

AMERICAN
SOCIETY FOR
18TH-CENTURY
STUDIES

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

50 YEARS OF THE WOMEN'S CAUCUS

HELP US CELEBRATE!

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THE 18TH-CENTURY IN THE PRESENT

*Enlightenment for All:
Teaching the Eighteenth
Century Beyond the Academy*

CHLOE NORTHROP

Feb. 6, 2026

10amPT/11amMT/noonCT/1pmET

SAVE THE DATE

[Register here!](#)



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Misty G. Anderson
University of Tennessee

Dear colleagues,

We begin this academic year with new Bylaws, a new and expanded Board of Directors, and new questions about the long eighteenth century we inhabit. ASECS has been the foremost learned interdisciplinary society for the study of the long eighteenth century for 56 years, long before anyone was using the term that has since been re coined by Joe Roach as the “deep” eighteenth century and, more recently, by Al Coppola as the “thick” eighteenth century. With that deep, thick history swirling around us, Philadelphia calls serendipitously in 2026. It is shaping up to be a powerful and historic meeting.

The co-hosting with the Scottish Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, the overlap with "The Revolutionary Age: France, Haiti, and America" conference, and the Philadelphia Arts Collective's production of Royall Tyler's 1787 *The Contrast* create further opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration. I am mindful that some of our non-U.S. members may face challenges or concerns about travel; know that we are working on ways to keep our relationships and conversations going strong, and keeping hopes high that a record number of us will gather for this landmark occasion.

Our “18thC in the Present” webinar this year will focus on how we can rise to this occasion as public historians, whether in our own classrooms or in larger venues. We are stewards of knowledge who have an obligation to stand firm for reality, past and present, and to teach publicly as the long eighteenth century is distorted and weaponized. Public history is not limited to those with PhD training in History, but is instead a set of tools, practices, and methodologies available to us as humanistic scholars who need to discern, in the words of Kathryn Lasdow, public historian at Suffolk University, what debates are worth having, and the difference between noise and what is real when we enter public conversations. In our recent conversation, she generously made time for my questions about what makes an effective public historian, and how she encounters this moment when reason seems to have given way to vibes, memes, and spin. Perhaps the lessons imagination, affect, and the pleasures of mutual sympathy from Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments* could provide new lessons for our moment. Pope’s “Reason the card, but Passion is the gale” is an insight that we may yet turn to practical advantage. Many of you are already doing public humanities work with local historical societies, DH projects, or through op ed writing. One easy way to act publicly now is to join the campaign to save Bucknell University press, spearheaded by our own Jeremy Chow. If you haven’t signed the letter already, please consider doing so.

As a society we have been tending to the internal work of revising bylaws for the last two years. They now allow for more representation, including our first Graduate and Early Career Caucus Board member, Shruti Jain, as well as policies and procedures that respond to the concerns articulated in the Gladiator report of 2022. The new anti-harassment procedures will clarify channels for adjudicating possible cases of harassment, and broader representation on the Board of Directors means a few more voices at the table. I can assure you that you have an engaged and thoughtful Board of Directors who are putting the society’s interests first in our work, which includes fundraising to future-proof our society and making sure we remain accessible to members who are feeling strains on travel budgets and academic precarity generally. We have also launched new Membership and Careers committees to help our members navigate a range of career types and stages. One of our first webinars proposed by our newest elected Board member, Chloe Northrop, will be about encouraging and supporting research for members who are not in an R1 setting or who may not have access to tenure.

