Nora Berenstain  
Associate Professor  

**Department:** Philosophy  
**Core Faculty in Women, Gender, and Sexuality**  

**Project Title:** *Modality for Structural Oppression*  

**Details**  
When we speak of social structures and of social systems, we often speak of what is possible, probable, and expected within them. Social structures create and restrict possibilities, produce probabilities, and determine outcomes as the results of complex processes. How should we think about the necessary and the possible in the context of interlocking structural oppressions? Insights from structuralism in mathematics and the sciences prove useful for constructing a model of the modality of structural oppression. This framework can illuminate patterns of relations under oppression, such as the relationships between white supremacy and the prison-industrial complex, eugenics and reproductive coercion, and settler colonial land dispossession and sexual violence to theorize how structural oppressions generate stability, self-replicability, and re-generation across periods of apparent social change and transformation.

Robert D. Bland  
Assistant Professor of History and Africana Studies  

**Department:** History  

**Project Title:** *Requiem for Reconstruction: Memory and the Making of the Black South*  

**Details**  
*Requiem for Reconstruction* argues that black southerners and black northerners saw the South Carolina Lowcountry as a blueprint for reimaging the world of late-nineteenth-century southern politics. Well known for its outsized role during the Civil War and Reconstruction, less has been written about the afterlife of the Reconstruction era. This project argues that the rise and fall of the state’s racially gerrymandered Seventh Congressional District represented the last chapter in the long struggle to establish biracial democracy in the postbellum United States. Created by white southerners hoping to contain the political power of the state’s black majority to a single district, the “Black Seventh” served as one of the last bastions of the Republican Party in the New South. Thus, the Lowcountry inspired Black Americans within South Carolina and beyond the state’s borders to defend the radical legacy of Reconstruction. Most importantly, the district became a site where a black countermemory of Reconstruction was maintained and produced by working-class black southerners. A symbol of Reconstruction’s promise and peril, it served as a symbol for the lost promise of the New South.
Megan Bryson
Associate Professor

Department: Religious Studies

Project Title: Buddhism on the Southern Silk Road

Details
Buddhism on the Southern Silk Road uses Dali-kingdom (937-1253) Buddhist texts, art, and objects to argue that Buddhism circulated differently along the Southern Silk Road (from southern China to NE India) in comparison to the better known Northern and Maritime Silk Roads. Specifically, the geopolitical landscape of the south encouraged short-term, relay-style transmission as opposed to transmission through the longer-term, sustained contacts that were possible in the north. This mode of transmission in the south also meant that various forms of Buddhist media – images, texts, and objects – did not flow equally along all routes. Buddhism on the Southern Silk Road treats texts, objects, and images tied to the god Mahākāla as embodied networks that show distinctive modes of Buddhist transmission in an understudied but critical region.

Mary Campbell
Associate Professor of American Art History

Department: School of Art.

Project Title: Beauford's Door: The Art of Beauford Delaney

Details
“Beauford Delaney Returns to the Scene,” The New York Times proclaimed in 2016, noting that although the Tennessee-born painter’s “star had faded long before his death in 1979 at a Paris mental hospital,” researchers and curators had recently taken a renewed interest in his life and art. While public awareness of Delaney has only increased in the past four years, art historical scholarship lags behind. Most notably, no book-length study exists of his work. It is a glaring absence for an artist who has paintings in the permanent collections of New York’s Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Centre Pompidou, and other major institutions. This project rectifies this situation by situating Delaney’s paintings and works on paper in their full art historical, social, and political contexts.
Luke Harlow  
Associate Professor  

**Department:** History  

**Project Title:** *Faith in Republican Institutions: Lydia Maria Child and the Fight for American Democracy in the Civil War Era*  

**Details**  
This project sheds new light on the place of religion and women in Civil War Era politics, and especially in Reconstruction debates about democracy. It focuses on Lydia Maria Child (1802–1880), one of the United States’ most prominent abolitionist writers, and the Unitarian values that animated her connection to Republican politics. Throughout her life, Child argued that democratic values grew from religious principles. They challenged “aristocracy,” privileged pluralism, and emphasized the basic value of all people in the eyes of her God. Child’s faith was not blind, and these were not idealistic abstractions. They required institutions to sustain them—even as those institutions remained in her lifetime beholden to actors who undermined democracy. Child’s struggle, and that of the coalition she represented, was to bend the republic’s institutions to make the United States more democratic, and thus more in line with what she saw as providential will.

Brandon Winford  
Associate Professor  

**Department:** History  

**Project Title:** *A History of Black Banking in the American South Since 1865*  

**Details**  
After 1865, the majority of black banks opened in the American South. They represented an important feature in black economic life, particularly after the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. The Great Depression, however, forced all but a handful of these financial institutions into insolvency. *A History of Black Banking* argues that the everyday activities and rhythms at work inside the bank have not always been recognized for what they might tell us about community dynamics. Nevertheless, it became an important space where race, class, gender, institution-building, and reciprocity regularly played out. The black bank as an institution was filled with drama, disappointment, misunderstanding, celebration, tragedy, theft, strategy, growth, and democracy. These sites of black economic life represented the possibilities and strivings of black people and contributed to a thriving separate black economy. These financial institutions offered real and imagined pathways toward black economic independence. Moreover, a network of black banks helped train generations of black professionals and supported the establishment of new banks across the region.
Digital Humanities Faculty Fellow – Spring 2022

