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Apr 26th, 8:00 AM

33rd Annual Young Historians Conference

Portland State University History Department

Portland State University Challenge Program

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2022 Young Historians Conference Winners Ava Trueworthy, Samantha Knofler, and Nola Lierheimer

33RD ANNUAL YOUNG HISTORIANS CONFERENCE

Sponsored by:
**Portland State University's
History Department
& the Challenge Program**
April 26, 2023



Young Historians 2023 Schedule

8:00 – 8:40	CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST
8:40 – 9:00	WELCOME & PDXScholar RECAP
9:00 – 10:15	FIRST SESSIONS
10:15 – 10:30	BREAK
10:30 – 11:45	SECOND SESSIONS
11:45 – 12:25	LUNCH
12:30 – 1:45	THIRD SESSIONS
1:45 – 2:15	AWARDS CEREMONY

8:00 – 8:40	CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST	SMSU 355 (Ballroom)
8:40 – 9:00	WELCOME: John Ott, Professor and Chair, Department of History PDXScholar RECAP: Molly Gunderson, Interim Assistant Dean, PSU Library	

9:00 – 10:15	FIRST SESSIONS: Choose from two
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SMSU 328/9:	Bodies, Blood, and Punishment Moderator: <i>Professor Jennifer Kerns</i>
Ava Colleran Grant	Menstruation Products and Perceptions: Breaking Through the Crimson Ceiling
Ciara Pruett St. Mary's	Institutionalizing Femininity
Scarlett Anderson Grant	Law and Cultural Attitudes Towards Abortion: Ancient Civilizations to Present
SMSU 338:	Life after Death Moderator: <i>Professor John Ott</i>
Sarah Zdebski St. Mary's	A Double Edged Blade: Contrasting Theories of Dissection within 16th Century Italy
Ro Runkel Grant	Rite to Death, Left to Life: Death Ritual as a Cross-Cultural Unit of Analysis
Poppy Baxter Game Grant	The History of Vampire Folklore: Fear and Introspection, 2000 BCE.–2000 CE.

10:15 – 10:30	BREAK
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10:30 – 11:45 **SECOND SESSIONS:** Choose from two

SMSU 328/9:

Into the Unknown

Moderator: *Professor Richard Beyler*

Andy Manne
St. Mary's

Odysseus of the Arctic: The Epic of John Franklin and the Search for his Lost Expedition

Jascha Stern
Grant

Whaling in World History

Mak Gross
St. Mary's

Women's Contributions to Cracking the Enigma Code

SMSU 338:

Leisure and Innovation

Moderator: *Professor Loren Spielman*

Brooke Elliott
Grant

Unit Of Analysis: Ball Sports Throughout History

Amelia Nason
St. Mary's

The Contribution of Domestic and International Conflict in Renaissance Italy to the Sport of Fencing

Bella Bohne
Grant

The Rise of Rubber: A Story of Innovation & Exploitation

11:45 – 12:25

LUNCH

SMSU 355 (Ballroom)

12:30 – 1:45

THIRD SESSIONS: Choose from four

SMSU 328/9:

You Should See Me in a Crown: Philosophy and Power

Moderator: *Professor David Peterson del Mar*

Lea Yonago
Grant

Machiavelli's *The Prince*: Utopia and Dystopia

Isabella Gurin
St. Mary's

Death and Vengeance Behind Every Corner: The Great Purge and the Psychology of Joseph Stalin

Piper Heilbronner
Grant

Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, as Applied to Modern Philosophy

Evelyn Cooper
St. Mary's

The Court of Versailles Under Louis XIV: Home to the Desperate, the Destitute, and the Debauched