This will be a year for all of us to consider how our intellectual



ASECS Treasurer Joseph Bartolomeo &
President Misty G. Anderson (Toronto
2024, photo credit Pinpoint Photography)

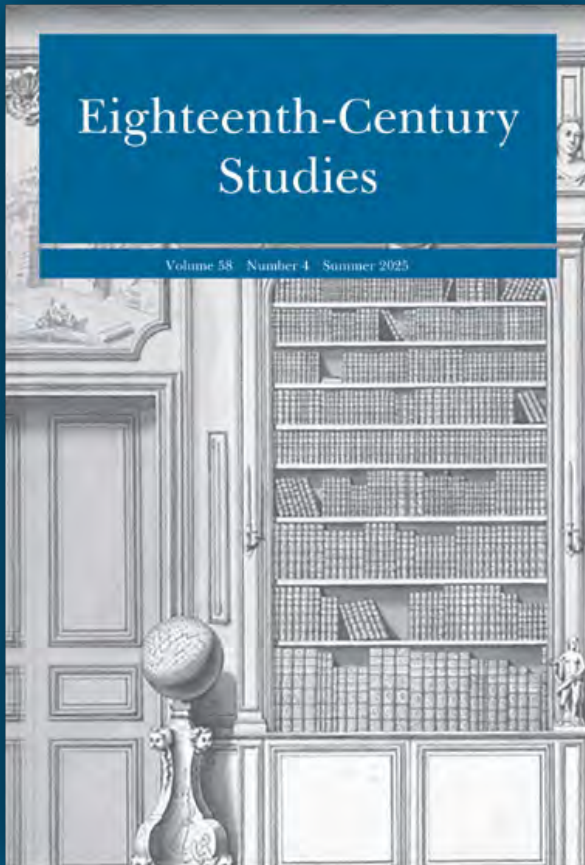
commitments, our writing, and our collaborations can help us "enunciate a confident collectivity and direct it into the future," as Suvir Kaul put it so eloquently in *Poems of Nation* (9). David Alff's piece in this past summer's issue of *Eighteenth-Century Studies* (58:4), part of a series of appreciations of Kaul's scholarship, mentorship, and activism from Alff, Laura Brown, and Chi-Ming Yang, reminded me of how Kaul's powerful insight about eighteenth-century poetry meets our own collectivity. You can find these pieces and others in the [table of contents reprinted in this Circular](#).

Speaking of that table also gives me a good opportunity to give thanks to both our *ECS* and *SECC* editors, Ramesh Mallipeddi and George Boulukos, for their outstanding work on our journals. One of the ways you can support their work and the work of the Society is to use direct links to Project MUSE when assigning articles for your classes; the revenue stream from Johns Hopkins helps the Society make up deficits. Every click counts.

I borrow from Dave's closing and his quotation of Suvir's crisp insight, unable to imagine more fitting words of encouragement and challenge as we grapple with the question of what it means to do the work we do in the present moment:

*What collectivity is this? Any serious answer will require the care of reading and the courage of conviction. As readers, we attend to the "codified operations of language" that bring a "filigreed world" into view. As actors, we advocate for the intellectual and political value of interpretations that cast that world anew. The pleasures and insights of the *vita contemplativa*, Suvir teaches us, require a corresponding will to show up and speak out—to protest, boycott, aid each other, and assume risk. No archives without repertoires of mutual support.* (58:4, p. 482)

I ask you to engage fully with this *vita contemplativa* we share, and to engage fully with each other, with creativity and in rigorous support of our shared work. That work matters more than ever, both because of the present troubles and despite them. In my challenge to be public humanists and historians wherever you are, and however you are able, I hope you'll find your greatest inspiration in each other.



Eighteenth-Century Studies 58.4

Articles

HELEN THOMPSON

Mercantilism, Enslavement, and Form: The Royal African Company's Rawlinson Archive

TYE LANDELS

John Newton, Collective Shame, and the Repentant Imagination of British Abolitionism

REBEKAH MITSEIN

Akan Worldviews and the Matter of Evil in Quobna Ottobah Cugoana's Thoughts and Sentiments

MAXIMILIAN E. NOVAK

Defoe's First Novel and the Critique of Fictional Narrative

In Honor of Suvir Kaul

CHI-MING YANG

Our Tribute to Suvir Kaul: An Introductory Sketch

DAVID ALFF

This Collectivity

LAURA BROWN

"Pulses of Difference": The Ecosystem of Eighteenth-Century English Literature

SAL NICOLAZZO

On Radical Precision: Suvir Kaul's Lessons for a Time of Monsters

SUVAID YASEEN

Translating Lineaments of Pain through Kashmiri Poetry

SARA KAZMI

An Archaeology of Silences: Memory and the Nation in Suvir Kaul's Writing on South Asia

