

**4TH ANNUAL
UNDERGRADUATE
HISTORY DEPARTMENT CONFERENCE
SATURDAY, APRIL 21, 2012
HELMKE LIBRARY 2ND FLOOR**

Schedule

- 9:30-10:30 AM** **Panel: "American Politics Re-Examined"**
Chair: Dr. David Schuster (History)
Presenters:
Tanner Billingsley (History), "New Deal Radicalism: Roosevelt, Labor, and the Wagner Act"
Joseph Wuest (POLS/History), "Madalyn Murray O'Hair and the Atheist Movement for Political Legitimacy"
Shane Grant (History), "In Self-Defense: The Confederacy Reinterpreted as a Conservative Revolution"
- 10:35-11:15 AM** **Panel: "Revolutions Around the World: Mexico and Romania"**
Chair: Dr. Richard Weiner (History)
Presenters:
Alexander Allison (History), "Plan de Ayala: Blueprint for the Mexican Revolution"
James Rinehart (History), "Revision of the Romanian Political Spectrum"
- 11:20-11:50 PM** **Panel: "Internship Opportunities through the Department of History"**
Chair: Dr. Christine Erickson (History)
Presenter: Douglas Sagstetter (History)
- 12:00-1:00 PM** **Lunch for faculty, participants and invited guests (RSVP required)**

Student Biographies and Abstracts

Panel: “American Politics Re-Examined”

Tanner Billingsley

Title: “New Deal Radicalism: Roosevelt, Labor, and the Wagner Act”

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Louis Cantor

Paper written for: Hist A314: US History, 1929-1945 (Fall 2011)

Tanner Billingsley is a senior with IPFW’s Department of History. Last year, he participated in the 3rd Annual Undergraduate History Conference, where he discussed the role of Mary Harris “Mother” Jones in the coal wars of West Virginia and Colorado. In 2011, he was the recipient of the Judie and Ralph Violette History Scholarship. This year, he received the Sharon Alt Piepenbrink Award for his research paper “Beyond Gender: Black Women amidst the Feminist Movement in the 1960s.” His current research interests include American feminism, the American labor movement, modern American conservatism, and Romania during the Ceausescu period. In his spare time, he enjoys reading and traveling to Massachusetts and Colorado.

Abstract

As a decade, the 1920s represented a conservative reaction to the Progressivism of the earlier twentieth century. Consequently, labor lost traction to industrialists and owners, who dominated the decade and profited spectacularly. Despite its reputation as a decade of prosperity, forty percent of the population lived under or at the official poverty level. When the economy collapsed in 1929 after years of laissez-faire economic policies, the working class was hit especially hard. Franklin Roosevelt, the nation’s new Democratic president, forwent Herbert Hoover’s dogmatic “hands-off” approach to the economy and instead pursued a more activist strategy, using the federal government to enact reforms and to directly spur economic growth. In 1935, Roosevelt signed the National Labor Relations Act, known as the Wagner Act. Perhaps the most radical, and controversial, of the New Deal reforms, the Wagner Act granted government protection to workers to collectively bargain—a crucial victory for a labor movement whose interests were largely neglected by Roosevelt’s predecessors. The Wagner Act provided federal protection for unionized workers, promoted collective bargaining, and established a strengthened National Labor Relations Board to protect and to regulate labor. Emboldened by the Wagner Act, workers conducted numerous strikes in the wake of its passage, demanding fairer pay and better treatment. Many employers, however, disregarded the bill and actively violated it, mistakenly believing that the Supreme Court would declare it unconstitutional. With the labor movement reinvigorated, industrialists, owners, and conservatives ruthlessly attacked the bill through an extensive but unsuccessful propaganda campaign. Ultimately, the Wagner Act represented crucial progress for workers amidst the Depression climate.

Joseph Wuest

Title: “Madalyn Murray O’Hair and the Atheist Movement for Political Legitimacy”

Faculty Advisor: Dr. David Schuster

Paper written for: Hist A382: The Sixties (Summer 2011)

Joseph Wuest is currently pursuing BA degrees in both Political Science and History here at IPFW. During this past year, he was awarded the Withers Scholarship Grant and had a paper he wrote for the 2011 Summer I session nominated for the Sharon Alt Piepenbrink Award. Just last month, he presented his research, “Treating Everyone as Abled: The Americans with Disabilities Act as Opportunity,” at the East Central Writing Centers Association 2012 conference. Some of his academic interests include the study of civil rights and liberties, judicial politics, and international law. Joseph plans to apply to joint J.D./Ph.D. programs in the fall to continue studying law and politics.