SMSU 338:	Like a Prayer: Interpreting Religion Moderator: <i>Professor Evguenia Davidova</i>	
Julian Balsley Grant	“An Impediment to Those Who Would Walk the Difficult Way”: How St. Francis of Assisi’s Revolution in Catholic Thought Was Built on the Perceived Inferiority of Femininity	
Eva Lieberman Grant	Caught Between Hell and Hallowed Ground: Ascetic Practices in Representative Religions	
Camilla Brown St. Mary’s	Christine de Pizan: Where Politics and Feminism Intertwine	
SMSU 327:	Power and Control: The Politics of Exploitation Moderator: <i>Professor Joseph Bohling</i>	
Piper Row St. Mary’s	The 1707 Act of Union: An Act of Desperation	
Ruthie Zeidman St. Mary’s	The Rise and Fall of the Relationship Between Mary, Queen of Scots, and Queen Elizabeth I	
Terah Bennett St. Mary’s	Money Talks: Why Jews Were Really Blamed for the Black Plague in Strasbourg	
SMSU 333:	Express Yourself: Adornment in History Moderator: <i>Professor Brian Turner</i>	
Sophie Luzier Grant	Most Vulgar and Barbarous: A History of Tattoo Stigma	
Anjali Weerasinghe Grant	Protective Styling, Ponytails, and Plaits: Weaving a Narrative of Race, Femininity, and Culture Through Hair	
Elliot Lindekugel Grant	Graffiti From Antiquity to Today: Exploring the Informal Art of the Average Person	
1:45 – 2:15	AWARDS CEREMONY Professor Jennifer Kerns, Department of History Joy Beckett, Challenge Program Director	SMSU 355 (Ballroom)

ABSTRACTS

9:00 – 10:15
SMSU 328/29

FIRST SESSIONS
Bodies, Blood, and Punishment
Moderator: *Professor Jennifer Kerns*

Menstruation Products and Perceptions: Breaking Through the Crimson Ceiling

This paper will examine different views on menstruation throughout history and their effects on social, political, and economic landscapes. The ancient Greeks, Romans, and Mayans all believed in the supposed 'magical powers' of menstrual blood. These societies held their own ideas on the limits of these magical abilities and the good and evil forces they could be used for. Throughout these ancient societies, menstruation was used as a justification for the increased control of the state and men over women's bodies. If menstrual blood did have these magical powers, it was a power that needed to be limited and controlled so as to not pose a threat to society. In Socialist Yugoslavia, the image of the female worker was celebrated. However, her menstruation and other aspects of her femininity had to be hidden. This led to the idea of an ideal woman being invisible. Colonization also led to the suppression of the menstrual practices and customs of many Indigenous peoples. Today, the stage of development of one's home nation has a big impact on the accessibility of menstrual products and proper hygiene. Access to menstrual hygiene has also been linked to a woman's ability to receive an education, and as a result, contribute more to the economy. In summary, society's views towards menstruation are linked to women's access to healthcare, employment, and educational opportunities. This is also connected to women's general role in society. Menstruation is present in every time period and across every culture and is a powerful method of analysis for examining a society's cultural, economic, and political spheres.

Ava Colleran, Grant High School

Institutionalizing Femininity

"Institutionalizing Femininity" explores the origins of the medicalization of gender norms in 19th century mental asylums. This paper examines the connections between rampant medical malpractice in 19th century American mental asylums, and how these abuses were a symptom of the patriarchy in the medical community acting to oppress the female psyche. One of the major issues this paper examines is the indistinguishability between psychiatry and gynecology in this time period. Gynecologists created the notion that women's reproductive organs made them insane, by arguing that issues in the uterus or reproductive organs, or simply possessing female reproductive organs could cause insanity. These gynecologists may not have actually believed that the female reproductive system caused insanity, but instead used their status as medical professionals to create a narrative that upheld male dominance by creating a distinction between the "superior" male sex and the naturally insane female. The medical system of institutionalization also allowed husbands to have total control over their wives. In many cases, husbands could have their wives institutionalized simply for holding different religious beliefs and after marriage, assumed the legal rights of his wife. Beginning with the muckraking journalism of Dorothea Dix and ending with an examination of increased mental health legislation and the DSM's creation of diagnostic categories for mental illness in the mid-20th century, this paper outlines the changes in medical malpractice and societal attitudes that have led to the formation and increased standards of modern medical practice.

