



A message from the Chair, Judy Bieber:

At last year's graduation ceremony, I remember outgoing chair, Melissa Bokovoy, commenting that presiding over History's graduation was "better than Christmas." Unfortunately, due to the current global health crisis, I will not have the opportunity to experience Christmas in May this year. I do look forward to holding an in-person commencement ceremony to honor your achievements when it is safe to do so.

As the threat of COVID-19 accelerated, I have spent a lot of time reflecting about the crisis that we are currently weathering. Like most of you, I have been blessed to have never experienced previously a societal shock of this magnitude. I do not remember the influenza epidemic of 1968, although my arm carries scars from the smallpox and swine flu vaccines. The more recent SARS, MERS, H1N1, and Ebola breakouts were minor blips for most of the population in the United States. We have not experienced a major war for nearly a half century. However, our long streak of American exceptionalism seems to have run out. I oscillate between

feeling grateful for my previous good fortune and feeling unprepared and ill-equipped for what may come.

As historians, we study change over time and its consequences. Many historians tend to gravitate towards moments of relatively rapid social change, where shifts are more visible and potentially more dramatic. An exception was the *Annales* school, which prioritized historical phenomena that changed very slowly. Not surprisingly, this approach flourished in the wake of the first and second world wars, when many European intellectuals felt overwhelmed by the consequences of catastrophic change.

Historians also have the benefit of hindsight. Looking backward, we are in a better position to assess whether or not human decisions had positive or negative outcomes in the short, medium, or long term. We can investigate the role played by microbes and ecosystems that develop in tandem with human societies. But we don't yet have the perspective to understand and evaluate the current historical moment.

As historians, however, you have the skills and knowledge to compare the history of previous global pandemics like the Black Plague and the "Spanish" flu. You know how to assess critically the superabundance of media reports to discern reputable sources from #fakenews. You also know that there is room for optimism. Out of tragedy can come innovation and opportunities for personal and societal evolution. Today, there is unprecedented cooperation within the global scientific community to develop effective therapies and progress towards a vaccine. While it is also possible to make choices that lead to greater socioeconomic disparities and the curtailing of human rights and freedoms, I am hopeful that there are positive lessons to be learned from this pandemic that will lead to more equitable, just, societies in a post COVID-19 world. While the present may feel grim and uncertain, you as well-trained historians have the wisdom, knowledge and perspective to contribute to that brighter future. As a teacher, parent, and child of elderly parents, I have some understanding of how hard this semester has been for all of you. My fellow history professors have spoken often of your grace and resilience as you navigated the academic and community challenges this pandemic has wrought. On behalf of all of us, I salute you! Be well!

Congratulations to our 2019-2020 graduates!

Doctor of Philosophy

Elena Friot
Jairo Marshall *Distinction*
Lean Sweeney

Master of Arts

Benjamin Davis
James Gleason

Baccalaureate

Emma L. Beauchamp
Dominic W. Bucalo
Arlin A. Bustillos
Giulia A. Caporuscio
Alejandra Cortes
Montifore J. Daniels
Lucia M. DeMartino
Dante M. Di Paolo
Allison J. Doney
Mackenzie Everett
Kyle C. Frank
Steven R. Hall
Keena A. Hays
Edward I. Irra
Robert S. Johnston
John R. Matthews
Rosalie M. Mondragon
Karli A. Montoya
Trevor D. Morrell

Hero L. Morrison *Honors*
Diego J. Moya
Dustin L. Newsom
Marcellina C. Padilla
Ulric C. Patrick
Mary Helen Pavlides
Jesse E. Pettinger
Robert Reyes
Katharine E. Reynolds
Michael A. Royer
Dontae K. Ruiz
Louisa H. Schoeller
Macey J. Sebastain
Jonathan B. Skroch
Christopher K. Sparks
Tyrell Taylor
Alondra Toca
Taren-Layne E. Warfield
Morgan T. York

