



HISTORY DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER Fall 2010 VOL 2. No.1



Department Faculty from left to right, first row Mary McCune, Karen Nicholas, Frank Byrne, Douglas Deal, second row, Robert Salisbury, Christopher Mack, Mark Kulikowski, Greg Parsons, Uyilawa Usuanlele, Leonardo Hernandez, Geraldine Forbes. Faculty unavailable for photo, Ming-te Pan, Gwen Kay, Kenneth Marshall.

Published semi-annually for the SUNY Oswego History Department alumni, faculty and staff, emeriti and friends.

Editorial Staff

Dr. Frank Byrne, Chair, Associate Professor
Terri White Department Secretary

Thanks faculty, staff, and students which made contributions to this issue of the History Newsletter.

Submit your information for the next Newsletter or join the ListServ historyalumni@oswego.edu for the next issue. All stories, articles, career changes are welcome!

Posted Newsletter also on the History Dept. webpage at <http://www.oswego.edu/history>

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A Message from the Chair:

Dear Friends of the History Department,

Greetings once again and welcome to the fall 2010 issue of the History Department’s electronic newsletter. It has been a busy semester for everyone in the department. Indeed so many things have come up that have diverted us from finishing our electronic epistle we feared this fall newsletter could well have become a winter edition. Nevertheless, since we managed to complete it before the end of the semester, by one week, we are calling it a fall newsletter. This edition contains new material, for example a column titled “From an Historian’s Perspective,” as well as the usual updates from faculty, both new and old, as well as news about several of our current students and alumni. I promise our spring newsletter will be issued in a more-timely manner. It will contain an appreciation of Dr. Karen Nicholas, who is retiring this semester, as well as information about the department’s spring honors ceremony. As always, we hope you enjoy reading the latest about the department and I look forward to any feedback you may have. Please do not hesitate to send me your questions or comments at frank.byrne@oswego.edu. Have a great winter!

Regards,
Frank Byrne

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FROM AN HISTORIAN'S PERSPECTIVE
Russia At The Crossroads: Stability or Disaster?

Mark Kulikowski

Since the end of the Cold War, the question on the minds of many has been “What’s next for Russia”? To date, we have seen economic and social confusion, Russia’s continued search for identity in the 21st century and much more. Making sense of all this has been and is difficult. However, as we approach the 19th anniversary of the end of the Cold War, a number of salient factors have emerged which will undoubtedly influence Russia’s immediate and long-term future. While no one can look into the future, it is possible to suggest possible future scenarios based on these factors.

Among the potentially most challenging problem Russia faces today is the changing population. With a current population of roughly 140 million, demographic changes suggest a very difficult road ahead. Among the changes taking place is the age disparity within the population. Like other countries, Russia finds itself with a growing elderly population. This, along with a smaller younger population means severe strains on industry, agriculture and education. Further clouding the situation is a relatively recent development—the death rate is now and continues to be greater than the birth rate. Projections are that by 2040, the Russian population could decline to 100 million. So far, social and cultural realities, future expectations and government incentives to have more children have all failed. Poor diet, life styles, pollution and other factors have meant a major drop in life expectancy as well. Once almost matching the United States, Russian life expectancy now stands at 60 for men, 70 for women. One immediate result of this situation is the widespread depopulation of rural areas. Looming is the economic cost of supporting an elderly population with ever declining tax income from the younger generation. Simply put, the population crisis is the most pressing Russia faces.



