

# Rutgers Institute for High School Teachers

## 2017-2018 Seminar Descriptions

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### **Fall Semester 2017**

#### **The Contemporary Relevance of Hannah Arendt**

Friday, October 13, 2017, 9am—2:30pm

**Kathleen A. Kremins**, Professor, Department of English, College of St. Elizabeth

Hannah Arendt, a political philosopher, is best known for her classic work, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, and her controversial book, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. This seminar will explore key theories, not only from these works, but also *The Human Condition* and her essays “On Violence” and “On Revolution.” Recognizing the recent rediscovery of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, there will be an intersectional approach to such concepts as plurality, conscious pariah, and statelessness alongside her embodied interrogation of Anti-Semitism and the Jewish Question. Using her political theory of *amor mundi*, love of the world, as a means to transgress ordinary boundaries, we will wrestle with the following questions: To what extent is her principle of coexistence (*amor mundi*) relevant to contemporary discussions of intersectionality or queer politics in an international setting?; Does Arendt’s vision serve as an alternative to more limited notions of political tolerance, one more directly attuned to question justice?; Is her concept of plurality an important companion to theories of intersectionality and sexual politics?

#### **Famous Trials of the Jazz Age: Sacco and Vanzetti, Leopold and Loeb, and Scopes**

Friday, October 27, 2017, 9am—2:30pm

**Paul G.E. Clemens**, Professor, Department of History, Rutgers

In one of the most brilliant journalist accounts of an era, Frederick Lewis Allen, writing in 1931 and looking back during the early years of the Great Depression, produced, *Only Yesterday, An Informal History of the 1920s*. His buoyant account of the Jazz Age – Babe Ruth, the Harlem Renaissance, *The Great Gatsby*, Josephine Baker, and on and on – has subsequently been balanced by historians' accounts of the other, darker side of the 1920s. After a brief overview of the 1920s, we'll look at three famous trials, and sample some of the primary sources from each, that capture both the sensationalism of popular culture in the 1920s, and the bleaker side of life during that era. Sacco and Vanzetti were tried for a murderous robbery and convicted primarily because they were immigrant Italian anarchists. Leopold and Loeb were Chicago youths who attempted to commit the "perfect crime" by kidnapping and murdering a neighbor's young son. They were defended by Clarence Darrow, the most famous defense attorney of the era, who put the death penalty itself on trial. Darrow also headed the defense in the famous Scopes "monkey trial," where he defended free speech but just as furiously attacked fundamentalist religion. We'll look as well at the modern implications of each trial and view a couple of film clips that have produced popular but fictionalized accounts of the cases.

### **Travels with Chaucer: Teaching *The Canterbury Tales*, from Gender to Anti-Judaism**

Friday, November 3, 2017, 9am—2:30pm

**Stacy S. Klein**, Associate Professor, Department of English, Rutgers

This seminar will provide a range of tools for teaching late medieval literature to high school students in a manner that strives to balance historical responsibility with modern relevance. We will focus mainly on *The Canterbury Tales*, one of the most exciting and yet enigmatic of Middle English poems. After an introduction to Middle English, the vernacular language written and spoken in England from approximately 1100-1500 AD, we will turn to the poem's historical, literary, and material contexts, paying close attention to how the various female figures, narrative voices, domestic arrangements, religious rituals, and sexual relations featured within the poem might have resonated with medieval audiences. Our seminar will conclude by considering how seemingly alien (and at times painful) cultural attitudes from a distant past might be made meaningful to modern readers.

### **American Cultures of Adolescence**

Friday, November 17, 2017, 9am—2:30pm

**Leslie Fishbein**, Associate Professor, Departments of American Studies and Jewish Studies, Rutgers

Although the first use of the word “adolescence” appeared in the 15th century and came from the Latin word “adolescere,” which meant “to grow up or to grow into maturity,” it was not until 1904 that the first president of the American Psychological Association, G. Stanley Hall, was credited with discovering adolescence as a distinctive stage of life worthy of scholarly study. This seminar will examine why adolescence emerged as a distinctive stage of life in the early twentieth century and the subsequent impact of its emergence on such issues as education, child labor, and juvenile delinquency. We will trace how adolescence had been understood through the interpretation of literary texts such as J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) and Julia Alvarez's memoir *Once Upon a Quinceanera: Coming of Age in the USA* (2007); films such as Frederick Wiseman's documentary film *High School* (1969) and feature films such as *Blackboard Jungle* (1955), *Rebel without a Cause* (1955), and *Mean Girls* (2004); and, via such works on neuroscience and parenting as Frances E. Jenson and Amy Ellis Nutt's *The Teenage Brain: A Neuroscientist's Survival Guide to Raising Adolescents and Young Adults* (2016).

