the boat, I researched topics related to the canal and created historical interpretation for programs at the canal,” Carlton said. “It was a really unique experience.” For Carlton, a big takeaway from the internship was a chance to learn how a historic site actually works—the behind-the-scenes labor needed to make the public’s experience a success.

Her fellow public history graduate student Meghan O’Connor had an equally intriguing job. As an intern at Mount Vernon, she researched George Washington’s smokehouse, an important part of life on an eighteenth-century plantation.

“Smokehouses were integral to preserving meat for consumption throughout the year.” Beyond the historical knowledge the experience gave her, O’Connor said the internship helped her understand how a historic museum operates while teaching her “invaluable skills on how to create a compelling exhibit for visitors.”

As for O’Connor’s public history classmate, Carlton hopes the internship will help her find a job in her field when she graduates in May. That’s something most students can relate to. In fact, at AU 85 percent of undergraduates participate in an internship, making the university the nation’s top school in that category. Adapted from web article by Charles Spencer.
Spotlight on New Faculty
The History Department Welcomes Three New Tenure-Line Faculty

Anton Fedyashin, Executive Director of AU’s Initiative for Russian Culture, earned his Ph.D. at Georgetown University. He just published his first book, *Liberals under Autocracy: Modernization and Civil Society in Russia, 1866-1904*. Prof. Fedyashin has taught courses at American University since 2008. His new book project explores the Cold War through the prism of spy novels and films and grows out of his popular class “The Cold War and the Spy Novel.” Last summer he took eight AU and two Georgetown University students to explore “Dostoevsky’s Russia.” Next summer, he will take students on a trip exploring “Romanov Russia.”

Pedram Partovi earned his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago and is an expert on the history of Iran and the wider Middle East. He is particularly interested in popular formulations of civil religion in Iran and in Iranian film. He is currently working on a book manuscript that challenges the dominant scholarly line on Iran’s modern political trajectory by examining popular civil religion.

Gautham Rao earned his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago and comes to AU after teaching at Rutgers University-Newark/New Jersey Institute of Technology. A scholar of the early U.S., his book manuscript, under contract with the University of Chicago Press, studies government customhouses from the Washington to the Jackson presidencies to understand the development of the federal government within the long shadow of the American Revolution. Other projects examine the United States Marine Hospital system and fugitive slave laws from colonial times to the Civil War.
Graduate Students

The Department congratulates our graduate students who have won prizes and awards: **Kit Crawford** (Gondos Graduate Summer Research Fellowship to use collections at the U.S. National Archives); **Rebecca DeWolf** (The Dirksen Center Congressional Research Award and Best Oral Presentation by a Graduate Student in the Humanities at the Robyn Rafferty Mathias Student Research Conference); **Erika Munkwitz** (Clendenen Fellowship); **Nicole Orphanides** (CAS Regional Conference Grant); **Terumi Rafferty-Osaki** (CAS Mellon Research Award, Vice Provost Award and Gondos Award).

Graduate students who presented at conferences this past year were: **Kit Crawford** (College of William and Mary 13th Annual Graduate Research Symposium); **Allison Ernest** (Humanities Council’s DC Community Heritage Project 8th Annual Summer Symposium); **Jordan Grant** (2012 joint OAH/NCPH annual meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin); **Alexandra Lohse** (Rocky Mountain Interdisciplinary History Conference at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and at the Council for European Studies Conference in Boston); **Erika Munkwitz** (Pacific Coast Conference on British Studies at the Huntington Library and the Victorian Interdisciplinary Studies Association of the Western United States, SUNY Plattsburgh); **Nicole Orphanides** (Food Networks Conference held at the University of Notre Dame); **Terumi Rafferty-Osaki** (Association for Asian American Studies Conference and the Annual Scholars’ Conference on the Holocaust and the Churches).

Undergraduate Students

Undergraduate **Lindsay Inge** won the Oppenheim Prize for her major seminar paper titled, “Victorian East London and the Public Museum.”

Mooney Prize Recipients

Congratulations to **Mikaela Binsfeld, Tiernan Donohue, Lindsay Inge, Angela Modany** who won James W. Mooney Research Awards to support their research for their major seminar senior theses.

Alumni

To register for AU events, please visit: american.edu/alumni.
New Faculty Books

Laura Beers
Brave New World: Imperial and Democratic Nation-Building in Britain between the Wars
(University of London School of Advanced Study, Institute of Historical Research, 2011)

Anton A. Fedyashin
Liberals Under Autocracy: Modernization and Civil Society in Russia, 1866-1904
(University of Wisconsin Press, 2012)

Max Paul Friedman
Rethinking Anti-Americanism: The History of an Exceptional Concept in American Foreign Relations
(Cambridge University Press, 2012)

See also Eric Lohr’s new book Russian Citizenship: Empire to Soviet Union (Harvard University Press), featured on page 3, and Peter Kuznick’s co-authored book The Untold History of the United States, featured on page 4.
Last year, history majors founded the Student Historical Society (SHS). The SHS got off to a great start. SHS members toured the National Archives, Bender Library’s AU Archives, and the Anderson House. Club members helped the American Society of Civil Engineers restore a historic DC boundary stone, and they attended a panel discussion at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History to mark Constitution Day. SHS’ History Trivia Night was a big success, and another trivia night is planned for this year. The SHS welcomes new members. Email historysociety@american.edu and follow SHS activities on Facebook.