Ciara Pruett, St. Mary's Academy

Law and Cultural Attitudes Towards Abortion: Ancient Civilizations to Present

Abortion, the termination of a pregnancy, has been practiced throughout history in various forms and frequencies. The controversy of the procedure has prevailed similarly, evident from its earliest documentation to recent legal decisions. In ancient civilizations, statutory legal sanctions were scarce, and differing opinions were recorded in early medical, religious, and philosophical texts. These texts influenced centuries of common law & cultural attitudes towards the practice. Debate about the role of fetal viability, ethicality, and safety of the procedure wove their way into the public conscience. These ancient conceptions influenced the widespread emergence of statutory abortion law in the 19th century. Legislation was further shaped by state attempts at population regulation, improved medical technology, and shifting cultural opinions about bodily autonomy and women's rights. Today, abortion law remains in flux, although trends towards liberalization are shown in the latter half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century. This paper is split into two sections: abortion in ancient civilizations (prior to the emergence of statutory law) and abortion in the 19th century-present (following the emergence of statutory law). In the first, the influence of ancient texts on ancient & modern opinions is examined chronologically. In the second, connections between ancient thought and 19th-20th century legislation are further analyzed, taking into account additional socio-political factors in each country that shaped its unique stances on the procedure.

Scarlett Anderson, Grant High School

9:00 – 10:15
SMSU 338

FIRST SESSIONS
Life After Death
Moderator: *Professor John Ott*

A Double Edged Blade: Contrasting Theories of Dissection within 16th Century Italy

Up until the Middle Ages, dissection was largely nonexistent. Gory and unsettling to the modern eye, physicians and anatomists alike agreed that animal dissections and comparative anatomies were more than sufficient to map out the human body. When academic dissections did begin to occur with regularity, they were rigid and formal in nature, relying on inaccurate anatomical texts written over a millennia ago by the Greek physician Galen. Dissection was a visual exercise, conducted primarily in Italian universities to provide a gory illustration for the medical student. The established format for dissection at the beginning of the 16th century was the quodlibetarian model, established 200 years earlier by Italian anatomist Mondino de Liuzzi. It featured three primary roles: the *lector*, *ostensor*, and *incisor*. The *lector* provided a reading in the traditional Latin of a Galenic text, which the *ostensor* translated into the colloquial language for the *incisor*, the person physically cutting into the body. A key feature of the quodlibetarian model is that the person guiding the dissection, the *lector* or *ostensor* depending on the region, had no physical contact with the corpse. They taught from a distance, remaining as far as possible from the messiness of the body in front of them. The physical demonstration was followed by a *disputatio* or discussion of the text with reference to the dissection, between the students and faculty present. This model of dissection was highly ritualized to the point of dogma and enforced Galen's older anatomical beliefs while stifling exploration and research into the human body. The stagnant quodlibetarian dissection was challenged, and subsequently overturned, with the publishing of Andreas Vesalius's revolutionary work, *De Humani Corporis Fabrica Libri Septem*, in 1543. The first of its kind, the *Fabrica* featured highly detailed and accurate anatomical drawings, an emphasis on hands-on experience, and a critique of the lack of exploration present within a rigid, text-based dissection. Following Vesalius's criticisms, the academic dissection shifted to focus more on the structures and function of the body, and what new knowledge could be deduced. This shift towards evidence-based reasoning was cemented into medical teachings through the construction of the oldest permanent anatomical theatre at Padua, Italy in 1595. The dissection would prove to be a valuable tool for physicians in diagnosing and treating the sick. Additionally, the research-focused dissection that emerged in the late 16th century modeled the scientific method and paved the way for scientific discoveries of the Renaissance, Enlightenment, and beyond.

Sarah Zdebski, St. Mary's Academy

Rite to Death, Left to Life: Death Ritual as a Cross-Cultural Unit of Analysis

Death ritual is a nearly ubiquitous aspect of life within civilization and serves the purpose of reconciling the logical positivist societal constructions that uphold social order with the fundamentally logic-breaking nature of death. This paper posits that death ritual serves as a strong cross-cultural unit of analysis as it provides insight into the defining socio-cultural traits and spiritual outlooks of different cultures. This unit of analysis is applied to Song-era Ch'an Buddhism, pre-colonial Hindu India, and Maori death ritual. For each of these examples, death rites are connected to aspects of art, culture, social organization, and spirituality or religion, and they are examined in relation to one another. The paper concludes with a further analysis of the consistent role death ritual plays in maintaining positivist social systems while being adapted to the disparate cultural needs of a given society.

