



Department of History

Fall 2022

# Newsletter

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## Letter from the Chair

*If you have news to share, please reach out to me at [Leilah.Danielson@nau.edu](mailto:Leilah.Danielson@nau.edu) or tweet us [@NAUHistoryDept](https://twitter.com/NAUHistoryDept)*

### Dr. Leilah Danielson

It has been a wonderful fall semester for the history department and NAU. For the first time in two years, the campus felt fully alive, with students, staff, and faculty filling our halls and classrooms. We had two fantastic new faculty members join our department, Dr. Lauren Lefty and Dr. Gregory Lella, who you will learn about in the newsletter. You will also learn about Marcus Macktima who joined us as a predoctoral fellow, allowing us to offer the Native American survey class for the first time in several years. The department runs much more smoothly now with the hire of a full-time program coordinator, Christine Fredericks, whose commitment to public education and administrative competence makes her a perfect fit for the history department.

I would like to highlight a few more activities and accomplishments from this dynamic semester. The history club has continued to thrive under exceptional student leadership and faculty mentorship. The department's Outstanding Senior – Melissa Valenzuela – was selected as

the College of Arts and Letters Outstanding Senior. We were also delighted to learn that one of our most esteemed alumni, Dr. Jennifer Denetdale, was honored with the Dwight Patterson Alumnus of the Year Award. We have continued to invite speakers for our History in the Headlines series and faculty have shared their research with each other in our revived research "brown bag" series. We have also made some important changes to our Graduate Program that will make it both more efficient and flexible, while retaining our core vision and strengths.

- Dr. Leilah Danielson



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### NAU History Alumnus Jennifer Nez Denetdale ('99) Wins Prestigious Award

The NAU Alumni Association awarded Dr. Jennifer Denetdale (Ph.D., History '99) the Dwight Patterson Alumnus of the Year Award at the Honored Alumni and Hall of Fame Ceremony on November 4, 2022. The first Diné to earn a Ph.D. in History, Denetdale is an internationally renowned scholar who has made unparalleled contributions to American Indigenous History and to Native American students and communities.

Denetdale grew up in on the Navajo Nation. Her father worked for the El Paso Natural Gas Company and the family of seven lived in company housing, first in Ganado and later in Tohatchi. Her parents were extremely dedicated to their children's education in English, a legacy of their experiences at the Stewart Indian School near Carson City, Nevada. With this support, Denetdale learned how to read quickly and by fourth grade had read every book in the school library. She graduated from high school in 1976 and went on to receive her BA in English from the University of New Mexico.

With her love of reading and writing, it seemed only natural to pursue an MA in English at NAU. There, Denetdale found a dedicated faculty who taught her how to read critically. Denetdale brought these skills to the history department, where she worked under the direction of Dr. Susan Deeds, now emeritus faculty. She remembers Deeds, along with Dr. Karen Powers, Dr. George Lubick, and Dr. John Leung with "fondness and respect." Setting a pattern for the future, Denetdale's example inspired the late Dr. Lomayumtewa Isshi of the Hopi Nation to join her in the history Ph.D. program. More Native students have followed in their footsteps, with Marius Begay, Shepherd Tsosie, Rob Estrada, Samuel Frank, Edgar Bernal-Sevilla, among others, receiving MA degrees in History. Dr. Denetdale has had a stellar career since

obtaining her Ph.D. She has authored numerous books and articles, including *Reclaiming Diné History: The Legacies of Navajo Chief Manuelito and Juanita* (2007), *The Navajo* (2008), and *The Long Walk: The Force Navajo Exile* (2008). Most recently, she co-authored the book, *Red Nation Rising: From Bordertown Violence to Native Liberation* (2021).

In addition to her outstanding contributions to the historical discipline, Dr. Denetdale has assumed a leadership role within academia and the Navajo Nation. She currently serves as Professor and Chair of the Department of American Studies at the University of New Mexico and as Chair of the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission. She is known far and wide as a generous mentor and supporter of Indigenous students, writers, scholars, artists, and activists. We are overjoyed to see her recognized with the Dwight Patterson Alumnus of the Year Award.