BETTY JOSEPH

"From History Tears Learn a Slanted Understanding . . .": Poetry and Collective Mourning

*Multiple Title Review***NICHOLAS ALLRED**

Scott K. Taylor, *Ambivalent Pleasures: Soft Drugs and Embodied Anxiety in Early Modern Europe*, and: Dayne C. Riley, *Consuming Anxieties: Alcohol, Tobacco, and Trade in British Satire, 1660–1751*

*Single Title Reviews***MARK DIZON**

Kristie Patricia Flannery, *Piracy and the Making of the Spanish Pacific World*

PATRICK BARKER

Sheryllynne Haggerty, *Ordinary People, Extraordinary Times: Living the British Empire in Jamaica, 1756*

JULIA HAMILTON-LOUEY

Mary Caton Lingold, *African Musicians in the Atlantic World: Legacies of Sound and Slavery*

RUPALI WARKE

Sudev Sheth, *Bankrolling Empire: Family Fortunes and Political Transformation in Mughal India*

**LOUISE CURRAN**

Claude Willan, *Literary Authority: An Eighteenth-Century Genealogy*

BORIS ZAKIĆ

Oliver Wunsch, *A Delicate Matter: Art, Fragility, and Consumption in Eighteenth-Century France*

CHLOE WIGSTON SMITH

Andrea Pappas, *Embroidering the Landscape: Women, Art and the Environment in British North America, 1740–1770*

CHELSEA PHILLIPS

Ellen Malenas Ledoux, *Laboring Mothers: Reproducing Women and Work in the Eighteenth Century*

ANTONIO T. BLY

Barry Bienstock, Annette Gordon-Reed, and Peter Onuf, eds., *Family, Slavery and Love in the Early American Republic: The Essays of Jan Ellen Lewis*

Executive Director's Column

BENITA BLESSING

So much to celebrate!

If you are thinking to yourself that you don't feel much like celebrating at this particular challenging moment in time, I would like to challenge you to celebrate despite - or even because of! - this particular moment in time. ASECS members have demonstrated their commitment to this community in so many ways:

- **Advocating for the field.** Please make sure you click on the link to the News Circular Special Feature on the [Members Respond to the Shuttering of Bucknell University Press](#) page. Have a similar story to share? Let me know.
- **[Planning for the next 50 years with the Women's Caucus!](#)** The Women's Caucus is celebrating 5 decades of supporting research on feminist scholarship, and is planning for the next 5 decades. Bring a friend to the Women's Caucus luncheon! And keep your eyes peeled for some Giving Tuesday surprises. Mark your calendars: Dec. 2, 2025 will make ASECS history, and you'll want to be part of that effort!
- **[Early bird registration](#)** is open for ASECS' 56th Annual Meeting, April 9-11, 2026, in Philadelphia. And if over 170 sessions isn't enough to make you want to cheer, let me at least share some positive developments for our attendees:
- All attendees residing outside of the US will receive an automatic 25% discount on registration - no need to fill out any forms. You'll see the discount on your registration page. We'll also work with our attendees traveling to the US to provide them with accurate information, including providing a "buddy system" to check in with someone after crossing the border.



- We now have a General Conference Support Fund to help defray the costs of registration. See more information on that and other conference support funds on the [Awards page](#).
- Submitters and chairs have responded positively to our requests to help us control our spiraling AV costs. In our last in-person conference in Toronto, LCD projectors made up the largest expense category by far. We'll always need projectors and speakers for our members - for accessibility, and for visual and sound presentations. But when presenters offer hard copies for accessibility to audience members, and use technology like the media-sharing opportunities enabled by our app, you help keep our non-fixed registration costs in check. Thank you!

See you in Philadelphia!

SERVE ON THE ASECS BOARD OF DIRECTORS!

