Announcing the 2022 Winners of the Undergraduate Prize in Global Medieval and Renaissance Studies

There were two winners of the Undergraduate Prize in Global Medieval and Renaissance Studies this year.

Penn Press congratulates Vito Acosta, a member of the Class of 2022 majoring in East Asian Languages & Civilizations, who won the prize for his paper titled *Continuities in Inner Asian Legitimation*, a discussion of the thirteenth-century *Secret History of the Mongols*.

Penn Press congratulates Quinn Gruber, a member of the Class of 2022 majoring in English and Italian Studies, who won the prize for their paper titled *Crestomazia dei poeti italiani del Cinquecento*, an interpretation of the UPenn Ms. Codex 279, containing a collection of sixteenth century sonnets and poems.

The prize carries an award of $200 worth of free books from Penn Press and appears on the student’s academic transcript and is published in the commencement booklet.

The prize is awarded by the undergraduate interdisciplinary Program in Global Medieval and Renaissance Studies (GMRS), which fosters the study of Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa, and even the New World, from Late Antiquity to 1700. Penn Press Faculty Editorial Board member Eva Del Soldato serves as the liaison between the GMRS program and the Press and served on the jury of faculty and graduate students that selected the winning papers.

Penn Press Books Recognized for Excellence

*The Corruptor of Boys* by Dyan Elliott has won the *Otto Gründler Book Prize*, granted by the Medieval Institute.

*Politics of Temporalization* by Nadia R. Altschul has won the “*La corónica*” Book Award, granted by the Medieval Institute.

*The Apache Diaspora* by Paul Conrad has won the *Gaspar Pérez de Villagra* award, granted by the Historical Society of New Mexico.

*Japanese American Incarceration* by Stephanie Hinnershitz has won the *Philip Taft Labor History Book Award*, granted by the Cornell ILR School.

*I've Been Here All the While* by Alaina Roberts has won the *Stubbendieck Great Plains Distinguished Book Prize*, granted by the Center for Great Plains Studies at the University of Nebraska.
Pride Month: Guest Essay by Clayton Howard

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) Pride Month is currently celebrated each year in the month of June to honor the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in Manhattan. In observance of LGBTQ Pride Month, Penn Press is thrilled to share the following essay from Clayton Howard, author of *The Closet and the Cul-de-Sac: The Politics of Sexual Privacy in Northern California*. In his book, Howard chronicles the rise of sexual privacy as a fulcrum of American cultural politics.

Earlier this year, the State of Florida passed the Parental Rights in Education Act. The new law prohibits educators from talking about sexual orientation with students in kindergarten through third grade, and it confines them to guidelines set by the state on “age appropriate” topics related to sexuality in higher grades. Furthermore, it requires teachers and staff to disclose important information about students’ mental health to their parents, including details related to their sexual or gender identities. Many policymakers, activists, and voters have rightfully condemned these bills for censoring teachers and for exposing children questioning their sexual or gender identities to potential abuse from hostile parents. “Why aren’t we protecting our children’s right to privacy?” asked Angie Nixon, a Jacksonville Democrat and critic of the law.

Why have so many straight-identified, cisgender Americans worried about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) topics in schools? How did gay and transgender rights become key parts of American politics? And why did “privacy” become some of the default language for all sides in these debates? My book, *The Closet and the Cul-de-Sac: The Politics of Sexual Privacy in Northern California*, answers these questions by examining conflicts over gay rights and sex education from World War II to the late 1970s.

Beginning in the 1940s, federal, state, and local officials promoted two kinds of policies related to sexuality. First, they rewarded Americans for participating in heterosexual relationships, particularly marriages, and punished people who defied gender norms or expressed same-sex desires. Second, postwar policymakers promoted sexual privacy. Federal policies required new homes to have private bedrooms so that married couples could protect their sex lives from their children. Educators taught Americans that sexual privacy led to good mental health and strong marriages. Children, they instructed, should respect bedroom doors closed by their parents.

Although these trends often reinforced one another, critics of these policies sometimes used the language of “privacy” to challenge the most repressive laws of the postwar era. These advocates often conceded that homosexuality was a social problem, but they argued that the state took on too much power when it tried to police it. Small numbers of liberal lawyers, sex educators, and early gay rights groups argued that harsh punishments for non-normative sexuality violated Americans’ “right to privacy.”

This history decisively shaped the conflicts over LGBT rights in the U.S. in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Although gay and lesbian activists after the 1960s continued to reference the right to privacy, more and more of them spoke about the importance of “coming out of the closet” and that “gay is good.” Many straight-identified Americans responded with ambivalence to these claims. Although many Americans oppose discrimination against LGBT people, they see most acknowledgements of LGBT life in schools as a sign of preferential treatment for a minority and an unnecessary burden on children. Critics of laws like the Parental Rights in Education Act have pointed out that they marginalize queer youth and have labeled them “Don’t Say Gay” bills, which emphasize the state’s role in censoring teachers. Among other things, these arguments appeal to a broad straight-identified public that dislikes prejudice and values privacy.

