

SPRING 2022

# OLDE NEWS

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THE REED COLLEGE HISTORY DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER



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# From the Chair

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**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES JOSH HOWE**

This winter I have been thinking more and more about time. As a historian, I purport to study change over time, but I have to admit that like many of my colleagues, I give much more attention to the numerator in that equation than I do to that inexorable denominator. It is hardly novel to note that time passes, and that periods of dramatic historical change like the one we seem to be living through currently are typically marked by a “before,” a “during,” and an “after.” The change is the thing we are interested in; time serves as background, a sort of metronomic scenery that gives the action relief or context and enables generalizations. Hard times. Good times. Times of war and peace. Or a particular *bête noire* of mine in student writing, “olden times.”

I have been considering time more closely in part to try to make sense of what it means to be living through what many characterize as a “time of crisis.” The term “crisis” is itself a temporal one, used to describe periods of intense difficulty, danger, and important decisionmaking—a turning point, even—and in many senses it does well to describe the import of the many urgent, overlapping challenges that have come to dominate news cycles and shape our lives over the last two years.

The COVID-19 pandemic is the most obvious of these, but the pressing imperatives of climate change, economic inequality, and racism, already extant in American life, have also contributed to a sense of epochal urgency since the pandemic began. And yet, as a historian, the persistence of the COVID-19 crisis has me remembering that temporal frames matter quite a bit. Just as not everything is peaceful in a time of peace and not everything is hard during hard times, not everything that happens during a time of crisis is itself a crisis. People find successes and joys; when they face challenges, those challenges are not necessarily emergencies. And the longer the temporal frame of the crisis—and here we are at two years—the easier it is to see the rich, complicated, and often lasting encounters of daily life that flat temporal designations like “a time of crisis” tend to mask. Tendrils of these encounters often reach beyond the present moment into both past and future; they tether us to communities and institutions that help us measure continuity and change over time. Crack open a “time of crisis”—be it the current pandemic or the Blitz of 1940-41 or the depressions of the 1890s—and you see that there is a whole lot of everyday life that goes on during periods of historical change.

That is certainly true of the Reed history department, anyway. As we begin our fourth consecutive “pandemic semester,” I am happy to report that most of what we are focused on continues to revolve around the rigorous and inclusive exploration of the past that shapes what we do, “time of crisis” or otherwise. We have returned to mostly in-person courses, and our history faculty continues to work hard to make those courses inclusive, effective, and informative in new and creative ways. We were also fortunate to take advantage of favorable pandemic conditions in the fall to re-start our extracurricular programming with a very successful Wallace T. MacCaffrey lecture, delivered by Michelle McKinley, the Bernard B. Kliks Professor of Law & Director of the Center for the Study of Women in Society at the University of Oregon. In the spring, we will welcome former visiting assistant professor Shane Dillingham back to Reed to present his research on indigeneity in Mexico in the twentieth century and indigenous people’s interactions with education and politics. You can read more about Shane’s talk on **page 4**. Outside of the classroom, Margot Minardi continues to lead our thesis seniors in the “Thesis Fridays” series as they work with their advisers toward graduation in the spring. Current students can find information about the annual Thesis Extravaganza on **page 4**. You can also check out Michael Breen discussing his new role as editor-in-chief of the online organization H-France on **pages 5 and 6**.

As we shared in the fall newsletter, Doug Fix will retire at the end of the spring semester after serving the college for more than 30 years.

As we prepare to celebrate Doug’s career, the department has also nearly completed the search for a new faculty member in East Asian History. Current students can keep an eye out for emails from the department list-serve for opportunities to meet the candidates. The department is also in the midst of a search for a visiting faculty member in African, Middle Eastern, or South Asian history. Current students, keep an eye out for opportunities to participate in that search, too!

As always, through thick and thin, we Reedies have been reading! Take a look at what students, faculty, and alumni in the Reed History community have been up to in our “What Are You Reading?” section on **page 7**.

Finally, we share the sad news that our much beloved emeritus colleague, Ed Segel, passed away this fall at the age of eighty-three. Jackie Dirks remembers Ed briefly here on **pages 8 and 9**; you can also find a more extensive celebration of Ed’s life and work at Reed [here](#).

The spring semester is upon us, and I am excited to see students back in the classroom as we get back to the work of exploring sources, honing critical writing skills, and feeding the wonder and curiosity that comes with teaching and doing history at the college. I have said it before, and I’ll say it again: The present is uncertain. The future is unpredictable. It’s a great time to be a historian!

All the best,  
Your Humble Chair,



Josh Howe

# Lecture Announcement

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**Alan Shane Dillingham:**

**Oaxaca Resurgent: Indigeneity, Development and Inequality in Twentieth-Century Mexico**

On Tuesday, February 22, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. in Vollum Lecture Hall, Alan Shane Dillingham will be giving a talk on indigenous development in Mexico and how indigenous people shaped local and national politics in Oaxaca during the twentieth century, as well as the relationship between indigeneity, rural education and development, and the political radicalism of the Global Sixties. He draws from declassified surveillance documents, original ethnographic research and focuses on the experiences of anthropologists, government bureaucrats, trade unionists, and activists. This lecture is open to the Reed community only and attendees are required to wear masks and be vaccinated and boosted. For more information, click [here](#).