Nominate yourself or your colleague for:

- Second Vice President
- Member-at-Large (2)

Check out our [other volunteer opportunities!](#)

CLICK HERE

AMERICAN
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18th-CENTURY
STUDIES

The Shuttering of Bucknell University Press

SPECIAL FEATURE
ASECS NEWS CIRCULAR
FALL 2025

JEREMY CHOW

GREG CLINGHAM

KEVIN COPE

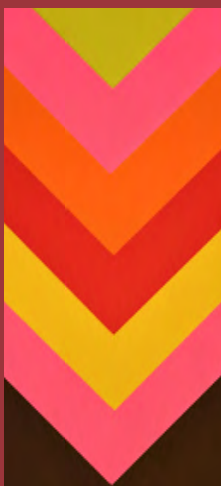
JASON FARR

EMILY FRIEDMAN

SUZANNE GUIOD

CHRIS MOUNSEY

MIRIAM WALLACE
& MONA NARAIN



[LINK TO SPECIAL FEATURE](#)



Members Respond



AMERICAN
SOCIETY FOR
18TH-CENTURY
STUDIES

EARLY BIRD
REGISTRATION
IS OPEN NOW!

Join us in Philadelphia!
**American Society for
Eighteenth-Century
Studies**

56th Annual Meeting

April 9-11, 2026

image credit K. Huff for PHLCVB



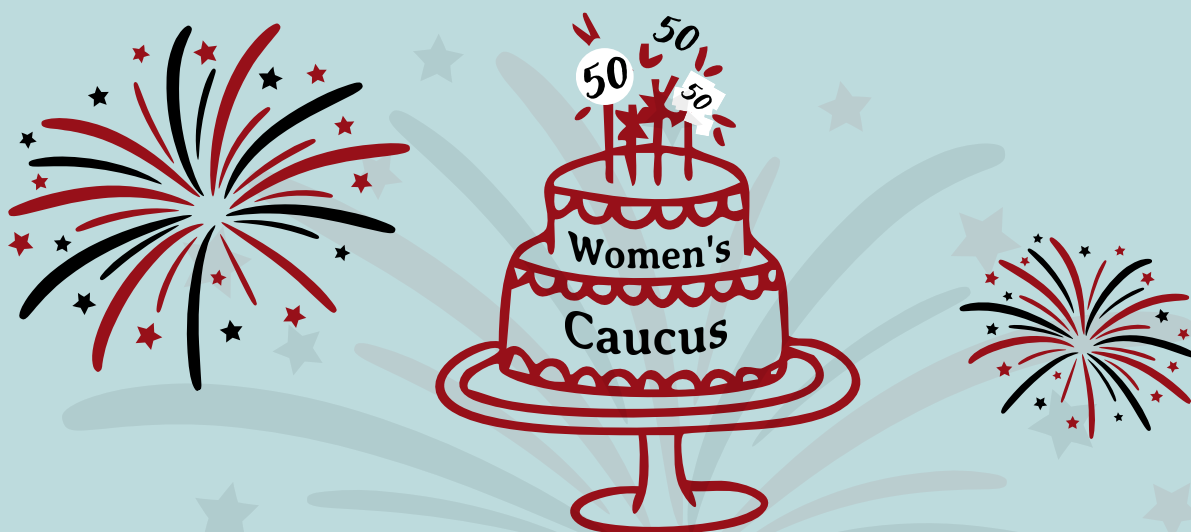
UPCOMING AWARDS, GRANTS, AND FELLOWSHIPS DEADLINES