Ro Runkel, Grant High School

The History of Vampire Folklore: Fear and Introspection, 2000 BCE.-2000 CE.

The History of Vampire Folklore: Fear and Introspection, 2000 BCE.-2008 CE., is an exploration on the history of vampire folklore and how legends of vampires have influenced the behaviors of different cultures for centuries. Part one of this paper argues that vampire folklore was created as a fear tactic to force common citizens to submit to the "cultural capital" specific to their region. "Cultural capital" will be explored thoroughly, and many examples throughout a myriad of cultures will be provided to prove this claim. Chapter one, "Ancient and Classical Vampire Legends," begins with examples of pre-Christian vampire mythology including: the vampire king Abhartach from Celtic Ireland, Classical Grecian vampires, Lilith as she is depicted in Sumer, as well the Old Testament during the Talmudic period of Hebrew mythology, and finally the *Rakasha* from Ancient Indian legends. The following chapter "Slavic Vampire Folklore" concerns European vampire folklore, more specifically the three types of vampires in Russian folklore, as well as the key aspects found through all European vampire folklore and how this relates to the ideas of "cultural capital." The final chapter of part one titled "Vampire Folklore in Asia and South America," introduces examples of vampirism from Peru and Indonesia.

Part two argues that after the Enlightenment people became less concerned with pleasing God and following social codes in order to gain acceptance both on Earth and into heaven. Resulting from this, folklore became old-fashioned, but the vampire evolved through literature to represent this shift. Chapter four, "The Transformation of Vampires in post-Romantic Literature," explores how vampires shifted from being a representative of failure to follow cultural capital into a representation of humanity's battle with our own consciousness resulting from the publication of post-Romantic age vampire literature. The final chapter, "Vampires Evolution Through Film," explores how after the release of the film *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* in 1922, many film adaptations of both Dracula and other vampire characters influenced the vampire to once again change, causing him to become a staple in popular culture.

Poppy Baxter Game, Grant High School

10:30 – 11:45
SMSU 328/9

SECOND SESSIONS

Into the Unknown

Moderator: *Professor Richard Beyler*

Odysseus of the Arctic: The Epic of John Franklin and the Search for his Lost Expedition

This paper examines and maps the reasons for the lasting impression and legacy of the search for Sir John Franklin's disappeared 1845 expedition in search of the Northwest Passage. In the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, burgeoning British Arctic exploration provided a rich foundation for serialized narratives, which, as they played off sentiments of national ambition and imperial pride, inspired a romanticization of the Arctic region and the men who explored it. The search for John Franklin's missing expedition became the epicenter of this trend due to the search efforts of his wife, Lady Jane Franklin, and the controversial findings of explorer John Rae. Most research focuses primarily or solely on Jane's efforts, as well as the public press coverage of the search and the response to Rae's reports as the cause of the expedition's popularity. This paper examines those two variables in tandem as well as mapping the legacy of the search through the movements and emergence of folksongs and other artistic works inspired by the expedition. Through analysis of letters and journals connected to the expedition and search, British newspapers publishing Arctic content, and archived recordings and broadsides of songs, this paper asserts that the relationship of the expedition to the quasi-mythological Northwest Passage, the efforts of Jane Franklin—amplified by the press, and the national fervor behind it—all cemented the lost Franklin Expedition as a keystone event in the history of western exploration, and a story of uniquely legendary status among the sagas of the arctic.

Andy Manne, St. Mary's Academy

Whaling in World History

Employing the history of whaling as a unit of analysis for studying world history reveals significant insights into different civilizations' commercial development and cultural values. The nature of the polarity between industrialized states and coastal indigenous societies can be revealed by juxtaposing commercial whaling practices with subsistence whaling traditions. In this paper, I'll analyze the histories of whaling in Japan, the Faroe Islands, and Britain, with a brief section on mythology in whaling Cascadian indigenous tribes. Although the history of whaling in rural indigenous societies is certainly more ecologically virtuous than in urbanized countries, the ethics of whaling are somewhat equivocal. Whaling civilizations' moral emphases and cultural values are best discerned by studying the reasons for which they whaled, and the weaponry and techniques used in the hunt.

