

Welcome to Volume 4 of *The Toro Historical Review*!

This volume is featuring a variety of student contributions from our core seminar series, HIS 300, 400, and 490, as well as book and film reviews.

History 300 is a course that introduces and develops research and analytical writing skills for the history major. For Dr. Fawver's Fall 2017 course, early American slavery served as the unifying theme to the course. Students developed specific topics to research first introduced in Philip Morgan's *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-century Chesapeake and Lowcountry*. Angelica Reed chose to analyze the economic interchanges between free whites and slaves. Dr. Namala's History 300 course focused on the study of indigenous, in particular Nahuatl perspectives on Mexican conquest history. Using Matthew Restall's *Seven Myths of Spanish Conquests* as a starting point, students developed research topics reflecting Restall's thesis that rather than Spanish superiority, it was disease, steel, and especially indigenous allies that explain the Spaniards' ultimate victory over the Mexica Empire. Taylor Marshall and Thaithao Nguyen's papers demonstrate impressive mastery of the difficult 16th-century Nahuatl sources pertaining to this topic as well as much independence in terms of locating additional secondary sources for their research projects.

History 400 provides advanced disciplinary training designed to prepare students to undertake independent historical research. A historiographical essay based on a historical theme or event chosen by the student is the culminating assignment for the course. A strong paper will showcase the skills of collecting and analyzing a large body of scholarship, as well as synthesizing the arguments and contributions of individual historians and/or schools of thought. Alvin Okoreeh's paper, developed under the mentorship of Dr. Murillo, is an example of those skills in the field of African History.

Federico Salas' work on the Moynihan report comes from Dr. Johnson's History 490 senior seminar course. The theme of the course was the classical civil rights movement, and CSUDH students were able to perform primary source research using a plethora of digitized archival holdings on civil rights from across the nation. Salas looks at how the Moynihan report, released in a way the author had not planned, illustrates problematic interpretations of black families and fails to account for the ways in which systemic inequalities contributed to poverty in black households.

In addition to the research papers introduced above, Volume 4 also features two film and one book reviews. In Dr. Murillo's History 361, History of Modern Africa,

students think about how in the United States, Hollywood films play a huge role in shaping knowledge about the African continent and its history. For their respective reviews, Thaithao Nguyen and Grace Windsor used their historical inquiry skills to analyze the 2009 film *Invictus* as a primary source. They drew on published film reviews and at least two ideas/concepts/arguments from the text by Curtis Keim, *Mistaking Africa: Curiosities and Inventions of the American Mind*, 3rd edition (Boulder: Westview Press, 2013). For Dr. Monty's History 320, History of the U.S.S.R. and Post-Soviet Russia, Sharon MacNett analyzed *Moscow to the End of the Line*, a subversive novel that circulated underground (samizdat) in the USSR during the Brezhnev era. MacNett shows how the novel's author, Venedikt Erofeev, inverted numerous Russian and Soviet literary archetypes to critique the Soviet system during the "Era of Stagnation."