

Gettysburg COLLEGE | THE GILDER LEHRMAN
INSTITUTE of AMERICAN HISTORY

MA in American History

Spring 2025 Newsletter



Welcome Letter

Welcome, students, friends, and alumni! I hope that you enjoy this semester's newsletter and the inspiring stories inside about our MA program and its students. So many wonderful new things are happening.

Our program's all-star faculty continues to ensure that the Gettysburg College–Gilder Lehrman MA in American History is an ideal academic home for educators. New courses offered in spring 2025 included American Art and Material Culture with Jennifer Van Horn (University of Delaware) and US Political History Since 1945 with Beverley Gage (Yale University), a 2023 Pulitzer Prize winner.

On the student side, I'd like to extend a special welcome to the forty-five students joining us through a new cohort: the MA+15/30 program. For these students, who already possess a master's degree in history from Gettysburg College or elsewhere, the opportunity to continue taking graduate courses has significant professional benefits. Many have found that their districts provide raises for fifteen or thirty units after the MA (as well they should). These MA+15/30 students are taking courses alongside more than 700 teachers, museum professionals, and National Park Service employees.

We are looking forward to the summer, which is generally our highest-enrolling semester because so many students take two courses, rather than one at a time. Only in summer is there an opportunity to complete a course in six-week sessions—just in case you have a family vacation planned, too. Summer is also when many students take Capstone and relish the chance to focus on research.

Thank you for being part of the Gettysburg College–Gilder Lehrman Institute community. It is an honor to support educators who promote historical literacy and share in our respect for primary sources, historical expertise, and critical thinking.

STAFF HIGHLIGHT: MEET RICHELLE LAMARR



Richelle Lamarr is the assistant registrar of Graduate and Summer Programs at Gettysburg College and has been supporting the MA program since it came to Gettysburg in 2022.

Richelle has over twenty years of experience in education and holds a Master of Arts in Teaching, specializing in Elementary Education and Middle Grades Math. She moved from Northern Virginia to Pennsylvania six years ago, and joining the Gettysburg College community has been a rewarding opportunity for her to work on a campus that shares her passion for learning and teaching.

On a day-to-day basis, Richelle oversees the student record side of our graduate programs. She handles course registration, drop/add, withdrawals, transcript requests, transfer credits, degree audits and conferrals, and enrollment/degree verifications.

Richelle loves that working with the MA program means that she gets to support educators. Seeing the passion our graduate students have for their field, and how they bring that knowledge into their own classrooms and spaces, is extremely rewarding for her.

Outside of work, Richelle enjoys spending time with her partner and his three children, their German shepherd, and five cats. Music and dance have been her lifelong passions, and having been an avid gamer for years, she tries to enjoy a good video game every now and then.

You can reach Richelle and her team at registrar@gettysburg.edu if you have any questions.

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We’re always happy to answer your questions and provide the documentation you need, especially for those pay increases! Feel free to reach out if you’d like to discuss how we can help you meet your district or employer deadlines. When you finish your degree, we also hope you join us in person at Commencement. It’s one of our favorite days, because we finally get to meet the people we’ve been emailing with for years.



SUMMER 2025 COURSES

Course registration for the summer term is currently open. To view full course descriptions and draft syllabi, please visit the [Gilder Lehrman MA Summer 2025 courses page](#). Applications are due Thursday, May 15 for the Summer I term and Thursday, June 26 for the Summer II term.

New Course Spotlights

The Fate of the American Constitution, 1787–1937

with John Fabian Witt | Yale University

This course takes up the social and political history of the US Constitution and the practices that have arisen around it, from the founding era to the 1937 transformation that now hangs in the balance.

The Life and Times of Ida B. Wells

with Mia Bay | University of Cambridge

This course explores the history of African Americans between 1865 and the 1930s by taking a close look at the life of anti-lynching crusader Ida B. Wells

The Civil Rights Movement

with Charles McKinney | Rhodes College

This course will examine the development of the American Civil Rights Movement from roughly the Reconstruction era through the early twenty-first century, with particular attention to the ways the Movement unfolded in the American South.

Returning Courses

The Declaration of Independence

with Eric Slauter | University of Chicago

Capitalism in American History

with David Sicilia | University of Maryland

The Great Depression and the New Deal

with Eric Rauchway | University of California, Davis

The Kennedy Era

with Barbara Perry | University of Virginia



Marion S. Trikosko, Marchers with SCLC sign for the Savannah Freedom Now Movement during the March on Washington, August 28, 1963 (Library of Congress)

MA STORIES: FROM LEARNING TO TEACHING

This semester, we asked students to share how their experiences in the MA program have shaped their teaching. Thank you to everyone who wrote to us with their stories!