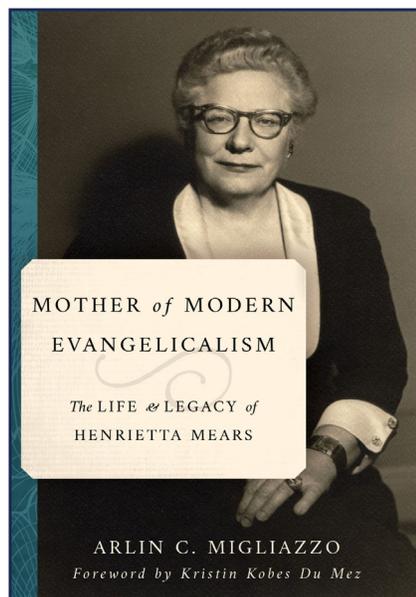


## Alumni Features

### Dr. Arlin C. Migliazzo ('75)

Dr. Arlin C. Migliazzo received his MA in 1975 and writes that "NAU was an important part of my intellectual journey." He received a Ph.D. from Washington State University in 1982 and then had a long and successful career as professor and administrator at Whitworth University in Spokane, Washington. His achievements include two Fulbright awards and a book entitled *To Make This Land Our Own: Community, Identity, and Cultural Adaptation in Purrysburg Township, South Carolina, 1732-1865* (2007), which received the 2013 National Award for Research and Preservation from the Society of Daughters of Colonial Wars. His most recent book *Mother of Modern Evangelicalism: The Life and Legacy of Henrietta Mears* (2020) was honored with a 2022 Book Award of Merit in History and Biography by the religious

publication *Christianity Today*. He and his wife have two children and three grandchildren.



### Xukang Zhang ('22)

NAU alumni ('22) Xukang Zhang is studying International and Comparative Education at Columbia University Teachers College. An international student from China, Zhang majored in History Education at NAU where he became interested in Intercultural Communication and Secondary Social Studies.



At Columbia Teachers College, Zhang expects to connect a multicultural curriculum to social studies learning. "Even though the past is archived, the aftermath can still have an impact on current events and our daily life. Learning history can help me understand the ongoing situation worldwide and make proper decisions based on analysis," Zhang said.

As for his undergraduate education at NAU, Zhang expressed gratitude for history professors like Dr. Linda Sargent Wood, Ms. Christi Carlson, and Dr. Derek Heng. "They helped me adapt to the learning environment, such as English academic writing and critical thinking. These academic skills benefit my academic experience," Zhang said. We want to thank Xukang Zhang for sharing his experiences with us, and we wish him the best of luck at Columbia Teachers College!

## Ryan Badertscher ('19)

NAU alumni ('19) Ryan Badertscher recently published an article entitled "Women in Arizona Aviation: A Brief History, with a Focus on the Phoenix/Mesa Area" in the *Journal of the American Aviation Historical Society*, Vol. 67, No. 2 (Summer 2022). The article is based upon research he conducted as an intern for the Mesa Historical Museum in 2020 and which led to the exhibit "Women in Aviation." There was so much information that did not make it into the exhibit that Badertscher decided to compile it into an article for publication.

Carrying-out his research on Arizona's female aviators research was a challenge due to the pandemic. "I was essentially limited to material that was available online...the state archive was closed due to COVID for most of that time, as was the Air Force archive at Luke Air Force Base," Badertscher said. Despite this obstacle,



Badertscher utilized digitized newspapers and *Sky Pioneering: Arizona in Aviation History* by Ruth M. Reinhold to guide the research that led to the exhibit and which eventually became the basis for his journal article.

Badertscher's internship with the Mesa Historical Museum led to his appointment as collections manager. He held this position at Mesa Historical Museum until September 2021, when he moved to Germany to pursue an MA in Global History at the Freie Universität Berlin where he is also studying UX/UI design and Web Development. "NAU definitely influenced this, as I really found how much I love historical research while I was a student...having done a semester abroad in southern Germany in 2018, that probably had a lot to do with my choosing Germany to study again," Badertscher said. We want to thank Ryan for sharing his recent endeavors and wish him all the best!