Politically speaking, Russia has, in fits and starts, managed to move into a quasi-democratic system. With a constitution, civil rights, separation of powers and representative body for the entire population, Russia has all the ingredients to develop its own style of democracy in the future. However, looking beyond all this, Russia is clearly in the very uncomfortable position of being in transition from an authoritarian system to a truly democratic one. Hence, vestiges of the past are clashing with emerging trends. Several examples underscore this clash. The Russian Government has had to deal with a wide variety of public issues, from civil rights, environmental problems and ethnic hatred. Governmental response has been mixed. In some cases, particularly those dealing with civil rights, the government has used force to close down groups and individuals who they deem as threats. These include veterans groups, NGOs and supporters of gay rights. Unfortunately, in virtually every case, the people and groups who are the targets of government actions are simply exerting their constitutional rights of freedom of speech and assembly. Rather than deal with these issues through legal means, the State feels justified in falling back on force. Environmentally too, the governmental response has been inconsistent. For example, the government, along with environmentalists, are behind preserving in pristine condition of Lake Baikal in Siberia, which contains about 20% of the world’s aboveground fresh water. Yet, a recent plan to build a new highway linking Moscow and St. Petersburg seemingly has governmental support, although its construction would destroy huge areas of old growth forest and other environmentally sensitive areas. Ethnic hatred is also an issue the Russian government has yet to solve. Non-Russian citizens in the Russian Federation find themselves not only the target of right-wing hate groups, but also, in some cases, the government itself. The inability of the government to protect its citizens, provide equal access to the law and actively control civil violence aimed at minorities suggest indecisiveness at the top.