Abstract

Much of the historical analyses of the United States in the 1960s concern themselves with movements for political legitimacy. During this era, critical masses of disenfranchised minorities led by an assortment of charismatic leaders organized protests and fought legal battles in order to secure and exercise their civil rights. These civil rights movements were instrumental in gradually altering the public perception of these minority groups; prejudices and notions of racism that had once dominated public policy and majority opinion began to erode and be replaced by more liberal laws and precedents and more tolerant societal perceptions. This, however, was not the case for American atheists. The 1960s witnessed an opportunity for atheists to unite themselves under a leadership and challenge the unconstitutional prevalence of government-endorsed religion—particularly endorsements of Christianity—that plagued the public school system and other various publicly funded institutions. Unfortunately for their cause, American atheists’ initial success in the 1963 U.S. Supreme Court case, *School District of Abington Township v. Schempp*, was quickly overshadowed by the poisonous personality of one of its chief litigants, Madalyn Murray O’Hair, and her inability to secure political legitimacy for the movement.

This paper focuses predominately on Madalyn Murray O’Hair and her significance in the failure of American atheists to achieve political legitimacy during the 1960s. O’Hair’s initial victory in the *Schempp* case to remove the recitation of prayer in public schools was a success for atheists, but only a fleeting one; it was more of an isolated incident rather than a foundational event comparable to the Birmingham Bus Boycott. Once Madalyn Murray O’Hair seized the attention of the American public, she squandered any chance of legitimacy for American atheists with her outlandish behavior, uncharismatic personality, and subsequent failures to overturn other varieties of government-endorsements of religion. As a result of the character of Madalyn Murray O’Hair and her inefficiencies as a leader, a critical mass of atheists united under one, influential movement was never formed, and American atheists were unsuccessful in their attempts to eradicate publicly-endorsed religion and change public opinion from a standpoint of prejudice to tolerance.

Bibliographical Note:

In order to present the negative public perception of Madalyn Murray O’Hair and the damage this perception inflicted on the atheist movement for political legitimacy, this research relied predominately on articles from the *New York Times* that tended to characterize O’Hair in a negative fashion as “the Atheist.” These and other articles, such as one from the Baltimore Sun the day of the *Schempp* decision, consistently casted O’Hair as a vulgar and offensive woman who sought to eliminate as much of Christianity’s influence in America as possible. A disclosed FBI investigative report that included documents collected over several decades was also utilized to further demonstrate the kind of threat most Americans—and supposedly the federal government as well—saw in O’Hair. Finally, this research was guided by secondary sources such as Bryan Le Beau’s *The Atheist* and Anne Rowe Seaman’s *America’s Most Hated Woman*; these works were especially useful in providing a narrative of the quick devolution of O’Hair from potential leader to a polarizing, fringe character.

Shane Grant

Title: “In Self-Defense: The Confederacy Reinterpreted as a Conservative Revolution”

Faculty Advisor: Instructor Deanna Wooley

Paper written for: Hist T335: Revolutions (Fall 2011)

Abstract

Nearly one hundred and fifty years after its demise the Confederacy remains a much discussed topic among students of United States history. Often it is the ultimate cause of its demise that is debated, but this examination will not attempt to answer that question. Rather, it will attempt to identify the Confederacy as what will be labeled a “conservative” revolution. For the purpose of this paper, the term “conservative” will be used to denote an event that contains the nationalistic, expansionist, and religious elements of a right-wing revolution and the anti- modernist element of a counterrevolution. These criteria apply to the Confederacy and will therefore be used as the principal means by which the thesis is supported. Research reveal that in the years immediately preceding the war Southerners often spoke of creating a revolution that would free them from the bonds of Northern tyranny and preserve their culture.

Panel: “Revolutions Around the World: Mexico and Romania”

Alexander Allison

Title: “Plan de Ayala: Blueprint for the Mexican Revolution”

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Richard Weiner

Paper written for: Hist F346: Modern Mexico (Fall 2011)

Alexander Allison was born and educated in Fort Wayne, Indiana. A proud graduate of South Side High School, Alex enrolled at IPFW in 2009 and since then has devoted his studies towards both Spanish and history. In his free time, Alex enjoys reading fiction and particularly enjoys the works of Gabriel García Márquez. In July, Alex will travel to Valparaíso, Chile where he will study at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso. Upon the completion of his studies in Chile, Alex will return to IPFW where he intends to graduate with a B.A. in history.