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## Give to the History Department:

[Donate to the History Department through the NAU Foundation!](#)

## Department Updates

### Letter from the Director of the History Education Program: Dr. Lauren Lefty

This fall I've had the immense privilege of embarking on my new role as Director of NAU's History Education Program. And what a wonderful start it's been! NAU began as a normal school in 1899 with the goal of training teachers for the territory's growing public education system. Since then, it's stayed true to that mission by preparing thousands of teachers for work across the state and nation. I'm honored to build on that tradition and help grow our program to meet the needs of Arizona's students today and into the future.

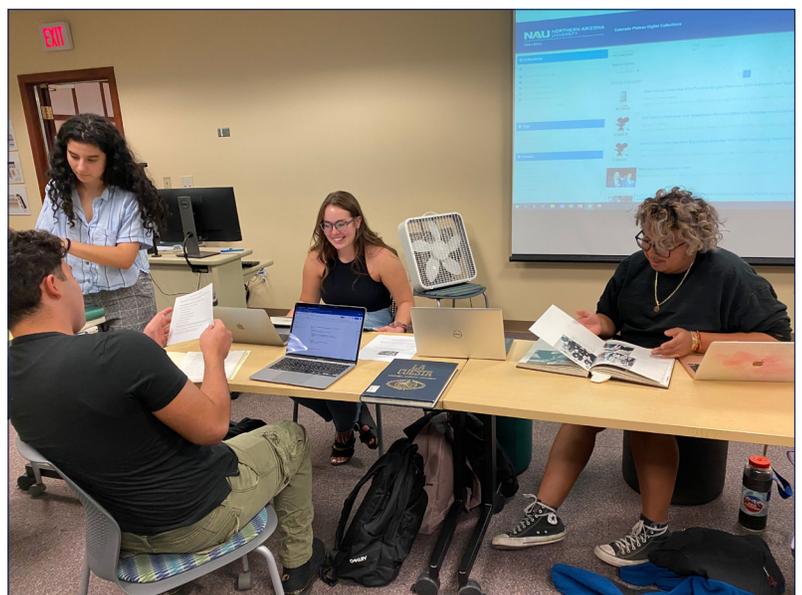
Supporting that work is an incredible history faculty and student body. I've been so impressed by the dedication of my colleagues to their teaching and research, and the commitment of our students to their work as teacher candidates. In our polarized moment when History classrooms have become culture wars battlegrounds, our candidates are demonstrating their resolve to teach the type of inquiry-driven and critical histories our secondary students deserve. That means incorporating a variety of

voices, especially the historically marginalized, and reflecting insights from recent historical and educational scholarship.

I've also been grateful for the work of Christi Carlson in building an excellent relationship with local schools. We've been hosting lunches with Social Studies educators at local middle and high schools, expressing our appreciation for their work with our students. We're happy to share that for the first time we're also able to offer our cooperating practicum teachers stipends for their invaluable mentorship.

Stay tuned for more updates from the BSEd program as we continue to grow and build. We'll be working to create more professional development opportunities, forge partnerships with local educators and colleagues across NAU, host relevant speakers, and bolster recruitment and retention efforts to support a diverse teacher pipeline. I'm thrilled to be here in Flagstaff and appreciate the warm welcome. Great to be a Lumberjack!

- Dr. Lauren Lefty



Dr. Lefty and her History Education Majors on a trip to Cline Library's Archives.

## NAU History Club

The NAU History Club had a successful semester. It welcomed many new members, and had a myriad of discussions and fun club meetings. Among the most memorable was the Open House hosted by the History Club and history department. Peers and professors joined together to discuss future classes for the spring 2023 semester and to connect with their teachers outside of the classroom. There was a high attendance, and we don't think it was just because of the free pizza!

The club had booths at two of the club fairs this semester, one of the booths being at the freshman letters event on the South fields. The club held two Jeopardy matches this semester with category topics like the history of video games, Asian history, Earth history, and much more. As for the future, the club is hoping to take field trips to museums in Northern Arizona.

History Club meets every Tuesday at 7 pm in the Liberal Arts Building Room 201. [Join the club discord](#) or follow us on Instagram [@NAUHistoryClub](#) for updates.