# Senior Thesis Extravaganza

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Join us on April 1, 2022 from 3:00-5:00 in the Gray Campus Center as our history seniors briefly present their thesis research. Future history thesis writers are especially encouraged to attend, but this event is open to all Reed community members. Celebrate our seniors while learning about a variety of topics.

# H-France

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## PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND HUMANITIES MICHAEL BREEN

*In July of 2021, our own Michael Breen was appointed the Editor-in-Chief of H-France (<https://h-france.net>), a key resource in the study of the Francophone world. We caught up with Michael and asked him to tell us a little bit about the journal.*

Now in its 31st year, H-France is a digital hub of scholarly publications and information on the history, literature, art, music, film, and philosophy of the Francophone world. As Editor-in-Chief, I collaborate with an international, interdisciplinary team of editors to oversee the publication of five open access journals. These include H-France Review (<https://h-france.net/h-france-review/>), the leading English-language publication for reviews of newly published books on French history and culture. Taking advantage of the possibilities afforded by electronic publication, H-France Review offers extended critical analysis of current research in history, literature, art history, music history, film studies, history of science, and philosophy. A related publication, H-France Forum (<https://h-france.net/h-france-forum/>) focuses on significant new books in Francophone history and literature by developing forums where four scholars review a recently published book, which the book's author then responds to. A multimedia journal of French Studies, H-France Salon (<https://h-france.net/h-france-salon/>) incorporates print and audio-visual components to disseminate research and promote scholarly discussions in multiple ways.

These include publishing debates and collective reassessments of critical, methodological, and professional issues; tributes to influential individuals; recordings of conference presentations; webinars; and other innovative projects. Imaginaries: Film, Fictions, and Other Representations of the French-Speaking Worlds (<https://h-france.net/imaginaries/>) reviews current and classic films, novels, and other media set in the French-speaking world's past, while also discussing museum exhibitions and plays as well as new media such as video games and podcasts, with an eye towards their pedagogical and scholarly uses. (I should note that Cornie Labridy in the French Department, serves as Imaginaries' Assistant Editor). French History and Civilization: The Papers from the George Rudé Seminar (<https://h-france.net/rude/category/volume/>) publishes peer-reviewed articles drawn from the biennial conference of The George Rudé Society, Australia and New Zealand's primary scholarly organization for the study of French history.

In addition to these five journals, H-France also maintains an electronic discussion list with approximately 4,000 members around the globe, a Scholars Registry that facilitates contact between more than 1,000 scholars, a Digital Humanities Database that helps teachers and researchers locate relevant DH projects, a website, and a number of additional resources for scholars, teachers, and students. While H-France had already established itself prior to the start of the coronavirus pandemic as a vital scholarly community and an important set of resources for scholars of Francophone history and culture, its role in fostering scholarly dialogue and exchange has only grown in the last two years. As in-person conferences and lectures have been canceled or curtailed, H-France has provided an alternative platform for scholarly gathering, helping to host online conferences for scholarly societies and to host lectures, book discussions, and conversations about other professional matters. It also recently launched a new Research Repository to help make microfilms, digital photographs, and other archival materials accessible to researchers who are unable to travel to archives and research libraries. As we confront the realities of the environmental costs of travel to conferences and foreign libraries and archives, H-France will have an increasingly important role to play in fostering new modes of scholarly interaction and research.

Students who are interested in learning more about H-France's resources and potential opportunities associated with its operations should feel free to contact me at [breenm@reed.edu](mailto:breenm@reed.edu).

--Submitted by Professor Michael Breen



# What Are Reedies Reading?

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## ALUMNI RECOMMENDATIONS

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**Diana Peterson Walsh, '77:**

"The Power of Fun: How to Feel Alive Again by Catherine Price. A beautiful book on how to schedule time to disengage from technology and purposefully schedule time to seek enjoyment."

**Brian Cowan, '92:**

"I'm currently reading Jonathan Swift's History of the Four Last Years of the Queen (wr 1712-13; pub. 1758) for a conference presentation on 'History from Loss: A Global Introduction to Histories Written from Defeat, Colonization, Exile and Imprisonment'. Follow us on Twitter for more details: @HistFromLoss"

**Edward Peters, '72:**

"'Light from Uncommon Stars', by Ryka Aoki, deals with the interactions among a transgender teen-age runaway whose only solace is her violin, a world renowned violin teacher who literally sold her soul to the Devil, and the refugee crew of an intergalactic starship who are hiding out while running a donut shop in East L.A."

## STUDENT RECOMMENDATIONS

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**Dylan Thelen, '23:**

"I recently read Catch-22 by Joseph Heller for the first time, which of course isn't a history book but an absurdist dark comedy in a World War 2 bomber squadron. Heller's own experience and technical knowledge come through in the niche historical facts which make the juxtaposition with the absurdity all the more amusing and striking!"

