

For immediate release
March 12, 2023

Joan DeJean Announced as the Louis Gottschalk Winner

Joan DeJean has been awarded the [American Association of Eighteenth-Century Studies'](#) prestigious Louis Gottschalk prize for the book, *Mutinous Women: How French Convicts Became Founding Mothers of the Gulf Coast* (Basic, 2022)

The Louis Gottschalk Prize recognizes an outstanding historical or critical study on the eighteenth century and carries an award of \$1,000. Louis Gottschalk (1899-1975) was the second President of ASECS, a President of the American Historical Association, and for many years Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago; his scholarship exemplified the humanistic ideals that this award is meant to encourage.

The Committee, comprised of Drew Armstrong, Sarah Benharrach, Brooke Newman, Nush Powell (chair), and Dustin Stewart, offered the following laudatio:

In *Mutinous Women*, Joan DeJean, Trustee Professor of Romance Languages at the University of Pennsylvania, has composed an arresting account of the scores of impoverished, imprisoned French women who survived forced transportation and exile to develop into the “founding mothers” of New Orleans. First victimized by their employers and families, and then, almost at random, by the implacable power of the State, these women defied the path laid out before them, only to have their stories forgotten after their thousands of descendants began to thrive along the colonial Gulf Coast. DeJean’s work represents decades of meticulous archival work, masterfully condensed into a narrative that must tell the stories of more than a hundred women, all of whom matter, without neglecting the view and importance of the collective. It is for her triumph in this balancing act, as well as for the depth of her research, that ASECS is pleased to award her the Gottschalk Prize. DeJean’s distinctive voice displays advocacy for the corpus of women she describes, while reminding readers of the often-understudied violence that could be inflicted at the bottom of the social order. *Mutinous Women* reminds us that whatever we might like to appreciate about Enlightenment thought and high-ranking intellectuals, the disempowerment of parts of our population are a part of modernity, too, and it is incumbent upon us to track how decisions that affect that were, and are, made.