## “How Do I Bring More Black and Latinx History Into My Classroom?”

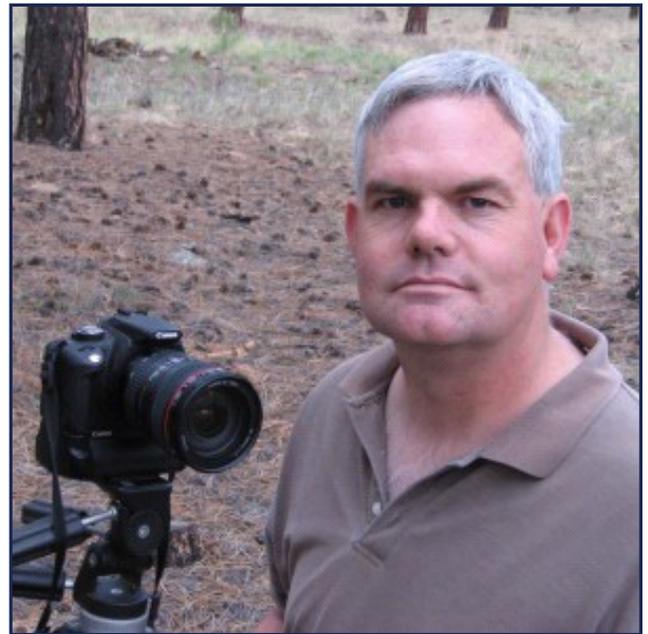
This fall, the NAU History/Social Studies program hosted an online viewing of the Freedom School Project's panel discussion on the topic of “How Do I Bring More Black and Latinx History Into My Classroom?” featuring Paul Ortiz, author of *An African American and Latinx History of the United States* and Rebeka Anne Cordova, from the All Y'all Social Justice Collective, a social justice collective of school teachers and others. Afterwards, NAU history professor Dr. Lauren Lefty moderated an inspiring discussion with students.



## Department Updates

### Letter from Director the Graduate Program and Public History: Dr. Michael Amundson

The graduate program passed several major changes through the department this fall including a plan to replace the comprehensive exams track with a professional portfolio that emphasizes the skills that history graduate students have mastered. As part of this, the HIS 597 Study for Comprehensive Exams class will be revamped to a Portfolio and Professional Development class. Stay tuned for more details...we hope to have this in the catalog and available to students starting in Fall 2023.



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# History

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**Contact Graduate Director:**  
Michael.Amundson@nau.edu

**Learn More:**  
<https://nau.edu/history-department/graduate-degrees/>

The second change will affect our 4+1 accelerated program where the department has hopefully made this program easier for undergraduates to enter as juniors. Please contact me at [Michael.Amundson@nau.edu](mailto:Michael.Amundson@nau.edu) for details about both of these changes.

Public History would like to congratulate Melissa Valenzuela who is the Outstanding Graduating Senior for the College of Arts and Letters in December. Melissa not only completed the Public History course as a junior but won a NASA grant to work on a Public History internship at Lowell Observatory Archives and then was hired there as well.

Finally, the graduate program congratulates Edgar Bernal Sevilla who successfully defended his comprehensive exams and graduates in December. Edgar has been teaching and coaching in a Tucson Middle School the past two years so congratulations to Edgar for finishing up his M.A.!

- Dr. Michael Amundson

## New Academic Program Coordinator: Christine Fredericks

The history department is thrilled to have Christine Fredericks as our new full-time Academic Program Coordinator. Ms. Fredericks grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area and remembers when BART was built. She earned her AA in accounting and then went on to complete her BA in Secondary English Education at ASU. She taught from 1990 through 2006,

when she went into the corporate world where she worked for an insurance company as an insurance adjuster for the next 16 years. In 2012, she ran and was elected to the FUSD School Board and is currently serving her third term. She recently decided, in her words, "that it was time to get back to an academic setting." She retired from the insurance business "set my sights on NAU and am very thankful to have landed here!"

In addition to her busy work schedule and civic life, Ms. Fredericks has four children, two of whom live in Flagstaff, one lives in Page and another lives in Ohio but is hoping to head back West once she completes her nursing degree. Between the four of them, she has five adorable grandchildren ranging in age from two to nine. She and her wife also have two dogs plus her daughter's dog and two birds filling their home.