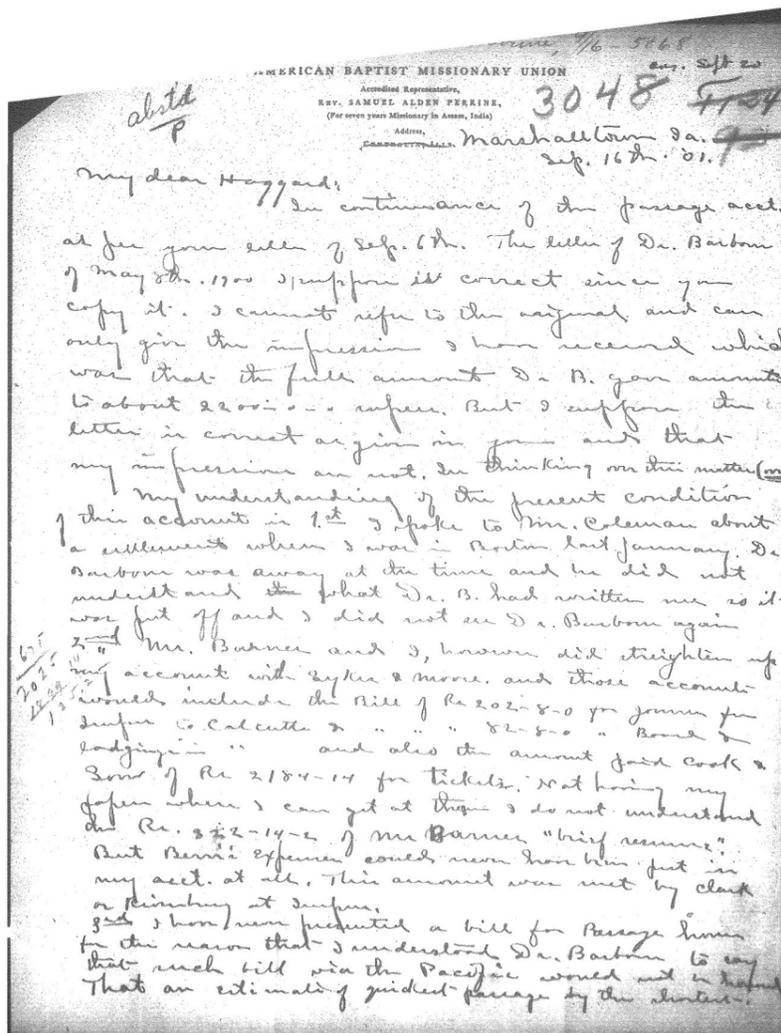
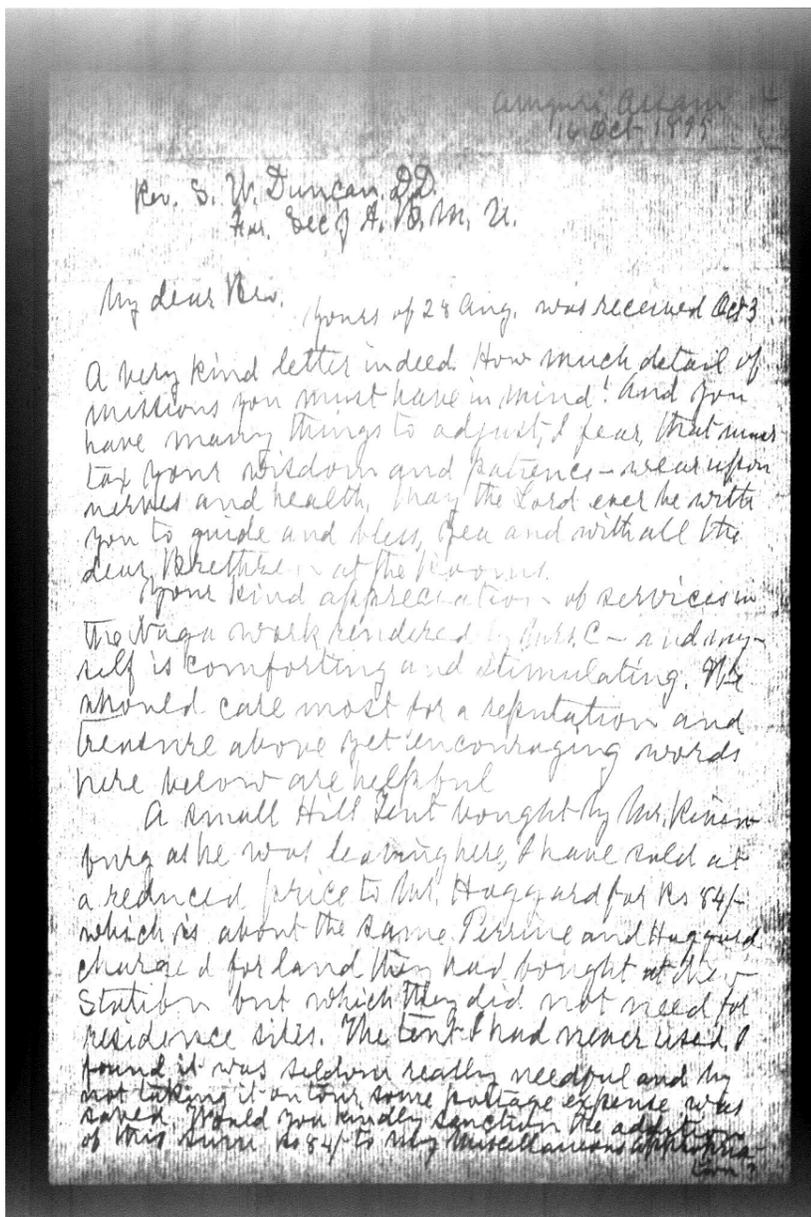
All the above situations facing Russia today suggest the country faces insurmountable problems. For many years, the Russian Federation has been described as a “Third World nation with nuclear weapons”. While this is clearly an exaggeration, finding a way out of this situation is something that will not come quickly or easily. Historically speaking, we must realize that in its over 1000 years of history, Russia probably has had no more than a decade of quasi-democracy. In many ways, they are building a new governmental system while quite facing serious challenges. Some nations in similar situations have succeeded, others have failed, and some others have maintained a twilight existence between success and failure. What the eventual outcome will be for Russia is unclear. Whatever the ultimate fate of the nation, it rests in the hands of the Russian people. This marks a unique situation for a nation as old as Russia, which has endured some form of authoritarian rule for virtually its entire history. What the Russian people do with this new power is something all of us will watch with interest and concern.

What have our Faculty been doing?

