



THE HISTORIAN

FALL 2025

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

As we wrap up another semester, I want to take a moment to reflect on the many accomplishments and exciting developments within our department.

First and foremost, we are thrilled to welcome two new faculty members to the Department of History! **Dr. Jennifer Harbour** joined us this fall from **Black Studies**. While **Dr. Harbour** continues to teach courses on African American history, we are also excited for new history courses she's developing, including a History of Medicine course she will launch next semester. We are also very excited to welcome **Dr. Brynne Long** to our faculty. **Dr. Long** brings expertise in military history and an enthusiasm that has enriched our program, expanded our network of community partners, and inspired our students. In her first month at UNO, **Dr. Long** had already begun to plan a week's-long interdisciplinary program to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the



History Department Chair, Dr. Danielle Battisti (center)

Declaration of Independence (see pp. 5 & 8 for details). Please join me in extending a warm welcome to both **Drs. Harbour and Long!**

This past summer, we saw a cohort of twelve OPS teachers join a special experiential learning curriculum within the **MA in History & Government program** developed in partnership with our colleagues in **Political Science**. Running through Summer 2027, the program helps teachers develop classroom assignments that incorporate local, regional, and national sites of public

history, as well as real-world governance into their classrooms.

As usual, you will see these pages filled with updates on the hard-work and impressive accomplishments of our faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students. Students have been busy with local internships, grant competitions, research trips, and so much more.

While we've all earned a nice long rest as we break for the year, we're excited for what's ahead and hope to see you at our upcoming events!

GRADUATE LUNCH & LEARNS

This fall, graduate students had the opportunity to learn from leading voices in the field during a series of seminars held in September, October, and November. The sessions featured historian and author **Dr. Alessandra La Rocca Link**, UNO's Speech Center Director **Dr. William Cooney**, and **Claire Du Laney Dunker**, Associate Professor in UNO Archives & Special Collections.

From navigating professional publishing and delivering impactful conference presentations to honing listening and writing skills, these events equipped our graduate students with valuable tools for academic and professional success.

CONGRATULATIONS SUMMER AND FALL 2025 GRADUATES

Undergraduate

Xavier Bradley-Rael BA
Sean Collard BS
Brayden Kimball BA
Megan McDanel BA
Daniel Schuncke BA
Christopher Weaver BS

Graduate

Ellen Albright MA
Shad Beam HISTORY CERTIFICATE
Patrick Flanigan HISTORY CERTIFICATE
Amber Green-Meiners MA
Paul Jensen MA
Darcy Meinke HISTORY CERTIFICATE
Dennis Rinderknecht MA



FEATURED GRADUATE STUDENT - MD ROBIUL ALAM RONI

This past summer, graduate student and teaching assistant, **Md Robiul Alam Roni** conducted fieldwork and archival research in New York City as part of the **Sam and Frances Fried Holocaust and Genocide Academy Graduate Research Fellowship**. His work supports his M.A. Portfolio Project, "Enduring Trauma: Gendered Violence, Statelessness, and the Historical Persecution of Rohingya Women."

During his trip, **Roni** completed extensive archival research at Columbia University's Center for South Asian Studies and Columbia University Library, where he worked under the guidance of Dr. Manan Ahmed, a leading historian of South Asia. He gathered archival documents, photographs, memoirs, and historical materials to examine the colonial and post-colonial roots of Rohingya persecution. His research continued at the New York Public Library, where he accessed rare press materials, refugee testimonies, and UN publications. Additionally, Roni met with Dr. Mehnaz Afridi, a genocide scholar at Manhattan University, to gain insights and recommendations for his project.

A significant aspect of the trip involved connecting with members of the Rohingya refugee community in Brooklyn and Queens. **Roni** met individually with five Rohingya refugees, who generously shared their stories of displacement, resilience, and survival. These conversations provided invaluable perspectives on trauma, community fragmentation, and the ongoing struggle for recognition faced by Rohingya people in the diaspora. **Roni** plans to apply to Ph.D. programs in Genocide Studies and related fields this semester.