Jascha Stern, Grant High School

Women's Contributions to Cracking the Enigma Code

During WWII, the German military was using the Enigma machine, which could send coded messages. For example, one soldier types the "B," and it types the "A". There were thousands of possible combinations to utilize for the machine, and the German military changed them monthly. The machine posed a problem for the Allies in WWII because German military could communicate secretly with ease on matters of ship location and battle plans. The Enigma was heavily utilized in the Battle of the Atlantic, which was a naval battle. The British military established a classified code breaking operation at Bletchley Park. Anyone employed there was sworn to secrecy under the Official Secrets Act until the 1970's. This is the location where Alan Turing, perhaps the most famous codebreaker, created the Bombe machine which cracked codes in twenty minutes, alongside a team of other codebreakers, including Joan Clarke. A deeper analysis of interviews with previous female employees at Bletchley, academic journals and chapters reveal that the achievement of codebreaking can be credited to several women who worked at Bletchley Park, specifically codebreakers such as Joan Clarke, who have been historically unknown.

Mak Gross, St. Mary's Academy

10:30 – 11:45
SMSU 338

SECOND SESSIONS
Leisure and Innovation
Moderator: *Professor Loren Spielman*

Unit Of Analysis: Ball Sports Throughout History

Ball sports can be used to examine a society's prosperity, religions, and values. This paper dives into four regions (the Americas, East Asia, Egypt, and Europe) to analyze their ancient ball games and how they reflect the culture of that civilization. For the Americas, the ancient games of *ullamalitzli* and *pok-ta-pok* reflect the animist beliefs of Mesoamerica, often associated with sacrifice. These games can still be seen today in the form of *Ulama*, a modern game that's played in Mexico to this day. In addition, native tribes in North America have created the origins of modern Lacrosse. East Asia focuses on both China and Japan, and the influences they had on each other's ball games. In China, their sport *cuju* created the framework for modern soccer, with Japan quickly following with their sport of *kemari*. Europe's ball sports can be seen in Greek mythology, specifically in the story of Odysseus and Nausicaa. In addition, ball sports played a role in the Roman's military success and its preparation of young soldiers.

Brooke Elliott, Grant High School

The Contribution of Domestic and International Conflict in Renaissance Italy to the Sport of Fencing

Fencing, the art or practice of attack and defense with the foil, épée, or saber, has progressed over hundreds of years from the warfare of Germanic tribes to a regulated Olympic sport. This paper investigates the development of fencing during the fifteenth and sixteenth century Italian Renaissance and outlines a variety of ways that fencing culture mirrored Italy's at the time, demonstrating that Italian fencing was a product of both international and domestic conflict beyond the sport itself. The competitive cultural influence of aesthetic epicenters such as the Florentine Republic over other European countries—particularly France, Spain, and Italy—was paralleled by the spread of Italian fencing treatises and masters into these nations. Furthermore, an internal Italian culture that prioritized honor and fostered rivalry among citizens, as well as their city-states, made the fencing duel a tenet of Italian society as a means of defending one's dignity. Preparation for these duels, and their increasing regulation, led to the practice of fencing as a sport. Taken in tandem, these factors meant the Italian style was in an optimal position of burgeoning progress and societal tension to be the inspiration for all fencing that followed.

Amelia Nason, St. Mary's Academy

The Rise of Rubber: A Story of Innovation & Exploitation

Many commodities have been centralized in the study of world history, but rubber stands out as a unique and intriguing unit of analysis. From its invention in Ancient Mesoamerica, this paper addresses the impact of the polymer through different periods of its history. The first chapter introduces the origins of rubber, deep in the tropical jungles of South-Central Mexico with its inventors- the Olmec civilization. Directly after the Spanish conquest of the Americas, rubber was not utilized by Europeans. It took experimentation and accidental innovations to discover how to transform raw rubber into its most useful form. The period after these innovations, coinciding with European and American Industrialization, is known as the "rubber boom." The second chapter of this paper attempts to underscore the complex interplay between foreign industrialists and the two primary rubber producing regions at the time. After the exhaustion of these regions, the subsequent chapter illustrates a shift to a new region and strategy of rubber production. The final section of this paper describes the role of rubber during two dynamic global conflicts and the rise of synthetic alternatives to the war commodity.