**Isaac Thurston, '23:**

"Jack London Short Stories, (To Build a Fire to be specific)."

**LiLi Siedare, '23:**

"I recently read 'Her Neighbor's Wife: A History of Lesbian Desire Within Marriage.' As someone who is incredibly interested in US queer history, this book shed light on the struggles of being queer during postwar America, specifically in the 1950s, and looked at the experiences of lesbian women living in the suburbs."

**Betsy Wight, '23:**

"Over winter break, I read 'The Wreckage of my Presence,' an essay collection by actress and comedian Casey Wilson. It's a funny and poignant account of her life, and even those who aren't familiar with Wilson's work are sure to laugh, cry, and enjoy it!"

# Remembering Professor Ed Segel (1939-2021)

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The History Department sadly notes the death of our former colleague, Professor Edward Barton Segel, who passed away in October 2021. A graduate of Harvard and UC Berkeley, Ed taught History and Humanities at Reed from 1973 until his retirement in 2011. A thoughtful and humane teacher, Ed advised more than one hundred senior theses during his Reed career. His classes inspired generations of Reed graduates. Ed cheered his former students on as they undertook careers as diplomats, financiers, lawyers, journalists, and historians.

At Reed, Ed taught what he characterized as “history from the top down.” His early classes covered European diplomatic history, 1843 to 1914, then the Origins of World War II. Though he often joked that European history had more class than American history, Ed eventually developed and taught popular courses on 20th century U.S. foreign policy, the Cold War, and the U.S. role in Vietnam. In an interview with Reed’s Oral History Project, Ed reiterated his view that war is not an anomaly, but “something that nations do all the time.” A mainstay of Reed’s modern Humanities (HUM 220), Ed crafted memorable lectures on the coming of the French Revolution, the conservatism of Edmund Burke, and on his beloved composers, Beethoven and Mozart.

Ed was an excellent colleague. He holds the record as the longest-serving Chair of Reed’s History Department. In the Division of History and Social Sciences, Ed shaped various iterations of the International Comparative Studies Program, and he helped pioneer the Division’s thesis first draft requirement.

In John Sheehy’s 2011 *Comrades of the Quest*, Ed described his experience as an out gay man in academia:

When I came to Reed from Berkeley 1973, I was quite firmly out of the closet. I wasn’t quite sure how to deal with it at Reed, but it turned out that some of my Berkeley students had friends at Reed, and had told them, “There’s a gay professor coming. Look out for him.” So the gay students knew about me before I arrived. Reed was always, so far as I’ve been aware, quite hospitable that way.

Ed Segel leaves a legacy of grateful colleagues and students, who honor his guidance and kindness. Ed’s work will live on in the causes he championed, and the scholarship that bears his name: <https://www.reed.edu/reed-magazine/articles/2021/segel-obit.html>

--Submitted by Professor Jacqueline Dirks, Reed '82



# Let's Catch Up!

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**David Sacks, Richard F. Scholz Professor of History and Humanities, Emeritus:**

"Along with getting several essays and articles of mine on their way to publication this year, and in anticipation of returning to archives and libraries in the United Kingdom in the coming Summer or next Fall, I have returned to work on my book-in-progress focused on the careers and writing of Richard Hakluyt (1552?-1616) and Thomas Harriot (1569-1621) in which I explore the interconnections between theological and religious conflict and the development of the modern "sciences" in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Its working title is: *The Certain and Full Discovery of the World: Richard Hakluyt and Thomas Harriot*. I have three more chapters to draft, and I am aiming to complete the manuscript by New Year's Day, 2023."

**Maurice Isserman, '72/'73:**

Maurice Isserman will be attending his 50th Reed reunion this coming June. His current scholarly project is a history of the American Communist Part which will be published by Basic Books. His 2019 book on the US Army's 10th Mountain Division in World War II, *Winter Army* is available in paper from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

**Natalie Sheehan, '10:**

"Working on a Master's in WWII Studies from ASU Online!"

**Kalina Hadzhikova, '15:**

"I'm working on a PhD dissertation about court fools and the comedic performance of intellectual disability in 13th- and 14th-century England, but I'm horribly behind on my writings, so I'm shaming myself into working harder by telling the Reed community about it."

**Nato Green, '97:**

"I'm leading collective bargaining for SEIU Local 1021, a large union mostly of local government but also private colleges and nonprofit social service agencies."

**Meri Clark, '95:**

"In the fall, I taught a history course on comparative nationalism and civil wars in Finland, Spain, and Colombia. It's part of a project about how states depict human relationships to nature for national ends (e.g. cross-country skiing in Finland, high-altitude bicycling in the Andes)."

**Brian Click, '16:**

"My friend Moose (Jeff Price, '03) and I are putting together an Oregon history podcast. It's coming soon to the virtual airwaves - we'll be sure to share it with history alums, and we'll welcome topic suggestions!"