Name	Description	Deadline
<u>Innovative Course Design Competition</u>	Submit your syllabus!	November 15, 2025
<u>A. C. Elias Irish-American Research Travel Fellowship</u>	Calling all 18C-Ireland researchers!	November 15, 2025
<u>Louis Gottschalk Prize</u>	For single-authored books	November 15, 2025
<u>Hans Turley Prize</u>	Best paper on an LGBTQ+ topic	November 15, 2025
<u>General Conference Support Fund</u>	Registration support to the ASECS Annual Meeting	December 15, 2025
<u>Graduate Student Conference Support Fund</u>	Supports graduate student travel to the ASECS Annual Meeting	December 15, 2025
<u>Non-Tenure Track Faculty (NTTF) Fund</u>	NTTF travel assistance to the ASECS Annual Meeting	December 15, 2025
<u>James L. Clifford Prize</u>	Recognizes an outstanding article on 18C-culture	January 15, 2026
<u>Theater & Performance Studies (TaPS) Graduate Student Prize</u>	Best grad student paper on theatre/performance	January 15, 2026
<u>Mary D. Sheriff Travel and Research Prize</u>	Supports the study of feminist topics in 18C-art history & visual culture	January 15, 2026
<u>Graduate Student Research Essay Prize</u>	Awarded to an outstanding unpublished research essay by a graduate student	January 15, 2026
<u>ASECS Travel Grants</u>	Support for research in 18C-studies requiring travel	January 15, 2026
<u>Women's Caucus Intersectional Prize</u>	Recognizes excellent intersectional 18C-scholarship	January 15, 2026
<u>Women's Caucus Émilie du Châtelet Award</u>	Supports ongoing women's studies research by an independent or adjunct scholar	January 15, 2026
<u>Women's Caucus Editing and Translation Fellowship</u>	Support for translations/editions of primary women's studies texts	January 15, 2026
<u>Srinivas Aravamudan Prize</u>	Recognizes an article that pushes the boundaries of 18C-study	January 15, 2026
<u>George E. Haggerty Book Prize</u>	For LGBTQ+ Studies in 18C-Scholarship	January 15, 2026
<u>Excellence in Mentorship Award</u>	Nominate a mentor!	January 15, 2026
<u>Daiches-Manning Memorial Fellowship in Eighteenth-Century Scottish Studies</u>	Supports 2–6 months of research on 18C-Scotland as a Fellow in residence at IASH	February 1, 2026
<u>María Salgado Travel Grant</u>	For grad students presenting on Ibero-American world at ASECS annual mtg.	February 15, 2026
<u>Pilar Sáenz Student Essay Prize</u>	Best graduate student essay for a course or academic program	February 15, 2026

Conference
Support
Awards

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**You're invited to the
Women's Caucus Luncheon!**

SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 2026, 12:30PM

Help us celebrate

✦ 50 years of the Women's Caucus ✦

***Tickets are available in the
conference registration portal now!
Bring a friend!***



Have you heard?

Giving Tuesday is Dec. 2, 2025!

We're preparing a surprise.

Stay tuned!

PARLIAMENTARIAN'S CORNER

Per ASECS' new Bylaws, our parliamentary authority is the American Institute of Parliamentarians' Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure-2. Test yourself on your knowledge of our parliamentary authority with this **quick quiz!**

Do you have other questions? The ASECS Parliamentarian is ready to answer them! Just drop a line to the ASECS Business Office.



**NUSH POWELL,
ASECS PARLIAMENTARIAN**

Per AIP's Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure, ASECS' parliamentary authority, **meeting minutes should contain:**

- a) The names of anyone who makes a motion and the names of any seconds
- b) All proposed amendments, whether they pass or fail
- c) A careful and accurate paraphrase of debate and discussion
- d) Attendance