Abstract

Few documents have played such an important role and have continuously influenced national politics in Mexico more so than the Plan de Ayala. On November 28, 1911 Emiliano Zapata read the plan that was written by Otilio Montaña Sánchez “while the Mexican flag was raised and a band played the National anthem.” While scholars continue to debate over whether or not the flag was actually raised or which of the eight conflicting stories of the Plan de Ayala’s origins is accurate, the significance of the Plan de Ayala is uncontested. Following Francisco Madero’s failure to fulfill the promises of the 1910 revolution the Plan de Ayala called for a seizure of all foreign owned lands and all properties that had been taken away from villagers during the reign of Porfirio Díaz, the expulsion of all Spaniards from Mexico, the confiscation of one-third of lands owned by *hacendados* friendly to the revolution and total confiscation of lands owned by *hacendados* opposed to the revolution. In order to demonstrate the purity of their cause, the Zapatistas redistributed all of the lands they occupied to the disenfranchised peasants. For seven years the Zapatistas followed the agenda of the Ayala plan with something close to a religious devotion, and since its cause was abandoned in 1918 the Ayala plan has been the beacon of hope and banner to follow for agrarian reform in Mexico. The Plan de Ayala was drafted in response to Francisco Madero’s betrayals to the principles of the revolution during the period of interim government and as President, and provided political legitimacy and structure to the Zapatista’s ongoing revolutionary activity.

James Rinehart

Title: “Revision of the Romanian Political Spectrum”

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Bernd Fischer

Paper written for: Hist J495: Senior Seminar: Balkan Dictators (Fall 2011)

James Rinehart is a senior in the Department of History at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne. He is scheduled to graduate in spring 2012. This is James’ first time speaking at the Undergraduate History Conference. His research interests are primarily focused in the political history of the Balkans. His future plans are to attend graduate school to study the history of the Balkans and Eastern Europe. Other hobbies of James are participating in athletics, performing music, and traveling

Abstract

Balkan state politics underwent a series of ideological shifts during the 20th century. At the end of WWI, nationalism increased in importance in several Fascist Balkan States during the interwar period. Romania, one of the more multi-national states in the Balkans, created a nationalist organization called the Iron Guard. Following WWII, Fascism was disbanded in Romania and Communism came to the forefront for Romanian Politics under the influence of the Soviet Union. This political transition is significant for the reason that on a traditional political spectrum, Fascism and Communism are considered polar opposing ideologies, yet several of the Balkan states, in particular, Romania, transitioned from one end of the spectrum to the next with what appeared to be ease. To make a political transition from one regime to the next is difficult, but to transition from one extreme to the next without civil war or mass killing demonstrated two things: Romania was in poor economic shape and willing to try anything to revive its economy, and secondly, two of the major political regimes during the Fascist and Communist eras were not as different as they claimed. In fact, both the Fascist dictator, Ion Antonescu and Communist dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu’s political systems shared many key components during their years in power. This easy transition from Fascism to Communism in Romania challenges the initial construction of the political spectrum and demands consideration for reconstruction. Therefore, studying the two Romanian political figures, Ion Antonescu and Nicolae Ceausescu, and their use of a dictatorial form of government, totalitarianism, and nationalism might suggest a movement for the reconstruction of the Romanian political spectrum from its original linear design into a new spherical construct.

Panel: “Internship Opportunities through the Department of History”

Dr. Christine Erickson coordinates and supervises the for-credit internships for History majors.

Douglas Sagstetter will be graduating in May with a history degree, international studies certificate, and political science minor. During his time at IPFW, Douglas has held two different internships. His first internship experience was at the Whitley County Historical Museum. He is currently a paid intern at ARCH, the historical preservation society in Fort Wayne. In the Spring 2012, Douglas was selected by IPFW to attend Indiana's State Preservation Conference, which was held in Whiting, Indiana. Douglas plans on acquiring a job in historical preservation and / or public history after graduation.

Faculty Updates

Dr. Christine Erickson is continuing to work on her book manuscript, *Fraternity on the Frontier: The Montana Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s*.