Bella Bohne, Grant High School

12:30 – 1:45
SMSU 328/9

THIRD SESSIONS

You Should See Me in a Crown: Philosophy and Power

Moderator: *Professor David Peterson del Mar*

Machiavelli's *The Prince*: Utopia and Dystopia

Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince* is regarded as one of the first works of political realism, a text that put power and pragmatism before all else. I speculate that Machiavelli took absolutism as a point of departure because he was attempting to regain Medici favor. However, his commitment to a prince and its corresponding praxis exemplifies the power of utopia. Along the lines of Leszek Kolakowski, "utopia" here refers to a state of social consciousness that is an inevitable product of developing historical conditions. Without utopias, there could be no social subject which processes and shapes the world. Antonio Gramsci would later identify this in *The Prince* and apply it to early 20th century socialist aims. However, as our society has continued to lose its subjective quality, politics have become increasingly capitulatory, and utopias have become obsolete. It is now the *dystopia*, a social consciousness with no real subjectivity, that dominates ideology. An analysis of *The Prince* and its subsequent interpretations shed light on this phenomenon.

Lea Yonago, Grant High School

Death and Vengeance Behind Every Corner: The Great Purge and the Psychology of Joseph Stalin

Under Joseph Stalin's rule of the Soviet Union, the Purges, or "repressions" as they are now known in Russia, led to the direct and indirect deaths of an estimated twenty million people through starvation, executions, and forced labor camps. As the uncontested dictator of the Soviet Union for nearly twenty-five years, Stalin made no attempt to gain popular support among his nation but enforced his interpretation of communist-socialist rule by means of unremitting oppression and terror. Why did he utilize such vindictive measures? Was it his absolute aversion to any authority and ruthless insistence on total control at all times? This paper explores Stalin's mental state through his personal documents, political actions, and psychological indicators throughout his life. The Purges concluded when Stalin died, demonstrating that he was the key to the violence, not an inherent product of the circumstances or historical repetition, and that his clinically-unwell mind may have instead been the culprit.

Isabella Gurin, St. Mary's Academy

Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, as Applied to Modern Philosophy

Aristotle's *Rhetoric* was written in the fourth century BCE but remains relevant today. By looking at how rhetoric can be used in political, religious, or scientific methods, one can get an understanding of how *Rhetoric* is used in modern language. However, because *Rhetoric* was written centuries ago, it is easy to lose sight of how Aristotle originally guided the art of persuasion. This makes it essential to go back to the original text to understand and apply Aristotle's teachings. Current historians, speech therapists, and political analysts have looked at *Rhetoric* in new ways, constantly developing its uses. Rhetoric is necessary for both persuading and defending, and Aristotle's book is at the root of these linguistic skills.

Piper Heilbronner, Grant High School

The Court of Versailles Under Louis XIV: Home to the Desperate, the Destitute, and the Debauched

“A nobleman, if he lives in his providence, lives free but without substance; if he lives at Court, he is taken care of, but enslaved.” A quote by a contemporary of Louis XIV, King of France and resident of *Le Château de Versailles*, Jean de La Bruyère reveals the more intricate reality of the Court in seventeenth-century France. Versailles was not merely a royal spectacle, nor another French palace, it was a highly politicized project undertaken by Louis XIV with the express intent to devastate the noble class. This paper explores the means by which Louis weaponized Versailles and the fates of nobles who found themselves trapped behind gilded walls. Those who withered away in the spectacle that was Versailles are categorized in this paper as the desperate, the destitute, and the debauched. Each had their own reasons for staying at Versailles and found themselves victim to different entrapments. This paper seeks to unravel the original intent of Versailles through the noble class who was so affected.