Maureen McNicholl
Los Angeles, CA

"I use my material from the GLI-Gettysburg program in my classes all the time! I learned so much from my lectures, Q&A's, and papers, that I can incorporate into my teaching. For example, in Professor Denver Brunsman's course on the American Revolution, I learned about George Washington's Culper Spy Ring. I ended up creating an activity where students write messages to each other using codes found on Mt. Vernon's website—always a hit!"

Jared Maynard
Dearborn High School
Dearborn, MI

"I teach mostly Arab Muslims, so I tailored my research in this program to their culture's stories. I researched Muslims in the colonial era in the American Colonies: A Continental History, the effects on Arab Muslims after 9/11 in Presidential Leadership at Historic Crossroads, the Kennedy's relationship with Israel and its effects in The Kennedy Era, and how the US used the press to stage a coup against Iran in 1953 and how that affected relations with the Middle East in The Presidents vs. the Press. I wrote my Capstone about Dearborn specifically and how Henry Ford's car culture in the city led to a thriving Arab population at the expense of African Americans in neighboring Detroit. During the school year, I used this research to add the stories of Arab Muslims in America to the AP US History curriculum in my classroom. I also incorporated aspects of Michigan history I learned about in The History of Latina and Latino People in the US, The American Revolution, and LGBTQ History of the United States. I graduated last August and the program has helped my teaching immensely."



Photo courtesy of Jared Maynard

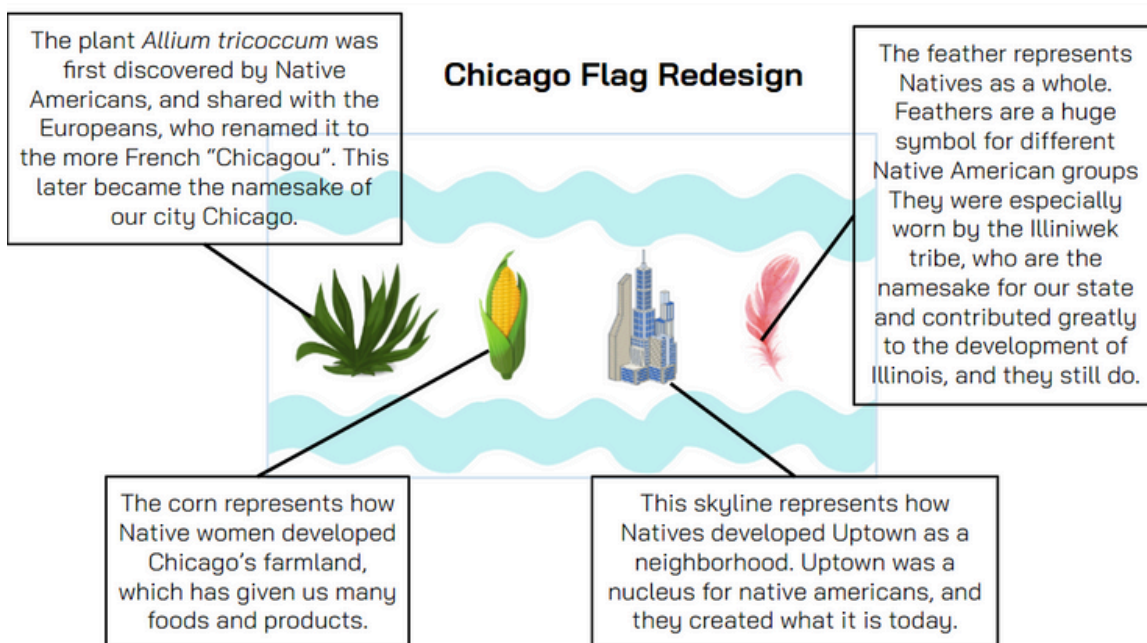
MA STORIES: FROM LEARNING TO TEACHING

Diamond (Didi) Dadej
Lane Tech College Prep
Chicago, IL

"This past summer, I took Professor Elliot West's History of the American West 12-week course as well as the Teacher Symposium course with Professor K. Tsianina Lomawaima on Native American history. These two courses enriched me incredibly. This year, I decided to assign my students an inquiry-based activism project to tackle the question: How can we teach respectful and responsible history?

"Blending local and national Native American topics, my US history students took tangible action to educate our local and national communities on Native American history. For example, my students wrote letters to our US senators from Illinois, urging them to pass the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act (S. 1723). They also created digital flyers and posters that were posted in and around our school campus, educating over 4,500 students at Lane Tech about the various eras of Native American history or amplifying the American Indian Center's Native American Heritage Month events in November 2024."

The graphics here were created by Dadej's students at Lane Tech College Prep.