Dr. Bernd Fischer's latest book is a collection of German and American documents dealing with the end of the World War two in Albania called *Shqiperia, 1943-1945* (Tirana: Albanian Institute of International Studies Press, 2012).

Dr. Suzanne LaVere spent the 2011-2012 academic year on a A.W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship in Medieval Studies at the Medieval Institute of the University of Notre Dame.

Dr. Ann Livschiz continued work on her project on the memory of the Holocaust in Belorussia during her sabbatical in the Spring 2012. She presented a paper "Naming the 'Unknowns': Revision of the Great Patriotic War's Heroic Pantheon and Nationality Politics in Soviet Belorussia and Contemporary Belarus," at the Association for the Study of Nationalities Conference in Moscow in September 2011.

Dr. Jeffrey Malanson is continuing to revise his book manuscript, *Addressing America: Washington's Farewell and the Making of American Culture, Politics, and Diplomacy, 1796-1852*. Chapters on George Washington and James K. Polk recently appeared in the *Chronology of the U.S. Presidency* (ABC-CLIO, 2012), and one on George Washington's foreign policy will shortly appear in Blackwell's *Companion to George Washington* (Blackwell, 2012).

Dr. David Schuster is currently researching the cases of people who were committed against their wills to the Kalamazoo Asylum for the Insane during the 1860s and 1870s. In addition, he is developing a course on the history of American medicine, to be taught spring 2013. His book, *Neurasthenic Nation*, came out last fall with Rutgers University Press.

Dr. Richard Weiner publications this year include "Globalization, Past and Present: Is History Repeating Itself?" *World History Bulletin* (April 2012) and "Mexico in the American Imagination: Preliminary Observations on US Expansionist Ideas at the Onset of Empire," *História e Economia* 10:1 [forthcoming, August 2012].

Dr. David Parnell, Visiting Lecturer in Medieval History, has been offered a tenure track position in the Department of History at Missouri Western State University.

Student Awards 2012

Tanner Billingsley received the Sharon Alt Piepenbrink Award for his paper “Beyond Gender: Black Women amidst the Feminist Movement in the 1960s.”

The Sharon Alt Piepenbrink award is given for the best history paper written in the past year. The award was established in memory of an outstanding history graduate of the 1970s.

Stephen Shilling received the Judie and Ralph Violette History Scholarship.

The scholarship is awarded to a history major with a minimum GPA of 3.5 and who has completed at least 15 credit hours of course work in the Department of History. The scholarship is endowed by Judie Violette, Dean Emeritus of Helmke Library, and Ralph Violette, Professor Emeritus of the History Department.

Upcoming Events and Special Announcements

Preliminary Call for Papers for the
2013 5th Annual Undergraduate History Conference
If you wrote an excellent paper for your Spring 2012 course, it is never too early to submit a proposal for the next year’s Undergraduate Conference!
Contact Professor Ann Livschiz if you have any questions.

The Department of History will continue to sponsor the “Lunch with a Historian” series in 2012-2013. The speakers will be announced in the fall of 2012.

Did you enjoy today’s presentations? Would you like to see the full-length papers? Interested in learning about last years’ presentations? Information about the 2009-2011 Undergraduate Conferences is available through Helmke Library on Opus: Research and Creativity at IPFW (opus.ipfw.edu). Information on this year’s conference will be uploaded over the summer.

The **History Club** holds weekly discussions on historical topics throughout the semester. If you are interested in joining the club, please contact **Chelsea Keen**, Club President.

Conference Planning Committee

Barbara Blauvelt, Secretary, History Department
Dr. Ann Livschiz, Assistant Professor, History Department
Melissa Ringle

History Department Faculty

Dr. Bernd Fischer, Chair
Dr. Christine Erickson
Dr. Suzanne LaVere
Dr. Ann Livschiz
Dr. Jeffrey Malanson
Dr. David Schuster
Dr. Richard Weiner

**The Department of History would like to thank the following people
for their help and support:**

Cheryl Truesdell, Dean of Helmke Library
Dr. William McKinney, VCAA
Dr. Carl Drummond, Dean of Arts and Sciences
Printing Services Staff
Special Events Staff
Bernard Lohmuller, CATV
Scott Magers and his weekend team, CATV
Marcus Tulley and his team, Physical Plant
Latif Bichai and David Spaulding, AVTS
Susan Alderman, University Relations and Communications
Nancy Bremer and Laurel Alberson, Marketing and Communications