[CLICK HERE](#) to find the answer on the last page of the News Circular



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Delegate's Report

ISECS Executive Committee Meeting

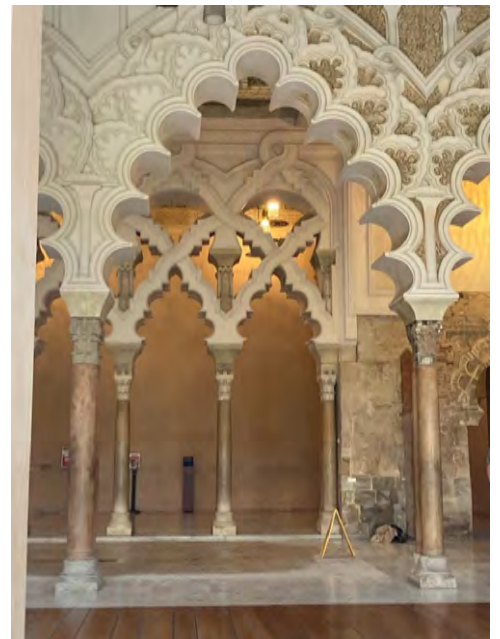
Susan Carlile, ASECS delegate, CSULB

The International Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies (ISECS) strives to bring together scholars of the long eighteenth century from every continent in the world. Their large conferences, which host 600-1200 papers/attendees from around the world, are held every four years. The conference in Edinburgh in 2019 and Rome in 2023 gave my work clearer scope and focus. This year as an ASECS delegate I attended the ISECS executive committee meeting.

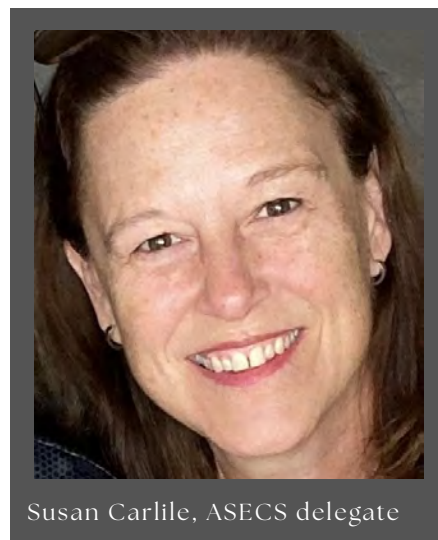


I am impressed with the variety of activities that ISECS undertakes throughout the year. The annual Early Career Seminar aims to accept as many proposals as possible and provide ample feedback. This year's "The 18th-Century and Possible Worlds" seminar also included analysis, writing, and methodology workshops. Next year "Reforming Religion, Morality and Society in Afro-Eurasia" will be held in Trieste, Italy. Proposals are due each year in July and these seminars result in a print publication the includes essays written in either English or French.

Two immediate opportunities are open to members of ASECS. The "Reframing the Enlightenment" conference will take place at the German Historical Institute in Paris, June 10-12, 2026. See the ISECS website for further information. The ISECS Digital Humanities Working group is collecting digital resources and hopes to sponsor two DH panels in Zaragoza in 2027. To connect, please fill out this questionnaire on existing 18c DH-Tools and Projects. If you would like to help shape ISECS 2027 panels, join Marion Romberg in an October Zoom meeting by selecting your availability here.



Planning for the 60th anniversary of ISECS, which will take place in three official languages (Spanish, English, French) in Zaragoza, Spain in July 2027, is well underway. ISECS hopes the location will encourage more delegates from Latin America. Also, a publication will include 28 contributors to celebrate this significant milestone. This year's assembly of delegates from countries including Brazil, Japan, and



Susan Carlile, ASECS delegate



and Iceland was held at the future site of at the University of Zaragoza, a beautiful and conveniently located campus. Zaragoza is a gorgeous, easily navigable city that is expediently reached by train from Madrid (1.5 hours) and Barcelona (2 hours) with picturesque paseos and plazas and some of the very best tapas in Spain. Delegates could happily spend many days before and after the conference exploring this fascinating, medium-sized city which is committed to reflecting on its history of overlapping Islamic and Christian influences.

CALL FOR PAPERS, *EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY STUDIES* SPECIAL ISSUE ON "PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE ENLIGHTENMENT"

Guest Editors

Ruth Mack (University at Buffalo, SUNY)

Crystal B. Lake (Wright State University)



Henry William Bunbury, A tailor riding on the back of a goose; representing an exploited worker (1780?)