"I am grateful to the History Department and the Sam and Frances Fried Holocaust and Genocide Academy for their support and encouragement." - Roni



GRACA RECIPIENTS - MASON HARTWELL AND CASSANDRA MENDOZA

Graduate Research and Creative Activity (GRACA) grants, funded by UNO's Office of Research and Creative Activity, provide vital support for graduate student research. This fall, we're proud to announce that our department has several GRACA recipients: **Mason Hartwell** (left), **Cassandra Mendoza** (right), and **Sean Nish**.

Mason's GRACA project explores the human geography

and environmental history of the Platte River. This waterway has shaped not only Nebraska's past but has impacted the nation, as well.

Mason's research will emphasize the river's significance to Nebraska's environment and its people, illustrating the ways in which these two elements intersect.

Cassandra's GRACA project focuses on developing a college-level course exploring

the six major phases of the United States' policy shifts toward Native Americans: coexistence, the "Indian Wars," removal, assimilation, termination and relocation, and self-determination. The course will be built on Canvas with the long-term goal of teaching it.

Cassandra explains that creating this course is not only an opportunity to educate others but also a chance to deepen her own understanding of this critical topic.

Congratulations Mason and Cassandra!

FEATURED ALUMNUS - JAMES HULSTEIN (BA 2007, MA 2014)

2025 was a memorable year for **James Hulstein**. **James** was named **Nebraska History Teacher of the Year** by the **Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History** and honored as Faculty of the Year by Nebraska Indian Community College. Reflecting on these accolades, he shared that he is honored by the affirmation of his work. Since 2008, **James** has taught history and social sciences at Bancroft-Rosalie High School, and has also served as an adjunct professor at Northeast Community College and Nebraska Indian Community College.

At Bancroft-Rosalie Community Schools, **James** developed curriculum focused on local history and Native American history. He also helped launch an innovative dual-degree program, enabling students to graduate with both a high school diploma and an associate degree—a testament to his commitment to educational access and excellence.

James's love for history began early, sparked by biographies and history books. When he arrived at UNO, he found a History Department that was "not only academically stimulating but also incredibly welcoming." His undergraduate experience inspired him to pursue a master's degree in history at UNO, where courses like Dr. Martina Saltamacchia's historiography seminar challenged him to think critically about sources and the craft of history. **James** credits his UNO professors with showing him history is not a narrow discipline



and credits them with "making me into the educator I am today." James was an active member of **Phi Alpha Theta** and the **History Club** and attended **R.D. Winchell Lectures**. He encourages current students to get involved saying:

"These experiences not only enrich your education but also help you build connections and perspectives that will stay with you long after graduation."

DR. MARK CELINSKAK - BOOK LAUNCH, NEW YORK CITY

On November 9, **Dr. Mark Celinscak** (right) and Mehnaz Afridi (center), co-editors of ***Global Approaches to the Holocaust***, joined Dr. Laura B. Cohen (left), Executive Director of the Harriet and Kenneth Kupferberg Holocaust Center at Queensborough Community College (CUNY), for an insightful discussion about their newly published book. The event took place at the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust in Battery Park City, Manhattan, New York City. This hybrid launch welcomed both in-person and virtual audiences, drawing more than 150 participants. You can watch the full conversation [on YouTube](#).



EMERITUS

Dr. Oliver Pollak

This summer, Emeritus faculty member Dr. Oliver Pollak had an article featured The Book Club of California's Quarterly Newsletter (Summer 2025, Volume XC, Number 3). His piece, titled "Collector Chronicles: Two Sisters – My Aunt and Mother – Rescue Books from Germany in 1939," recounts the courageous efforts of his aunt and mother, who endured Kristallnacht (November 9–10, 1938). Among the treasured volumes they saved was the classic children's book *Max und Moritz: Eine Bubengeschichte in Sieben Streichen* by Wilhelm Busch.

CONFERENCES & PUBLIC TALKS

Dr. Danielle Battisti

Presented from her new book in a webinar hosted by the Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, in October. The webinar featured research from [Hidden Histories](#).