Evelyn Cooper, St. Mary's Academy

12:30 – 1:45
SMSU 338

THIRD SESSIONS

Like a Prayer: Interpreting Religion

Moderator: *Professor Evguenia Davidova*

“An Impediment to Those Who Would Walk the Difficult Way”: How St. Francis of Assisi’s Revolution in Catholic Thought Was Built on the Perceived Inferiority of Femininity

St. Francis of Assisi is undoubtedly one of the most famous saints in the Catholic Church. Known for his complete poverty and deep love for the poor and animals, the Little Poor Man of Assisi has become renowned for his way of life and the fraternity he started that has continued for over eight hundred years. In an organization rife with cardinal sin, Francis was in stark contrast with his asceticism and rankless order. However, St. Francis’ entire ideology is built on the Catholic belief that women are inherently inferior to men and dangerous to those following God. Francis used feminine descriptors to denote his inferiority to God and saw relationships with women—platonic and romantic—as the gravest of sins. Despite facing immense challenges in pursuing the saint’s faith, women have been some of the most devout and important Franciscans. St. Francis is deserving of recognition for his humility, care for those who could not care for themselves, and the movement he inspired within the Church; however, the hateful beliefs that drove the saint to his good deeds in the first place must be central in any Franciscan study.

Julian Balsley, Grant High School

Caught Between Hell and Hallowed Ground: Ascetic Practices in Representative Religions

Asceticism, a spiritual phenomenon that encapsulates a wide variety of practices that aim to deny a person’s physical wants, needs, or comforts, appears in religions throughout human history and has had a profound impact on the ideals of the societies it appears on and the development of societal morals and ideals. This paper explores the ways in which ascetic practices developed and presented themselves in a collection of uniquely influential religions: Jainism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Jainism provides an example of asceticism in a non-theistic religion, while Judaism, Christianity, and Islam demonstrate how conflicting ideas about the value of self-denial interacted to form unique social norms within each religion. Ascetic attitudes persist to this day, both in religious and secular communities, and continue to influence societal culture, morals, and taboos.

Eva Lieberman, Grant High School

Christine de Pizan: Where Politics and Feminism Intertwine

The illustrious Christine de Pizan was a radical political writer during the beginnings of the Hundred Years War in France, and her biting feminist social critiques served to influence the choices made by a volatile aristocracy on the brink of a civil war. Most prevalently, Christine’s writings ardently defended the highly criticized rule of the infamous regent, Queen Isabeau of Bavaria. During her career, Christine de Pizan broke countless gender barriers. Much of her work, including *The Book of the City of Ladies*, *Le Livre de Trois Vertus*, *The Story of the Rose*, and *The Book of the Body Politic* were written with the express intent of promoting female leadership and intellectual freedom. Widowed at a very young age, she provided for her children independently through the publication of her own writing. During her time, Christine gained immense respect among the French aristocracy who frequently commissioned her despite the simple fact that she was a woman. Additionally, Christine was a devout Catholic and so grounded most of her feminist rhetoric within the Christian theology that guided popular belief, which earned greater regard and respect from those she sought to influence. Many modern historians have concluded that because of this, pious Christine would have disliked the ill-reputed regent queen Isabeau, who was largely disliked by her people for her reputation of sinfulness and licentiousness. In this paper, I will argue the exact opposite. How could a writer so passionately in favor of institutionalized female leadership and political participation possibly have opposed such a revolutionary queen? I will explore this perspective via an analysis of the many times Christine directly praised Isabeau within her work. To conclude, Christine de Pizan was a fierce advocate of female intellect and political participation, and her legacy is one of support, intellect, and political participation that is immensely socially relevant even today.

Camilla Brown, St. Mary’s Academy

12:30 – 1:45
SMSU 327

THIRD SESSIONS
Power and Control: The Politics of Exploitation
Moderator: *Professor Joseph Bohling*

The 1707 Act of Union: An Act of Desperation

The 1707 Act of Union was the agreement that created a union between England and Scotland. England had been Scotland's fiercest rival for centuries, making it surprising that Scotland would voluntarily give up independence by entering the Union. However, a closer look into Scottish motivation for the Union reveals that for most Scots entering the Union was involuntary. Scotland was in an economic crisis after years of famine and failed attempts at colonization, leaving England as the last resort for help. The desperation of Scottish politicians to regain economic stability for themselves and the common people led to an unfair union that brought about conflict that continues to this day.