Distinguished Teaching Professor, Geraldine Forbes

This summer I spent some time at the American Baptist Historical Society Archives in Atlanta Georgia to continue my work on the missionary Samuel Alden Perrine. Perrine served as a missionary in the Naga Hills in northeast India from 1892 to 1906 and was a pioneer in circulating images of Nagas – at the time considered “wild hill tribes” – to Americans and introducing magic lantern shows to the Nagas. My interest is in Perrine’s two careers: first as a devout missionary converting heathens to Christianity, and later, after his retirement, as a traveling lecturer who delighted diverse audiences with his tales and images of “Savage Headhunters.”

The Baptist archives, located in the main building at Mercer College (see photo), includes an extensive collection of correspondence from missionaries stationed around the world as well as official documents and journals and glass slides and photographs. To give you a sense of the kind of documents I have been reading, I have included one page of a letter from Perrine to the Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society and a page from a letter written by Reverend Clark, missionary who preceded Perrine in the Naga hills. Although I still have hundreds of pages of correspondence to read, I expect to complete an article on Perrine by the end of November.



Associate Professor Mary McCune

Mary McCune continues her research exploring the transition of late-19th century Jewish settlement houses to mid-20th century African-American community centers in several U.S. cities. One of the centers she is studying is the Baden Street Settlement House located in Rochester, NY. Recently Professor McCune learned that the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at SUNY Oswego, Rhonda Mandel, worked at Baden Street for several years in the early 1970s. A small world, indeed! McCune will be attending a conference on "Jews and the American City" sponsored by the Myer & Rosaline Feinstein Center at Temple University in November. She has also been asked to contribute to a teaching forum for the Journal of American Ethnic History which will focus on teaching immigration and ethnic history with documentaries and film. Dr. McCune will discuss her experiences using Barry Levinson's Avalon over the years in order to address issues of generational change, assimilation and nostalgia.

What have our Faculty been doing? Cont.

Associate Professor Ming-te Pan

Professor Pan took four Oswego students and toured the city of Beijing between May 18th-May 26th of 2010. Beijing has been the political center of China for more than six centuries, and has commanded attention and inspired controversy for decades. The capital is unique in its physical and spiritual terrain. The massive city walls protected the Imperial and the Forbidden City. The Great Wall marks China's northern border. As China opens its doors to outside influences, the prospect of visiting Beijing is one that fascinates all kinds of people.

Students had a chance to visit a city that stands at a crossroad. They experienced the changes in this international metropolis: from the magnificent Great Wall to the narrow streets (hutong), from the gigantic Imperial Palace to courtyard houses (siheyuan), from historic Ming Tombs to the settings for the 2008 Olympics. They witnessed the traffic in the city and the hustle and bustle in the commercial areas. Students enjoyed the famous Peking Duck, attended a folk performance at the famous Beijing Laoshe Teahouse, and watched a Peking Opera performance at an opera house. On the way to the Qing Emperor's Summer Palace, we also visited giant panda at the Beijing Zoo. Students not only had a better understanding about the history of the city also had a first hand experience about the lives of ordinary people in a "communist" society after three decades reform.



Assistant Professor Greg Parsons

Poland Trip

In the spring semester 2010, Professor Greg Parsons co-taught a course with Professor Jessica Hester on “Jewish Life and The Holocaust Experience.” The course was taught in conjunction with the Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, Poland. As an optional part of the course, Professors Parsons and Hester took ten SUNY Oswego students on a study visit to Poland from 18 to 28 May. Students participated in a two-day conference in Kielce, where they presented papers along with ten Polish students from Jan Kochanowski. In addition to tours of Kielce, faculty and students went on day trips to the historic towns of Kazimierz and Sandomierz and to former Jewish settlements in Chmielnik and Szd»ow. On May 25th, the group spent a very moving day visiting the camps at Auschwitz and Birkenau. The final two days were spent in Krakow, where the group enjoyed guided tours of Wawel castle and Krakow’s famous Jewish quarter. The trip was a terrific experience for everyone involved. The history department intends to again offer a course with optional travel to Poland in the spring of 2012.