Stop by and introduce yourself to Ms. Fredericks – you'll be glad you did!



## History in the Headlines

### Gun Ownership and Political Partisanship in America: Dr. Cari Babitzke

Our history in the headlines speaker this fall was Dr. Cari Babitzke of Boston University who spoke on the history of the National Rifle Association and political partisanship in recent U.S. history. Dr. Babitzke's talk was very well attended with approximately 35 viewers on Zoom and 40 in person. Her presentation showed how and why the NRA shifted from being primarily a "hobby" organization of marksmen and hunters to a "lobby" focused on preventing the passage of gun control legislation. She emphasized that it was by no

means inevitable that the organization made this shift and that the consequences have been an alliance between the NRA and the Republican Party and a political identity that links gun ownership with being "American." A lively discussion followed with questions about the relationship between the NRA and the military, and links between NRA membership and ideas about masculinity and whiteness.

## Faculty Highlights

### Welcoming New History Faculty

**Dr. Lauren A. Lefty** joined the history department as Assistant Professor and Director of History/Social Studies Education. Dr. Lefty received her Ph.D. from New York University's Steinhardt School of Education, Culture, and Human Development in 2020. Her dissertation, entitled "*Seize the Schools, Que Viva Puerto Rico Libre: Cold War Education Politics in New York and San Juan, 1948-1975*", focuses on the history of education and its intersection with U.S. empire in Puerto Rico. She has served as an ACLS Leading Edge Fellow with the Children's Defense Fund's Freedom School's Program, which recently won a grant from the NEH for a K-12 Teacher Institute on "*Centering Youth Agency in the Civil Rights Movement*." She is the author of a co-edited volume (with James W. Fraser), *Teaching the World's Teachers* (Johns Hopkins, 2020) and co-author (with James W. Fraser) of *Teaching Teachers: Changing Paths and Enduring Debates* (Johns Hopkins, 2018). We are thrilled to have such a stellar scholar leading our history education program!



**Dr. Gregory S. Lella** joined the history department as Assistant Teaching Professor of U.S. History. Dr. Lella received his Ph.D. from Stony Brook University in August 2022. His dissertation, entitled "*Fear in the Desert: Police Violence, Deportation, and Resistance in the Arizona Borderlands, 1964 to the Present*," explores the history of police violence, including the Border Patrol, in twentieth-century Arizona. His research complements department strengths in Western, Latine, and Indigenous History. He will teach U.S. history survey courses, HIS 396: Chicano History, and a new course on Crime and Punishment in U.S. History. We are very excited to have him join our faculty!



## History Predoctoral Fellow: Marcus C. Macktima

Marcus C. Macktima joined the history department as a predoctoral fellow. Mr. Macktima is an award-winning doctoral candidate at the University of Oklahoma completing a dissertation entitled “Issues of Forced Political Identities: The San Carlos Apache Peoples.” A member of the San Carlos Apache Nation, Mr. Macktima has taught Native American and Apache history at San Carlos Apache College. Here at NAU, he is teaching the Native American history survey, while writing the last chapters of his dissertation. We are very pleased to have him in our department!



