
2026 Undergraduate History Conference

Presented by the *Undergraduate History
Journal at Illinois* in partnership with
Phi Alpha Theta - Epsilon Chapter



About & Sponsors



The *Undergraduate History Journal at Illinois* presents the second Undergraduate History Conference at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, in partnership with the Phi Alpha Theta Epsilon chapter at Illinois. The conference features student presentations and speakers, along with keynote speaker and history professor Carol Symes.

Our theme, 'Reflections of Power,' invites discussion surrounding power throughout history and its various reflections. Join us as we explore the dynamics of power and celebrate undergraduate history research.

We thank all of our generous sponsors who have helped make this weekend possible:

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Friday, April 17



Illini Union Room 104

Doors Open & Mingle

1:00 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.

Join us as we begin our Undergraduate History Conference.

Opening Remarks

1:45 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Michael Zimmerman II, president of the *Undergraduate History Journal at Illinois*.

Panel One: Reflection on Authority

2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Chaired by Aidan Wright

- **“Varieties of Authoritarian Modernization: Park Chung-Hee, Mao Zedong, and the Kim Dynasty in Comparative Perspective”** by Ashley Xiao
- **“Cultural Erasure and Cattle: The Impacts of British Colonialism on the Irish Agricultural and Social Landscape”** by Owen Votoupal
- **“The Newtonian Economy: Scientific Authority and the Making of Modern Political Economy”** by James Panton

Friday, April 17



Illini Union Room 104

Panel Two: Reflections on Diplomacy

3:45 p.m. - 5:15 p.m.

Chaired by Henri Marchand

- **“The Issue of the Confederations’: Modern Lessons from Unsuccessful Polish-Czechoslovak Plans for a Central European Federation Discussed in 1940-1943”** by Shreya Gosavi
- **“Anti-Communist (and Authoritarian) Allies: US Foreign Policy with Paraguay and Chile During the Cold War”** by Graciela Best
- **“The Russian Influence on Anarchism as Seen in Paris”** by Owen McCoy

Keynote Speaker Carol Symes

5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

History professor Carol Symes presents:

“Refracted through Texts and Textiles: Recovering the Power of Early Medieval Women.”

Reception

6:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Small bites & refreshments will be served.

Saturday, April 18



Illini Union Room 314

Opening Remarks

9:00 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.

Graciela Best, president of Phi Alpha Theta's Epsilon chapter.

Panel Three: Reflections on Access

9:15 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.

Chaired by Vicka Liokumovich

- **“War on Fertility: How Private Organizations Pushed Birth Control into Chicago’s Black Communities”** by Rosette Pavkov
- **“The Right to Read: Literacy, Slavery, and the Meaning of Freedom in Early America”** by Emily Helfand
- **“Archaeological Evidence of South Asian Domestic Workers: Place and Space”** by Addison Perkins

Panel Four: Reflections on Gender Performance & Sexuality

11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Chaired by Graciela Best

- **“Hunting Homosexuals: the Federal Government’s Purge of Homosexuals from Federal Agencies in Washington D.C. during the 1950s”** by Sonny Steinhauer
- **“The Power of Penetration: The Boar and the Hunt in *The Master of Game*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and *The Mabinogion*”** by Silas Kampwerth
- **“Kendo as a Feminist Sport: Kendo and the Japanese Women’s Liberation Movement”** by Naomi Saathoff

Saturday, April 18



Illini Union Room 314

Lunch

12:30 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

Lunch & refreshments will be served.

Panel Five: Reflections on Institutions

1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Chaired by Brenden Crowson

- **“Get involved! Get busy!”: LGBT Teachers’ Organizations in Chicagoland, 1994-2001”** by Colin Stanhope
- **“Living Legacies: The Evolution of the History Department at the University of Illinois from 1867 to Present”** by Ava Buckley & Jai O’Dell
- **“Republican Post: Postal Service and Implementing the Ideals of the Revolution”** by Wesley Connell

Panel Six: Reflections on Identity

3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Chaired by Vanessa Turner

- **“Intertwined Catastrophes, Unequal Afterlives: Relational Trauma Within Palestinian Literature”** by Isabelle Skibinski
- **“American Museums and Repatriation to Peru”** by Lillian Webb
- **“Caesar’s Legion: Roman Legacy in a World That Forgot Rome”** by Paolo Spica

Saturday, April 18



Illini Union Room 314

Closing Remarks

4:30 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.

Stefan Djordjevic, associate director of undergraduate studies for the history department.

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