Dr. Jennifer Harbour

As part of a roundtable *Teaching American History in 2025*, at the BrANCH Annual Conference in Cardiff, Wales, Dr. Harbour discussed "Teaching Good History in the Anti-DEA Age: Some Suggestions for avoiding Powerless Pedagogy." The roundtable was sponsored by the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture.

Dr. Brynne Long

Dr. Long presented her research "Transformations of Prisoner Administration" at the Omohundro Institute's conference *For 2026: Wartime Transformations* at the William & Mary School of Education in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Dr. Martina Saltamacchia

Conference presentation: "Faith in Practice: Trade and Devotion in the Life of the Merchant Carelli," Leeds International Medieval Congress, Leeds, UK (July 7, 2025).

Conference presentation: "Training Minds, Not Machine Users: Critical Pedagogy Meets Generative AI," H-Net Teaching Conference, online. (August, 20 2025).

Invited lecture: "They Dwelled in Shacks & Built Cathedrals: Stories of People Who Built the Duomo of Milan," University of Mary, Bismark, ND (October 31, 2025)



Dr. Brynne Long joined the department this fall as a full-time instructor.

DR. BRYNNE LONG - WELCOME

We're thrilled to introduce **Dr. Brynne Long**, who joined us this fall from the University of Delaware. Dr. Long served as the 2024–2025 Charles Young Fellow at the U.S. Army Center of Military History and earned her Ph.D. from the University of Delaware. Her research offers a fresh perspective on the American Revolutionary War by reexamining the experiences of British-allied captives.

Dr. Long has jumped right in to the UNO community. In October, she participated in Nebraska Public Media's kickoff for America's 250th birthday celebrations at the Stuhr Museum. The event featured a sneak peek of Ken Burns's upcoming documentary *The American Revolution*, followed by a discussion with **Dr. Long**. She also served as a commentator at the Chuck Hagel Symposium.

Dr. Long is keeping busy this month spearheading [the Richard Dean Winchell Lecture](#), the flagship event of a week-long program commemorating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The lecture on April 10th features renowned historians Annette Gordon-Reed and Peter Onuf presenting "*The Cause of All Mankind*." Read more about the event on page 8. Please join us in giving a warm welcome to **Dr. Brynne Long**!

Dr. Long will teach both History of Strategy and The Revolutionary Era this spring.



DR. MARTINA SALTAMACCHIA - OUTSTANDING GRADUATE MENTOR AWARD

At the University faculty awards ceremony this fall, **Dr. Martina Saltamacchia** received the 2025 **Outstanding Graduate Mentor Award**, presented by the Office of Graduate Studies. This honor

recognizes her unwavering commitment to graduate student mentorship, excellence in teaching, and innovative leadership in program development. [Read more about her](#) support of graduate students and her influential contributions to the graduate program.

Pictured Left to Right: UNO Chancellor **Dr. Joanne Li**, Dean for Graduate Studies **Dr. Juan Casas**, History Department Graduate Program Chair **Dr. Martina Saltamacchia**, Dean for College of Arts and Sciences **Dr. Melanie Bloom**, and Senior Vice Chancellor **Dr. Phil He**.

FEATURED PART-TIME FACULTY - ERIN KELLEHER

This fall, we were delighted to welcome **Erin Kelleher** to the department. **Erin** is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Texas at Austin, where her research explores the transimperial history of education in Tunisia during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Her work pays particular attention to enduring Ottoman sociocultural influences during the French Protectorate era.

At UNO, **Erin** taught a course on the French Empire during the fall semester and will teach World History in the spring. In 2023–2024, she was a fellow at the Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA) in Meknes, Morocco, and was a fellow at the American Institute for Maghrib Studies (AIMS) Fellow in Tunis, Tunisia.



We are excited to have Erin bring her global perspective and expertise to our students and community.

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN DUAL ENROLLMENT TEACHING

We are proud to recognize two of our outstanding Dual Enrollment teachers who were recently honored for their dedication to excellence in teaching. UNO's Dual Enrollment Program presented **Matthew Moore and Jillian Roger** with the **Excellence in Teaching Award**.