Famously and influentially, Aristotle severed theory from practice, epistēmē from technē. By epistēmē, Aristotle meant to designate those forms of knowledge derived by reasoning and characterized by universality; technē, in contrast, designates the kinds of hands-on know-how one acquires by labor and handicraft. This special issue of *Eighteenth-Century Studies* seeks to address the fate of Aristotle's division in formulations of Enlightenment knowledge and expand revisionary accounts of the Enlightenment recently advanced by Paola Bertucci's work on French artisan-philosophers, Abigail Zitin's on practical aesthetics, and Ruth Mack's on handicraft philosophies, among others. Is empiricism as practical as Bacon's embrace of the artisan makes it out to be? At this historical moment, what kinds of thinking count as theory? What, after all, is the meaning of practice? How is practice related to work and society, and who has access to theory, to practice, or to creative combinations of the two?

We welcome essays from all disciplinary perspectives that document and reassess the kinds of practical knowledge that occasioned,

responded to, or resisted the philosophical ideals we commonly associate with the Enlightenment. Contributions might focus on the period's genres of instruction; developments in labor, agriculture, and manufacturing; the material cultures of science and philosophy; the everyday experiences of church or state; the techniques employed in the literary, visual, and performing arts; or the recovery of Indigenous knowledges. We are keen to read essays that attend to the bodies, gestures, and skills implicated in acts of doing and making—and that specify how practical knowledge relates to broader structures of class, gender, race, and empire.

Given the inherently interdisciplinary nature of this topic, we hope to draw together scholarship from history, literary studies, art history, performance studies, and musicology. We aim to curate a conversation that not only investigates epistemic practices but also reflects critically on how practical knowledge operated within the Enlightenment—and how attention to such knowledge might reshape our understanding of the period's legacies in the scholarly work we do today.

The journal welcomes new research in papers of 7,500 to 9,000 words by June 1, 2026. Please submit to ec.studies@ubc.ca and feel free to contact special issue editors Ruth Mack (rmack@buffalo.edu) and Crystal B. Lake (crystal.lake@wright.edu), or journal editor Ramesh Mallipeddi (ramesh.mallipeddi@ubc.ca), with questions or ideas for this issue.

Mark Vareschi Appointed Book Review Editor of *ECS*

The Executive Board is pleased to announce that the next Book Review Editor of *Eighteenth-Century Studies* will be Mark Vareschi, Professor of English at University of Wisconsin-Madison. His three-year appointment began on 1 July 2025.

A prolific and wide-ranging scholar of digital studies, media theory, surveillance studies, visual culture, and authorship studies, Professor Vareschi was recently promoted to Full Professor. He is the author of *Everywhere and Nowhere: Anonymity and Mediation in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Minnesota 2018) and co-editor of *Intermediate Horizons: Book History and Digital Humanities* (Wisconsin 2022). His articles have appeared in *ELH*, *Philological Quarterly*, *Theatre Journal*, *Eighteenth-Century Life*, and *Authorship*. Professor Vareschi has been awarded fellowships from the Folger Shakespeare Library, The Center for 21st-Century Studies, and The Institute for Research in the Humanities. He is currently at work on a monograph that develops a genealogy of surveillance technologies from the eighteenth century to the present.

The Officers and Executive Board of ASECS wish to thank Professor Kathleen Lubey of St. John's University for her outstanding service as Book Review Editor of *Eighteenth-Century Studies*.

Meet The Africa in the Eighteenth-Century ASECS/African Studies Association Publication Fellows

Twelve outstanding scholars were selected for the prestigious “Africa in the 18th-Century” Publication Fellowship, generously funded by the American Council of Learned Societies through a multi-association grant. Fellows participate in publishing mentorships at both the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies and African Studies Association 2025 Annual Meetings. We are grateful to the ASECS and ASA Members who have served as mentors to these fellows!

Benita Blessing, ASECS Executive Director

Alix Saba, ASA Executive Director

Umar Sheikh Tahir
Columbia University

What does it mean to be an 18th-century scholar?

It means engaging with a century of profound global transformation—politically, intellectually, and spiritually. For me, it’s about rediscovering African intellectual voices who were active agents in reshaping these traditions in the fields like logic, mysticism, poetry and theosophy. Studying this period allows us to challenge Euro-American and Arabic centric narratives by foregrounding Sub-Saharan scholars who contributed immensely to the global Arabic and Islamic thoughts.