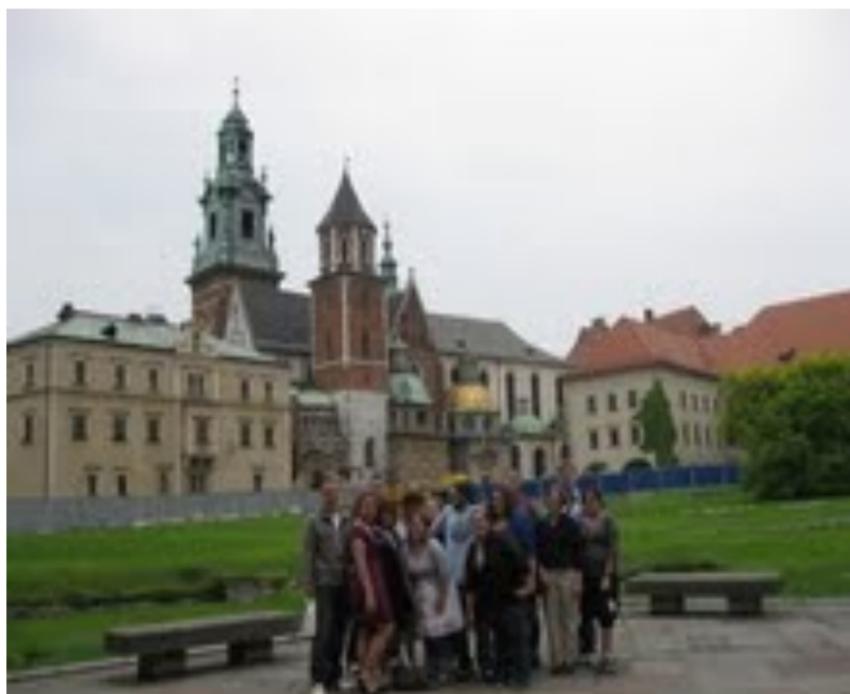
SUNY Oswego Student



Polish Students



Auschwitz



Wawel Castle

Associate Professor Kenneth Marshall

Kenneth Marshall (aka Dr. M) begins his fourth year as a faculty member in the History Department at SUNY Oswego. He was recently tenured and promoted (to Associate Professor), and is in the process of submitting the final version of his book manuscript entitled "Manhood Enslaved: Resistance and Survival among Bondmen in Eighteenth-Century New Jersey" to The University of Rochester Press (Race and Gender Series) for publication. The Press awarded Dr. Marshall a book contract at the end of Fall 2010. His great fondness for blaxploitation flicks will finally be realized in the classroom in Spring 2011. His Black Cinema course will focus on approximately 12 movies that helped to define this critical genre of black film. As a prelude to this class, he will introduce and screen "Black Caesar" on Thursday, October 28, in Laningan 107. He is co-sponsoring this event with the History Club. And of course, he and his lovely wife Meredith still chill (read: reside) in Rochester.

Associate Professor Gwen Kay

Gwen Kay spent the summer working on grant applications, articles and research. She also spent ample time at Home Depot working on various home repair projects on a family vacation home in Massachusetts, averaging two trips/day to the store. And keeping up family tradition, she drove into a hurricane (that dissipated) on Labor Day weekend.

Visiting Assistant Professor Lyn Blanchfield

Lyn Blanchfield is working on two research projects and editing a paper for publication. The paper entitled "Weeping and Tears in the Middle Ages: Problems and Analytical Approaches" will be published later this year or next year in a volume of essays Crying in the Middle Ages: Tears of History (Routledge), edited by Elina Gertsman. I am also working with a colleague, Rala Diakite (Associate Professor of Humanities, Fitchburg State College, MA) on an interactive website for teacher/scholars of women and gender in the medieval and early modern periods. We hope to get some assistance on compiling and annotating sources from the web from students in my spring medieval gender class. I am continuing my research on the use of "pig" as an insult in fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Florence, Italy and recently presented a paper at the 2010 Renaissance Society of America annual conference, held in Venice, Italy, on the proliferation of the term "piagnone" or "weeper" as a public insult in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Florence.