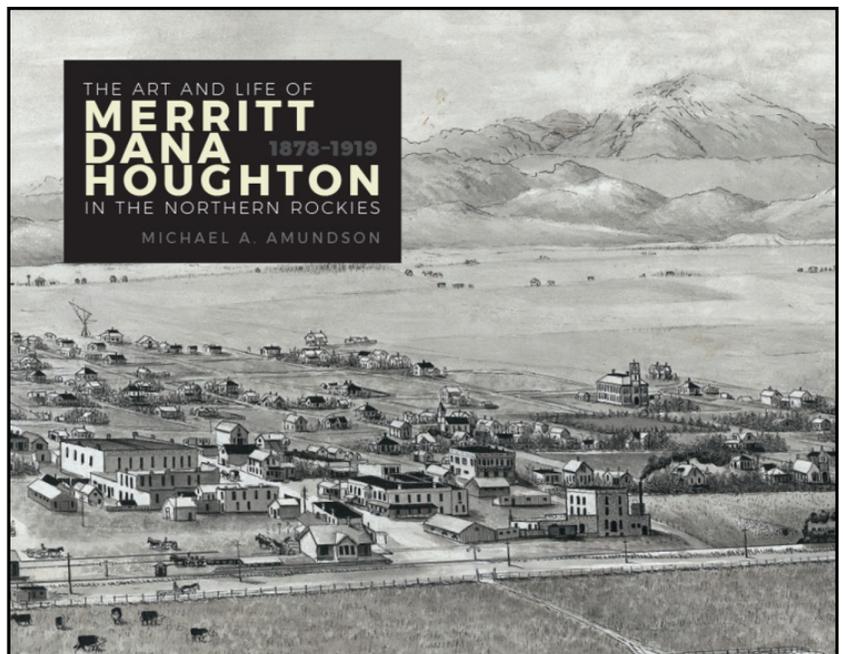
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## ***The Art and Life of Merritt Dana Houghton in the Northern Rockies 2022* by Dr. Michael Amundson**

NAU history professor Michael Amundson recently published a new book on pen-and-ink artists Merritt Dana Houghton who made over 200 bird’s-eye sketches of towns, ranches, mines, businesses, historical sites, and animals in Wyoming, Colorado, Montana Idaho, and Washington state between 1891 and 1915.

Houghton’s work depicts the infrastructure of the new settler society that was remaking the West in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, and Amundson demonstrates how Houghton’s vision of the American West remains active today.

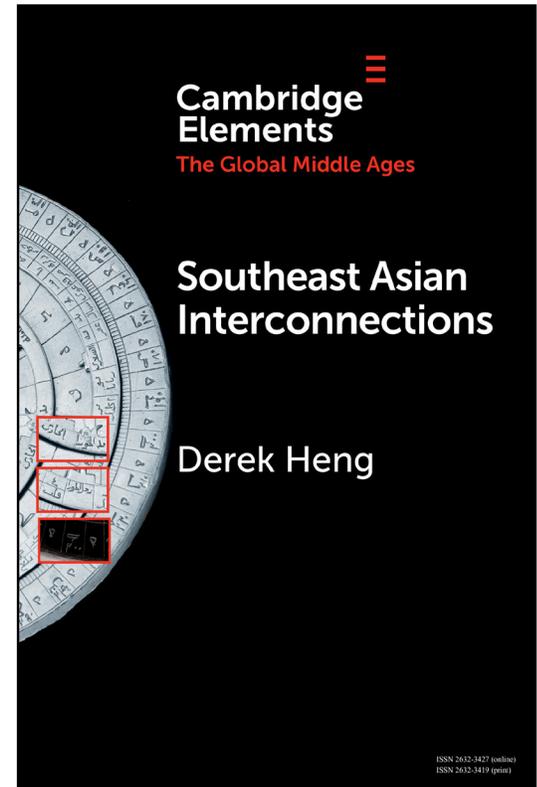
Amundson’s lavishly illustrated biography details Houghton’s life and work from his birth in Michigan in 1846 to his death in 1919 in Spokane through extensive genealogical records, newspaper accounts, and his illustrations—including historic ranches and bird’s-eye views of Fort Collins, Colorado; Dillon, Montana; and Spokane, Washington and the only known illustrations of long-lost places like Pearl, Colorado, and Rambler, Wyoming. Also included is a reproduction of a four-foot-by-eight-foot view of Sheridan, Wyoming and a sixty-image sample portfolio of his best-preserved illustrations organized by type.