MA STORIES: FROM LEARNING TO TEACHING

Kristan Kohls

Park Center Senior High

Brooklyn, MN

"This fall, I took Origins of the Civil War. As we got into the course work, it was lining up beautifully with my lessons at school! I started the school year talking about how slavery was an issue that was often 'kicked down the road' and that at some point Americans would have to deal with it. As we came to the pre-Civil War era, I gave students the question: 'Was slavery always an issue in America or was it only an issue in the days leading up to the Civil War?' Students were able to prepare their answers before speaking. We used the US Constitution and the early drafts of the Declaration of Independence to look at slavery. The discussions students had in their small groups were amazing! It still comes up in conversation as we move into other topics. They are making connections!"

Maggie May

Germantown Academy

Fort Washington, PA

"One of the missions of our history department is to help students become historical thinkers who possess the essential skills to research and write effectively. Our independent research paper process helps students to practice analyzing primary and secondary sources to produce an argumentative paper. I have modeled the 11th-grade research paper process on the methods used in the Master's Program by requiring students to submit a research proposal for topic approval. It is easy for students to say 'I want to write about Prohibition,' without knowing very much about it. Using the proposal method pushes them to dive deeper into their topic before selecting it. What about Prohibition interests you? This sparks curiosity but also teaches them how to let the research available to them drive their working research question. While learning about the topic they may encounter something they never even knew about. Don't be afraid that high schoolers aren't capable of completing the same sorts of assignments we complete. They can do it! In fact, when I ask my students to reflect upon the course, most will cite the research paper process as both the most challenging and the most rewarding part of the class!"

MA STORIES: FROM LEARNING TO TEACHING

Shannon Schaefer
Lamar High School
Houston, TX

"One major component of the IB History score is a student-led internal assessment paper focused on research in the field of history. After my first semester in the MA Program, I overhauled the way I taught this paper, incorporating an annotated bibliography, paper proposal, multiple drafts, and other checkpoints into our preparation. I became a more active participant in the early writing process with my students and had a clearer sense of where their anxieties and challenges might lie. Writing papers, and how to scaffold them for myself and for my students, has always been mystifying to me. The way papers are structured in the MA helped me understand a clearer path to a good process and implement a similar one in my classroom."

Bridget Sloan
Pulaski High School
Milwaukee, WI

"One of my classmates this summer shared that they often start a unit by having students read a primary source with no background information given and get students to make predictions based on the material. I have tried it a few times this semester and enjoy it! The students in Milwaukee History have really liked it because local history is often less well known and this gives them a chance to make an educated guess about events based on what they know of the city."



MA STORIES: FROM LEARNING TO TEACHING

Beth Doughty

Chief Umtuch Middle School

Battle Ground, WA

"I have taken so much that I learned in my different courses in the MA program, but this classroom story that I am sharing is a perfect encapsulation of expanding my existing lessons and knowledge and deepening my students' understanding of the importance and variance of multiple perspectives in the study of history. I took American Indian History with Professor Ned Blackhawk, and he made me realize that while I was including multiple perspectives in my instruction, I was not always being intentional or successful at including Native Americans in the greater narrative of my instruction. To remedy that, I've found primary source documents and resources to include Native Americans in my history courses. I do a lesson where I have students create blackout poetry by selecting words and phrases from historical documents that they keep, while covering the rest of the text with imagery related to the event or era. For my American Revolution unit, I gave my students three documents to choose from: The Declaration of Independence, King George III's Speech to Parliament on October 26, 1775, and The Oneida Declaration of Neutrality. Students then select one of the documents for their poetry and write an analytical reflection after their poem is done. After Ned Blackhawk's class, I added The Oneida Declaration of Neutrality, and it has been a powerful addition to include the Native American voice to the revolutionary conversation. Students learn that the Oneida attempted to express their sovereignty during this time of strife and the larger questions of rights and sovereignty for citizens on the North American continent.

"Here are some reflections that my students wrote regarding their analysis of the Oneida Declaration of Neutrality:

Student One: "I chose this document because I wanted to know more about the Native's, most education already bashes us over the head with 'BRITISH VS AMERICA' it's boring. The message of my poem is - Our new friends, we hear your suffering, however we refuse to join you or your enemy. Should you offer us help, or should the king, we will disregard both. We Want Peace. You hear us? PEACE. Give us peace or rest in pieces. But leave us out of it."

Student Two: "I chose this document because it was the least known of the three and it fascinated me while I read it. I think it's interesting because it told New and Old England to settle their problems between themselves without going to the Native tribes and presented the concept of the two nations being brothers, and therefore it being unethical to wage war. The message of my poem is that Old and New England are troubled but must return to peace or settle their own disputes. They are brothers, and they are the Oneida's brothers, so the Indians will not aid them in killing each other. They hope for peace between the colonists and England but will not meddle."