But critics rarely say that educational material on sexual orientation and gender identity might be good for all children. The “Don’t Say Gay” label highlights the state’s discriminatory actions, but fails to make a positive argument about the value of LGBT topics in schools for everyone. An inclusive curriculum might help young people of all sexual orientations and gender identities build their ideal relationships and families without confining them to a narrow list of acceptable norms. The problem with making this broader argument is that it would ignite controversy because it would challenge the notion that straightness is more important than all other identities.
Penn Press Welcomes Clint Kimberling, New Director of Sales and Marketing

As of May 16th, Clint Kimberling became Penn Press’ new Director of Sales and Marketing, joining us with more than 15 years of university press experience. His career began at the University Press of Mississippi, where he worked in publicity and advertising—while earning an MBA from Ole Miss. And most recently he served as Director of Marketing and Sales at the University of Alabama Press. While at University Press of Mississippi, Kimberling worked with our Editor-in-Chief Walter Biggins, and is excited to be reunited with him.

Kimberling is also thrilled to have joined the team at Penn, noting, “I’ve admired their list from afar for years and am honored to be working on the other side of it now.”

“I am looking forward to having Clint’s experience as a marketer for regional titles help us build up our own regional lists, in addition to leading our marketing and sales team as they cultivate deeper engagement with our scholarly lists and expanding journals program,” says Press Director Mary Francis.

Kimberling originally hails from Fort Worth, Texas, having moved to Mississippi where he graduated from Millsaps College and became a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity. He remained in Mississippi for more than a decade and worked in Alabama for the past five years.

When he’s not promoting and selling academic books, Kimberling spends his time running, playing golf, and finding a pickup basketball game. He will be relocating to Philadelphia with his girlfriend, four cats, and an Australian Shepherd puppy. And while we can’t speak for the animals, Clint is very much looking forward to the move and this next phase in his professional and personal life. We welcome all of them to our city and campus!

Penn Press Offers a Reading List in Recognition of Juneteenth

On June 17, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. signed into law the bill that established Juneteenth National Independence Day, June 19, as a legal public holiday. Juneteenth commemorates June 19, 1865, the date Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, and delivered General Order No. 3 announcing the end of legalized slavery in Texas. Historically, it has been a holiday celebrated by people of African descent in the United States, as well as people in Canada, Jamaica, Nigeria, the United Kingdom, and other countries throughout the world. Juneteenth is also a “symbolic date” representing the African American struggle for freedom and equality, and a celebration of family and community.

Penn Press has curated a collection of our titles that address the themes of Juneteenth and have presented a selection here. For the full list of titles, visit the collection’s web page.

Remaking the Republic: Black Politics and the Creation of American Citizenship by Christopher James Bonner

Force and Freedom: Black Abolitionists and the Politics of Violence by Kellie Carter Jackson

The Many Resurrections of Henry Box Brown by Martha Cutter

The Textual Effects of David Walker’s “Appeal”: Print-Based Activism Against Slavery, Racism, and Discrimination, 1829–1851 by Marcy J. Dinius

A Brotherhood of Liberty: Black Reconstruction and Its Legacies in Baltimore, 1865–1920 by Dennis Patrick Halpin

I’ve Been Here All the While: Black Freedom on Native Land by Alaina E. Roberts
Author Publicity

Gene Zubovich, author of Before the Religious Right (2022), authored an article for The Washington Post's “Made By History” column. In addition, the second installment of his interview on the Library of Congress Insights blog was posted. The book was also featured on the Patheos blog.


Poisoned Wells (2022), by Tzafrir Barzilay, was included in the Medievalists.net New Medieval Books roundup.

The Difference Is Spreading (2022), edited by Al Filreis and Anna Strong Safford, was reviewed in the Los Angeles Review of Books.

The Roman Peasant Project (2021), edited by Kim Bowes, was featured in Penn Today.

Critical Disaster Studies (2021), edited by Jacob A.C. Remes and Andy Horowitz, was featured in a Los Angeles Review of Books article.

Making the Miscellany (2021), by Megan Heffernan, was reviewed in The Times Literary Supplement.

Katherine L. French, author of Household Goods (2021), was interviewed on the Medievalists.net podcast.

Fighting for the Higher Law (2021), by Peter Wirzbicki, was reviewed in the Society for U.S. Intellectual History website.

Paul Conrad, author of The Apache Diaspora (2021), was interviewed on the New Books Network.

Adam Stern, author of Survival (2021), was interviewed on the Journal of the History of Ideas blog.

The Indigenous Paradox (2020), by Jonas Bens, was reviewed in The New Rambler.

Matthew Slaboch, author of A Road to Nowhere (2017), was interviewed on the Spectacles podcast.

Translation of the Month

Blue-Collar Conservatism: Frank Rizzo’s Philadelphia and Populist Politics
(HC 2018, PB 2021)

by Timothy J. Lombardo

The Korean language edition of Blue-Collar Conservatism was published in April 2022 by Hoewhanamoo Publishing Company, which focuses on books in the social sciences and humanities.

Audiobook Spotlight

Extinction and the Human: Four American Encounters (2021)

by Timothy Sweet

Narrated by AudioFile Earphones Award winner Danny Campbell, Extinction and the Human by Timothy Sweet was just published as an audiobook in May and is available from Audible.com.