### **From the Cold War to “the New Cold War”: Understanding American-Russian Relations**

Friday, December 8, 2017, 9am—2:30pm

**David Foglesong**, Professor, Department of History, Rutgers

A quarter of a century ago, U.S. leaders declared that “the Cold War” was over and prominent scholars proclaimed that a decisive Western victory had settled fundamental issues for all time. Yet in the last ten years many politicians, journalists, and scholars have warned or lamented that “a new Cold War” has erupted, with the West confronting a resurgent Russia from the Baltic states and Ukraine to Syria and beyond. Understanding these complex and controversial developments requires careful consideration of key questions about the nature, ending, and alleged resumption of “the Cold War.” Was the Cold War a bipolar geopolitical confrontation between two nuclear-armed superpowers that began after 1945 or a global ideological rivalry between capitalism and socialism that originated with the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917? Did the Cold War end when Western politics supposedly caused the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 or did it end in the late 1980s through the diplomatic engagement of U.S. leaders

with Soviet reformer Mikhail Gorbachev? Has the drastic deterioration of U.S.-Russian relations in the twenty-first century been caused primarily by aggressive policies of former KGB officer Vladimir Putin or by U.S. politics of expanding NATO and promoting regime changes in the former Soviet Union? In this seminar, we will grapple with four fundamental questions: What was the Cold War?; When did the Cold War begin?; How did the Cold War end?; and, How did a “new Cold War” develop? To prepare for the seminar, teachers will read stimulating essays on the Cold War and a new Cold War by leading scholars. During the seminar, teachers will examine a variety of images (including propaganda posters, political cartoons, and magazine covers) that they can use to engage their students in future discussions of the Cold War and new Cold War.

***Please Note: This seminar strongly overlaps with the seminar on the Cold War that was offered in October 2016. Teachers who attended last year's seminar should not enroll.***

## ***Spring Semester 2018***

### **Teaching World and African History from a Very Small Place**

Friday, February 2, 2018, 9am—2:30pm

**Allen Howard**, Professor Emeritus, Department of History, Rutgers

Using small places in West Africa (Kroo Bay, Freetown, Sierra Leone) as starting points, this workshop explores ways to teach key issues in World and African History. The idea is to work out from individuals (youth, women, and men) and from local places to broad themes: kingdoms and states, the slave trade, war, cities, imperialism/colonialism/nationalism, and epidemic disease. The workshop will focus on discussion of documents (provided by the instructor), visuals, and various teaching situations and tools in the framework of a power point presentation illustrating people, places, and themes.

### **Slavery and History: The Material of Black Lives and How We Interpret the Past**

Friday, February 16, 2018, 9am-2:30pm

**Marisa Fuentes**, Associate Professor, Department of History, Rutgers

This seminar discusses historical methods for piecing together the history of slavery in the Atlantic world from the late-17<sup>th</sup> to mid-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. It will focus particular attention to British Caribbean slavery, its origins and growth, and look closely at how historians negotiate and work with an archive in which enslaved people are found in fragments. Using examples from my recent work on enslaved women in urban Barbados, we will explore how to read, interpret, and make narratives from records and documents in which enslaved people are listed as property, criminals, and commodities, and think about an ethical historical practice that pushes back on the power of colonial language and ideas. Along with providing a solid historical overview of the major themes in Atlantic slavery, this seminar will consider gender and the enslaved experience and feature “hands-on” work with documents relating to this topic and we will discuss our historical practices related to such materials.

### **Fighting for Justice in the Age of the Atom**

Friday, March 2, 2018, 9am—2:30pm

**Shaun Illingworth**, Director, Rutgers Oral History Archives

In the last half of the 20th century, millions of Americans joined their voices together in social justice movements that challenged the norms of mainstream American society and aimed to secure civil rights for minorities and women, antiwar principles and policies, environmental welfare, LGBTQ+ equality and more. What motivated these men and women? What challenges did they face? How did their efforts intersect with other aspects of American history? What, ultimately, did they accomplish? Through oral history interviews, these eyewitnesses offer today's students insight into how people engaged with these movements, their goals and their ideals in both organized, public ways and through private, personal means. This workshop will offer teachers an in-depth look into interviews on social justice activism collected by the Rutgers Oral History Archives and other programs around the country, primary resources that students can analyze using a variety of learning strategies.