Matthew Moore

Currently pursuing his MA in History at UNO, **Matthew** was drawn to the program because of its strong partnership with Omaha Public Schools. "I'm always looking to expand my historical knowledge, so it just made sense to work within a program known for its credibility and opportunities in history," he shared. Inspired by his former high school teacher, Mr. Deardoff, and supported by his administration, **Matthew** has created a classroom environment that is both fun and engaging. One of his most popular classroom activities, history-themed "escape rooms," encourage students to collaborate, analyze historical evidence, and problem-solve together to advance through each stage. Believing that students should be the "drivers" of their own learning, **Matthew** strives to make history approachable and relevant.

Receiving this award has strengthened his commitment to innovative instruction: "It has motivated me to keep exploring creative ways to engage students and inspire their learning." Congratulations, **Matthew**, on this well-deserved honor!



Matthew Moore teaches Social Studies at Westview High School and is head coach of boys cross country and boys track and field.

"UNO truly understands the realities of teaching at the secondary level and supports educators in bringing advanced historical thinking into their classrooms." - Matthew Moore

Jillian Roger

One of our outstanding MA graduates, **Jillian Roger**, teaches History and Dual Enrollment courses at Marian High School.

"I have always had a passion for history, and UNO was the right fit for me to complete my MA," **Jillian** shares. "My thesis was the perfect marriage of my love for history and community."

Jillian brings that same enthusiasm for local history into her classroom, engaging students through Socratic seminars and hands-on analysis of historical sources. Recently, her students explored Barbara Welter's "Cult of True Womanhood" (1966) and compared its themes to modern expectations of women—a meaningful discussion in an all-girls setting.

She credits the UNO History Department faculty for equipping her to inspire the next generation of historians. Her students clearly agree: they nominated her for the Excellence in Teaching Award. **Jillian** says the recognition is both humbling and motivating: "The students are the most important reason why I come to school every day, and receiving this recognition tells me that I'm doing something right."

Congratulations to **Jillian** for her well-deserved honor and for continuing to make history come alive for her students!



UPCOMING EVENTS - RICHARD DEAN WINCHELL LECTURE

This year's **Richard Dean Winchell Lecture** will feature Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Dr. Annette Gordon-Reed (Harvard University), fresh off her involvement in Ken Burns's latest series *The American Revolution*, and renowned Jefferson scholar Dr. Peter Onuf (University of Virginia).

The lecture will take place **Friday, April 10, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.** at UNO's Thompson Alumni Center.

Their remarks will mark the flagship event of *"The Cause of All Mankind": A Celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence*, a multi-day program co-hosted by **UNO's History and Political Science Departments**. Dr. Gordon-Reed and Dr. Onuf will discuss their forthcoming publications—one exploring Jefferson's complex legacy on race, and the other examining Jefferson's vision of grassroots democracy. Their remarks will be followed by a short Q&A session.

Don't miss this exciting opportunity! Our **free, public event** delivers rich insights for everyone—from history buffs to students to seasoned professionals.
Register today!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Department Awards Ceremony

- ▶ April 23, 2026
- ▶ 5:00PM - 6:30PM
- ▶ Community Engagement Center
- ▶ Room 230
- ▶ **Free Parking**

Each spring, we come together to honor our students who have earned scholarships and awards. This special event is a chance to enjoy food and connect with students, their families and friends, and faculty.

Department of History Awards and Scholarships:

- ▶ George B. Lake Memorial Prize
- ▶ Frederick W. Adrian Award
- ▶ A.V. Sorensen Award
- ▶ Virginia Dare Shuflata Award
- ▶ Sam Fried Memorial Prize (Fried Academy)
- ▶ Frances Fried Award (Fried Academy)
- ▶ Jerold Simmons Scholarship
- ▶ Dunning Scholarship
- ▶ Jo Ann Carrigan Scholarship
- ▶ Shuflata Master's Fellowship



The Winchell Lecture will be held at UNO's Thompson Alumni Center on Friday, April 10, 2026 at 6:00PM.

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