## Faculty Highlights

### ***Southeast Asian Interconnections 2023* by Dr. Derek Heng**

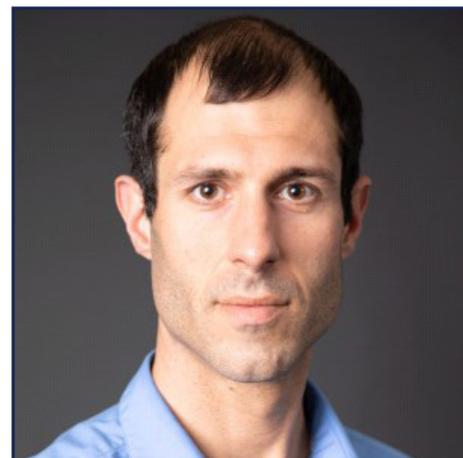
Part of Cambridge University Press's "Elements in the Global Middle Ages" series, Heng's book shows that, since the late first millennium CE, Maritime Southeast Asia has been an interconnected zone, with its societies and states maintaining economic and diplomatic relations with both China and Japan on the east, and the Indian Sub-Continent and Middle East on the west. This global connectedness was facilitated by merchant and shipping networks that originated from within and outside Southeast Asia, resulting in a trans-regional economy developing by the early second millennium CE. Sojourning populations began to appear in Maritime Southeast Asia, culminating in records of Chinese and Indian settlers in such places as Sumatra, Malay Peninsula and the Gulf of Siam by the mid-first millennium CE. At the same time, information of products that were harvested in Southeast Asia began to be appropriated by pockets of society in China, the India and the Middle East, resulting in the production of new knowledge and usages for these products in these markets.



### ***The Peoples of Anatolia 2022* by Dr. Jeremy LaBuff**

NAU history professor Jeremy LaBuff recently published a book that reviews the scholarship on the peoples of Anatolia to show that it often takes for granted the existence and importance of regional ethnic communities on the peninsula when investigating issues of identity, ethnic origins, and cultural assimilation (especially Hellenization). LaBuff argues that such assumptions lead to problematic conclusions that ignore or poorly apply recent theoretical work on ethnicity and current critiques of the assimilation model. A critical consideration of this work leads to an appreciation for the somewhat limited, and at times non-existent, role of regional ethnicity to the experiences of the inhabitants and communities of Anatolia,

who mainly promoted more local forms of belonging in the face of the attempted orderings of ethnographic and imperial discourses.



## Undergraduate Features

### College of Arts and Letters Outstanding Senior: Melissa Valenzuela

We are pleased to announce that Melissa Valenzuela is the history department's Outstanding Senior for fall 2022. She is also the College of Arts and Letters' Outstanding Senior and Standard Bearer. Melissa is graduating with a 4.0 GPA and plans to attend graduate school in public history and become a museum curator.

Valenzuela grew up in Tucson, Arizona where she spent much of her childhood sheltering from the heat in area museums and libraries. Melissa loved the direct experience of art and history and knew from a young age that she wanted to study history.

She served as president of her high school's history club and knew that she would major in history when she went to college. She selected NAU because she loved the small class sizes and Flagstaff's four seasons.

Melissa found a supportive community and faculty in NAU's history department. Her favorite classes were those on more specialized topics. She described Dr. Elizabeth Schwall's Cuban Revolution class as "amazing" and connected especially with the topics covered in Dr. Eric Meeks' U.S.-Mexico Borderlands class, having grown up close to the border.

Melissa discovered our public history program when she took a class with Dr. Michael Amundson who recruited her into his public history course. Only a sophomore at the time, Melissa recalls being intimidated by a class of seniors and graduate students, but she excelled in the course. Her contribution to the Intermountain Histories Project focused on Historic Theaters in the Intermountain West, which she argued served as community centers and sites for the contestation and expansion of citizenship rights.

[Check out the digital tour Melissa created entitled Let's Go to the Movies: Historic Theaters in the West.](#)

In spring 2021, Melissa won a NASA research grant to design a [virtual exhibit about Pluto at Lowell Observatory](#). Working with the archivist Lauren Amundson, she utilized a variety of artifacts to tell the story of Pluto's discovery and reception.

Lauren Amundson was so impressed by Melissa's incredible work ethic, creativity, and digital skills that she hired her for a part-time position in digital history, where she has worked on a variety of projects. Melissa will continue this work full-time after she graduates and will apply to graduate school the following year.

It has been a tremendous privilege to have Melissa in our classes and we wish her the very best in the future!