What have our former and current students been doing?

Ahoj from Brno, Czech Republic! I'm Sean Murphy, a senior and History major at SUNY Oswego, and this semester I am studying at Masaryk University in the Czech Republic. I am enrolled here at the University through Oswego's Central European Studies Program (CESP); our college also offers a TESOL Teacher Education Program at Masaryk.

The program offers a variety of courses that focus on Czech cultural history as well as courses on the social and political history of Central Europe. In addition, students can enroll in a beginner's Czech language course, a class which has proved to be a big help in navigating my way around. While there are few, if any, Czech students in the CESP courses, the diverse background of students makes for a unique classroom experience. In any given class there could be a discussion between the Czech professor and students from around the world. This places each subject into a global framework, an experience that would be difficult to replicate back home. Masaryk University, and in particular the International Students Club, does a fantastic job of getting international transfer students settled in Brno and host events and parties to enhance the study abroad experience.

Everyone knows the benefits of studying abroad: the ability to travel, learn a new language, broaden your perspective, and gain important life skills, but some (myself included) may be wary for a variety of reasons. I am far from completing my time here, but the few weeks I have been in Brno have been incredible and I have yet to regret my decision for even a moment. For anyone who has yet to consider a semester abroad, or for someone who may be on the fence, I wholeheartedly recommend the experience.

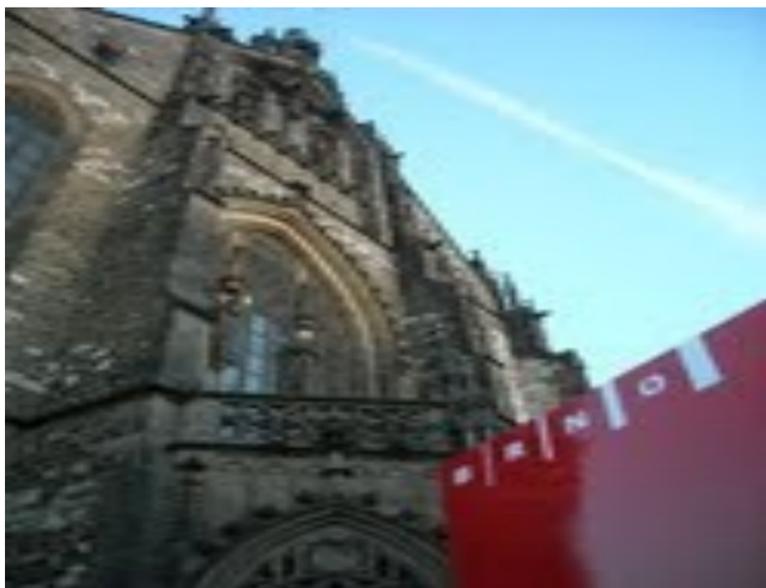
Sean Murphy
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Picture from the entrance to the Museum of Communism in Prague



Group photo from an International Students Club trip to Prague



Largest cathedral in Brno



Khuram Hussain undergraduate 1998, completed his PhD from Syracuse University in May 2010. His dissertation is entitled: "Something of Our Own: Muhammad Speaks in the Cause of Black Agency in School Reform, 1961-1975". Dr. Hussain is an Assistant Professor of Education at Hobart and William Smith Colleges.

Sara Wallace, MA History 2010, has been hired as an Intelligence analyst (IA). Intelligence Analysts with the FBI serve as mediums between Bureau personnel and Special Agents in the field collecting intelligence. IA responsibilities include retrieving



and analyzing local and national intelligence to fulfill requests or further information leads, reaching out to other law enforcement agencies to better communication and assist in investigations, and providing useful information to Special Agents to ensure success in the field. Intelligence Analysts with the FBI have the option to become Special Agents after three years of employment.