Piper Row, St. Mary's Academy

The Rise and Fall of the Relationship Between Mary, Queen of Scots, and Queen Elizabeth I

Mary, Queen of Scots and Queen Elizabeth I of England were powerful female rulers in the mid-16th and, for Elizabeth, early 17th centuries. Though the two had much in common, from serving as the head of significant European countries to facing prejudice from men to even being cousins, their relationship became tumultuous over the years. Mary was a young queen born in a time of turmoil between England and Scotland, and as she grew, as did her roles and responsibilities. As the ruler of one of the most powerful countries in Europe, Elizabeth experienced similar pressures and duties. Each queen had her fair share of challenges, and their relationship was built from a shared sense of sisterhood as few women could relate to their positions of power. Mary and Elizabeth only communicated by letter, but their words tell a story of a relationship that bloomed then eventually grew cold. Although many assume that the two queens were enemies, this paper takes a closer look at their correspondences and reveals a nuanced friendship that was significantly affected by power-hungry men, religious differences, political unrest, and separate claims to the same throne.

Ruthie Zeidman, St. Mary's Academy

Money Talks: Why Jews Were Really Blamed for the Black Plague in Strasbourg

The Black Plague, which took place between 1348 and 1351, was characterized by extensive regression in critical thought, learning, and halting of revolution against the contemporary wealthy regimes. Where before the plague, stirrings of intolerance against oppressive sociopolitical authorities were apparent, throughout the duration of the plague, gentile European communities blamed outsider groups for their society's turmoil, with Jews particularly being accused. The Strasbourg Massacre epitomized the European treatment of Jews during the Black Plague: the religious and ethnic minority was persecuted for allegedly poisoning the town's well-water and bringing disaster upon a Christian town out of religious spite. The sole economic activity of Jews in Strasbourg was moneylending, with Christian religious institutions and noblemen as customers. The plundering of Jews' possessions, as well as a cancellation of all debts to them, were only a few benefits reaped by those who persecuted and executed the Jews of this era. This undercurrent of economic motive was echoed throughout Europe, as the case of Strasbourg reveals. This paper explores the economic motivations of both the upper classes and the working classes in carrying out the extermination of European Jews during the Black Plague.

Terah Bennett, St. Mary's Academy

12:30 – 1:45
SMSU 333

THIRD SESSIONS
Express Yourself: Adornment in History
Moderator: *Professor Brian Turner*

Most Vulgar and Barbarous: A History of Tattoo Stigma

For thousands of years, tattoos have been used cross-culturally for purposes ranging from religious affiliation to ritual. Still, many societies today associate tattoos with deviance and criminality, making it difficult for tattooed people to find employment and acceptance within society. This negative stigma can be traced all the way back to Ancient Greece when tattoos were used to mark slaves and prisoners of war. Other examples are given from Dynastic China, Japan, the American circus, and the Holocaust. This examination of tattoo stigma throughout history exposes larger patterns of racism, hegemony, and ostracism, and gives us an awareness of social norms and how they evolve.

Sophie Luzier, Grant High School

Protective Styling, Ponytails, and Plaits: Weaving a Narrative of Race, Femininity, and Culture Through Hair

In recent years, race and gender have been more consistently incorporated into the study of history, but the nuance of their intersectionality is often missed. Hair has informed constructions of societal roles pertaining to ethnicity and sex for as long as the concepts have been distinguished. This paper explores how culture is intertwined with haircare and styling. Moreover, hair provides a scope with which to view and study the intersections of oppression cross-culturally.

Anjali Weerasinghe, Grant High School

Graffiti From Antiquity to Today: Exploring the Informal Art of the Average Person

Graffiti has long been overlooked as a worthwhile unit of analysis for understanding world history and should be recognized as such because the thoughts and feelings of ordinary people are revealed. The study of informal art can give clues to literacy rates and individuals feeling the global emotions of entitlement, boredom, captivity, and even love. This paper will cover inscriptions by builders of a Giza pyramid and those of tourists inside the tomb of King Ramses II. The implications of graffiti done by tourists or those from foreign lands is also apparent on the French side of the Western Front and on the roof of the Hagia Sophia during the ninth century. Claiming of territory as a motivation for graffiti is evident in post-colonial Australian rock art and the urban tagging of American cities. The ideas spread in graffiti can create revolution, as seen in Tanzania, and can be used as a way of democratizing education in times like the England Renaissance. Each of these examples is important in order to have a more comprehensive view of history through a unit of analysis that offers poignant insight into cultures.

Elliot Lindekugel, Grant High School

Thanks to all those who make The Young Historians Conference possible:

Challenge Program Instructors

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