## Undergraduate Features

### Student Archivist at Cline Library: Liv Hall

With help from an NEH grant, Cline Library was able to invest in a RetroScan film digitization machine, which makes the digitization process possible. The grant has also allowed Cline Special Collections and Archives to hire Olivia “Liv” Hall, a freshman Secondary History Education major. As the Student Archivist, her job is to digitize moving pictures using the RetroScan. “It definitely has benefited me a lot, because I want to be a history teacher. And so just...working in the archives, and seeing...historical documents, manuscripts, photos, films...it was very eye opening...it feels like I’m being a historian right now... this history does belong to the world.”



Cline Library is home to over 700 moving pictures from the early 20th century to the present. Special Collections and Archives (SCA) digitizes 8mm and 16mm film, and VHS tapes from their own collection and from the Hopi Tribe, the Hualapai Tribe, and Diné College on the Navajo Nation. The films being digitized are all at-risk, fragile, obsolete, or near-obsolete, which means that the content may be lost if they are not digitized. Over 115,000 digitized items, including photos, documents, maps, films, and audio recordings, are available online for free public access. Roughly 35,000 people visit the site annually. Everyone from members of the Native American community, publishers, authors, scholars, the general public, and students have all benefited from this accessible resource.



To see some of the film and photographs digitized by Cline Library Special Collections and Archives, visit the [Special Collections webpage](#).

## History in Glasgow, Scotland: Emma Burkhart

History senior Emma Burkhart is currently having a wonderful time studying abroad at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland. She loves Glasgow because it's walkable and has easy transportation access to the places she has been learning about in her classes. She has been to multiple museums and historic locations, including Stirling Castle and Edinburgh (see picture), where she observed Queen Elizabeth II's funeral procession into St. Giles' Cathedral, an experience that she describes as "both touching and surreal."

Emma attributes much of her success at the University of Strathclyde to the training she received by her history professors at NAU. Close mentorship of historical writing and primary source analysis prepared her for the structure of learning in the United Kingdom. As she explains, "There are only about three assignments per course in the UK, so having the resources and skill to write and research professionally has been very important, and I feel completely confident with [what] I learned at NAU to do well in my classes."

Emma's experiences learning abroad have inspired her to pursue an MA in public history. "I want to learn more about how to engage the public with history in new and exciting ways... [and I] feel inspired to incorporate the same kind of accessibility to history as I've experienced in the United Kingdom to my future work in public history." Emma's story is an inspiring one and we hope other NAU history students follow her example and take advantage of the exciting opportunities through the Center for International Education.



## Graduate Features

### Park Ranger at Walnut Canyon: Jenny John

The National Park Service recently hired NAU history graduate student Jenny John as a fee technician and interpreter at Walnut Canyon National Monument. Jenny joined the MA program in fall 2021 with public history as her career goal. As part of her program of study, she served as a summer intern over the summer of 2022 and just loved it. "I like the engagement with the public. At Walnut Canyon, you can tell when it clicks for visitors. It's really fun." When her internship came to an end, the Park Service hired her for a special project to develop a one-hour program on the coatimundi, an animal in the raccoon family unique to Arizona. Soon thereafter, they hired her full-time. Balancing graduate school and work has presented some challenges, but Jenny says it's worth it. "It's been my dream job to be a park ranger." Originally, she had hoped to work at a larger park such as Yellowstone, "but the community at Flagstaff Monument Parks is fantastic and you



can't beat it." We look forward to many years of collaboration with Jenny and her colleagues.

Jenny was on hand when Dr. Michael Amundson took his public history students for a tour of Walnut Canyon this fall. When asked how often she sighted a coatimundi, Jenny replied "never" and then one ran right past them. The moment is captured in the picture above.

## Shoutouts

### Congratulations Fall 2022 Graduates!

#### BA/BS/BSEd

- Samuel Boggs
- Brandon Cahoe
- Geron Como
- Sabrina Dominguez
- Katherine Eason
- Ashley Hostetler
- Carter Mericle
- Anastasia Mikelson
- Marie Olson
- Ryan Parsons

- Emily Roth
- Aime Valenzuela
- Erik Vargas
- Alexandria Wells
- Jacob Wiles
- Daniella Zamora

#### MA

- Edgar Bernal Sevilla

### Thank You Student Workers!

- Priscilla Imperial
- Kabrin Webb

- Bobbie Evans