Tasemere Gathers BA History 2008 is currently enrolled in the MA program in Urban Studies at Long Island University Brooklyn



Campus. This semester she is focusing on Urban Theories, the formation of "Ghettos" internationally, and contemporary issues such as gentrification, displacement, economic developments and the importance of identity. For the past six months she has worked with New York City Council Member Robert Jackson who represents the 7th District in Manhattan. Council Member Robert Jackson is the Chair of the

Education Committee and serves on the following committees: Black Latino and Asian Caucus; Contracts; Finance; Housing & Buildings; Land Use (Zoning & Franchises); Rules, Privileges & Elections; Sanitation & Solid Waste Management; Standards & Ethic. As a member of his staff, her duties include organizing and maintaining information for various organizations regarding advocacy and funding, and some aspects of preparing the budget.

Melanie Shaffer-Cuttilo BA History 2009 is now in her second year of graduate studies at Binghamton University, Melanie Shaffer-Cuttilo's research remains grounded in the field of Women's History with interest in women's engagement in the international contexts of environment, development, and human rights. Her graduate research examines the historical complexities and specificities of rural women's experiences with irrigation development in South Asia and Latin America during the period of 1945-1989. Her research demonstrates how these experiences influenced historical shifts in the international discourses of development, environment, and human rights. She has submitted her paper, 'An International History of Women's Activism and the Human Right to Water' to several e-journals and for consideration for the July 2011 Women's Worlds Congress in Ottawa. This December she will be presenting her paper, 'Women, Water and Development: Historical Perspectives from South Asia' as part of the Graduate Research Seminar Colloquium sponsored by Binghamton University's Department of History.

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Why a Career in History?

What Can I do with a History major

Do you think if you get a History degree your career options are limited to either teaching or going to law school?

How wrong you are!

While these are worthy professions, there are many other possibilities out there for you. For example, businesses employ Liberal Arts graduates because they know how to learn new things and how to communicate. Graduates in History enter medical school, and MBA, Public Administration, and Information Studies programs because they have learned how to think critically and solve problems. Knowledge of the larger world equips students to enter international fields.

Communication skills and the ability to do research and write, furnish History students with the skills needed to enter a wide range of fields from Public Relations to Events Management. Don't sell yourself short because you majored in History. Employers are looking for people with **the skills and knowledge** a major in History at SUNY Oswego provides.

These include:

Critical thinking

Research

Knowledge of issues relating to human diversity

Problem solving

Effective writing

Public speaking

Interpersonal communication

Listening

Ability to work as part of a team

Time management

Use of technology

INTERNSHIPS can provide work experience, but perhaps most important, they allow you to "try out" a career.

Students in our program have interned at the following institutions:

Richardson Bates House, Oswego, NY
Safe Haven Museum and Education Center, Oswego, NY
H. Lee White Museum, Oswego, NY
Oswego Women's Home, Oswego, NY
Oswego County Bar Association, Oswego, NY
Camp Hollis, Oswego, NY
St. Marie among the Iroquois, Syracuse, NY
Onondaga Historical Society, Syracuse, NY
Onondaga County District Attorney's Office, Syracuse, NY
Cayuga Museum of History and Art, Auburn, NY
Seward House, Auburn, NY
Historical Societies across New York State
New York State Assembly and Senate Offices
Disney World, Orlando, FL
ESPN Deportes (ESPN's Spanish Language Division)
Professional Football Hall of Fame, Canton, OH
The British Museum, London, England

"But what about the JOBS?"

Students who graduated with a History degree from our department are now doing the following (check back!! We will be adding to this list as we hear back from our alumni):

Yes, many have enrolled in law school. And, yes, many are teaching.

But here is what the others are doing:

Pursuing graduate degrees in History
English
Public Administration
Sports Management
And more (keep checking back as we update our list!)

Working in an array of jobs:

New York State Transportation Office
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
U.S. Border Patrol
U.S. State Department
Computer software service company
Owner/manager plumbing company
Owner/ Manager of a specialty store
Librarian And more (keep checking back as we update our list!)