Daniel H. Magilow
Professor of German

Department: Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures

Project Title: War, Genocide, and Everyday Life in German Photo Albums

Details
Posterity’s image of the Second World War and the Holocaust derives largely from a relatively small number of iconic atrocity photographs. Meanwhile, decidedly less spectacular images like those in the private photo albums of German soldiers and female auxiliaries remain underexamined. Yet these albums still present an opportunity to examine how ordinary Germans perceived war and genocide, and this project addresses two issues questions related to them: are there patterns in the ways these amateur photographers perceived their wartime experiences that algorithms—but not the naked eye—can discern? And if so, do they support or contradict established historical and memorial narratives about the Second World War and the Holocaust? To investigate these questions, this project aims to integrate traditional qualitative approaches to the study of the Holocaust’s visual culture with digital tools used to discern patterns in a larger set of images.

Graduate Fellows

Caitlin Branum Thrash
Sixth-year Doctoral Student (in 2021-22)

Department: English

Project Title: Books of Feminine Devotion: Female Influences on Meditative Lives of Christ and their Readers in Late-Medieval England

Details
Certain medieval holy women received visions from Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the saints regarding a wide range of topics, including the events of Christ’s life. These visions circulated widely and were incorporated into a wide variety of late-medieval devotional texts. A particularly popular genre of medieval devotional literature reconstructs the story of Christ’s life for devotional meditation with the goal of evoking intense emotional reactions from the reader; this genre was often targeted toward a female audience. The texts of two visionary women, St. Birgitta of Sweden and Mechtild of Hackeborn, had a significant effect on this devotional genre. Examining how women affected and were affected by a popular medieval religious literary genre reveals new information about individual texts, their authors, and the gendered aspects of medieval devotional practices.
Alyssa Culp

Sixth-Year Doctoral Student (in 2021-22)

Department: History

Project Title: *Death, Tradition, and the Making of the Modern Morgue in Rural Bavaria, 1855-1914*

Details
In the early nineteenth century, people died surrounded by those closest to them. Likewise, after death, the community was intimately involved in the death process, loved ones participated in the preparation of the body, observed the corpse in the home, and then escorted the body to burial. The introduction of morgues altered these traditions and rituals. My project investigates how nineteenth-century Bavarians’ cultural and social understandings of death, burial, and the corpse changed with the implementation of the modern morgue. It examines institutional developments related to the rise of the morgue and explores the impact of medical and state intervention on German culture and identity. The spread of these morgues speaks to the wider transformations of public health taking place not just in nineteenth-century Bavaria, but on a global scale.

Ziona Kocher

Fifth-Year Doctoral Student (in 2021-22)

Department: English

Project Title: *Breeches: Theatrical Cross-Dressing, 1675-1795*

Details
Cross-dressing was a staple in drama – especially comedy – during the Restoration and eighteenth century, providing a space of experimentation and play during a period when modern notions of gender and sexuality were crystalizing. The production of queer genders and sexualities through the use of costumes, mannerisms, and other aspects of performance on the long-eighteenth-century stage emphasizes the construction of these naturalized roles. Examining a range of plays that include cross-dressing by both men and women – which therefore produce a wide variety of different genders and sexualities – and utilizing practices of close-reading, performance history, and queer theory, this project seeks to push past the fairly pessimistic story often told about the use of cross-dressing during this crucial period in history.
Minami Nishioka

Seventh-Year Doctoral Student (in 2021-22)

Department: History

Project Title: *Civilizing Okinawa: Intimacies between the American and Japanese Empires, 1846-1939*

Details
By examining the quotidian interactions among Okinawan Christians and U.S. and Japanese Protestant missionaries from the late 19th century to the outbreak of WWII, this project highlights the collaborative interventions of both the U.S. and Japan into Okinawa, which was originally an independent kingdom but annexed to Japan in 1879. Previous works have characterized the U.S.-Japanese relations at the turn of the 20th century as rivalry. However, this project argues that they were in fact imperialist partners. Japanese and U.S. Protestant missionaries worked closely to support Okinawans’ assimilation into Japan. This project also argues that the Okinawan Christians adopted and strategically leveraged the aspects of both Japanese and US cultures to overcome their second-class status in Japan.

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Marco Haslam Dissertation Fellow

Michael Lovell

Sixth-year doctoral student (in 2021-2022)

Department: History,

Project Title: *A Medieval Enlightenment: Reason & Faith as Intolerance in Frankish Imperialism, 400-900 CE*

Details
While modern understandings of reason often place rationality in opposition to faith, to late antique and early medieval Christians, the two were inseparable. As such, Christians increasingly identified themselves as holding a monopoly on perfect rationality, while dubbing their opponents – namely pagans, Jews, and perceived heretical Christians – as untrustworthy champions of irrationality, insanity, and bestial nature. Elites in late Roman Gaul, Francia, and later Germany educated each other and the non-elite laity from the top-down on how to live most rationally for the sake of salvation through widely circulated sermons, saints’ lives, church and secular laws, and theological treatises. As the centuries progressed, this particular form of Christian identity narrowed the window of acceptable thought, thus increasing the degree of violence and persecution of religious outsiders in the Frankish dominions.