### **Science, Technology, and Capitalism in the Long Gilded Age**

Friday, March 23, 2018, 9am—2:30pm

**Jamie Pietruska**, Assistant Professor, Department of History

The decades after the American Civil War and Reconstruction are often understood as a “search for order” in which the rise of corporate capitalism, new transportation and communication networks, scientific discovery and technical innovation, and new forms of expertise and management created an underlying order, system, and rationality that enabled the United States to become an economic superpower by the turn of the twentieth century. This seminar will draw upon new research by historians of science and technology and historians of capitalism to reconsider the Long Gilded Age (1880-1920) as a period in which technological infrastructures and scientific knowledge often had the unintended consequence of creating volatility, uncertainty, and disorder in the economy. Specific topics will include controversies over new kinds of weather, crop, and business forecasts that were used as tools for risk management but often perpetuated the uncertainty they were designed to conquer; the rise of commodity futures trading and the ensuing legal battles over the differences between speculation and gambling; and, scandals over fraud in the contexts of dinosaur fossil hunting, sugar manufacturing, and patent medicine advertising.

### **Inventing America: Thomas Edison and the History of Technology and Industry**

Monday, April 9, 2018, 9am—2:30pm

**Paul Israel**, Research Professor, Department of History, Rutgers  
Director and General Editor, Thomas A. Edison Papers Project, Rutgers

The Thomas A. Edison Papers at Rutgers is documenting the career of the famous inventor and of his many technological innovations. These are not only of national and international importance, but they also have special significance for New Jersey history. Edison worked in the state from 1870 until his death in 1931 and his major inventive activities took place here. Even more significantly, he helped to invent industrial research at his laboratories in Newark, Menlo Park, and West Orange, and to make corporate America aware of the value of developing such a research capability. In addition, Edison's inventions laid the foundation for many industries, most notably electric light and power, sound

recording, and motion pictures, but also contributed to many others including telecommunication, electric batteries and cars, and cement manufacturing, among others. This seminar will examine Edison's historical significance and introduce participants to ways of incorporating the resources of the Edison Papers and the history of technology and industry into the teaching of history and social science. *The seminar will be held at Edison's last laboratory in West Orange, N.J., which is part of the Thomas Edison National Historical Park.*

### **The Great War and America's Rise to Global Power**

Friday, April 27, 2018, 9am—2:30pm

**Michael Adas**, Professor Emeritus, Department of History, Rutgers

1918 was not only the last year of World War I, but also the year when military interventions of the United States began to contribute in significant ways to the victory of the allied powers (by then effectively reduced to Great Britain and France). The workshop will focus on ways of integrating America's impact on the war into courses on both U.S. and global history. Participants will consider the major role America played in the years before it actively entered the war, the controversies relating to questions as to why and if it should have gotten involved, the often overstated impact of its plunge into trench warfare, and its outsized (and often misguided) role in fashioning the ill-fated Settlement at Versailles.

### **Mexico since World War II: Miracle or Mess?**

Friday, May 11, 2018, 9am—2:30pm

**Mark Wasserman**, Professor, Department of History, Rutgers

From 1940 through 1968 Mexico experienced a prolonged period of spectacular economic growth. But beneath the surface, the benefits of the good times were unequally distributed. As other countries in Latin America underwent serial regime changes, Mexico had the same ruling political party that peacefully transferred power for seventy years. But below there was repression and violence. The boom times ended in the early 1980s and many economic ups and downs followed, with crises rendered by the rise and fall of petroleum prices and production and the burden of enormous public debt. The long rule of the Party of the Institutionalized Revolution (PRI) ceased in 2000. Politics since has seemed to slowly disintegrate. From the 1980s Mexico embarked on a "war on drugs," which has induced calamitous violence. How then should we consider Mexico? Has Mexico prospect for economic growth and employment? Will Mexico remain politically stable? As our close neighbor and close economic partner these are crucial questions for people in the United States.

*To register for any of the seminars listed above, please mail the enclosed registration form or register on-line at*  
***[rcha.rutgers.edu](http://rcha.rutgers.edu)***

**Remember to register early!**

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