What are the challenges and opportunities of studying the 18th century?

The biggest obstacles are archival inaccessibility and misrepresentation. Many 18th-century texts—especially Arabic manuscripts from West Africa—remain unedited, uncatalogued, or kept in private libraries that are difficult to access. Often, works by West African scholars writing in Arabic are misattributed to the Middle Eastern scholars, erasing their local originality and identities. This stems from colonial-era geographic and epistemic boundaries that excluded West Africa from the Arabic intellectual traditions. That challenge could be turned into opportunities. There’s a growing movement to recover indigenous knowledge through critical editions and contextual translations of Arabic manuscripts of “Beyond Timbuktu”. Shifting Arabic manuscript studies from “text” to “meaning” opens pathways for reclaiming



intellectual agency and rebuilding our understanding of African scholarly contributions to global Islamic knowledge. There are very few experts in the field who can dive into those manuscripts by reading them, critically editing them, analyzing them and putting them into conversations with other material from outside West Africa.

Allegra Aiyda
Yale University

What does it mean to you to be an 18th century scholar?

To be an 18th century scholar frequently means thinking through the contradictions of the coexistence of

enlightenment thinking and trans-Atlantic slavery. Being a scholar of West African history more specifically means exploring how African societies experienced and shaped global transformations during a period of expanding European presence in my case in coastal West Africa. 18th century history is well studied in relation to the transatlantic slave trade, but often with Africa in the background rather than the main focus. I hope to contribute to scholarship by centering Africa's global and dynamic history and its foundational contribution to modern history.

What are the challenges and opportunities presented by studying the eighteenth century?

Eighteenth century African history frequently relies on fragmentary sources in the European archives, including European travel accounts, missionary letters, trade records. In addition, African history as a formal academic field is heavily focused on the colonial and postcolonial period. There are many opportunities to push against this euro-centric and more modern leaning history, including studies emphasizing African agency and the political complexity of eighteenth-century empires and kingdoms such as Asante, Dahomey, Oyo, Kongo. Additionally, we see the emergence of more environmental



and regional histories such as the Sahel, Niger Delta and Great Lakes. Overall, despite the eighteenth century being understudied this is both a challenge and an opportunity for more scholars to engage with this dynamic century.

A. Véronique Charles
Columbia University

What does it mean to you to be an 18th-century Scholar?

Working on the eighteenth century offers me the means to investigate the parts of the African littoral that were incorporated in and interfaced with the French colonial empire. I focus on the demands and discontents from free, or possibly freed, Senegalese men and women as they navigated the French Atlantic enslaving enterprise. As a result of the armed resistance in Caribbean colony of Saint-Domingue (present-day Haiti), in 1794, the French ushered the singular legislation of abolition of slavery in Atlantic World of this century. In focusing solely on the eighteenth-century, I juxtapose the insistences from the Senegalese colony and the mandate from the French metropole for (more) Black freedom(s).



What to you are the challenges and opportunities presented by studying the eighteenth century?

As a literary scholar, I foreground the poetics within the seemingly perfunctory articulations of desired freedoms found in petitions and correspondences from colonized Black subjects addressed to French colonial and metropolitan administrations. I embrace the challenge of deciphering proto-authorship in a region without a printing press. Through this research, I have the opportunity to expand upon the work of Lisa Ze Winters (2016), and Lorelle D. Semley (2017), Jesscia Marie Johnson (2020) whose book-length studies examine the gendered experiences of freedom in French colonial Senegal during the violent context of Atlantic slavery.

Deena Al-halabieh

University of California, Santa Barbara

What does it mean to you to be an 18th-century Scholar?

To be an 18th-century scholar means reckoning with how racial, religious, and linguistic differences were weaponized to further justify human bondage. My work rethinks the 18th-century using the silenced and distorted voices of enslaved African Muslims, who despite the systemic erasure of

their ethnicity and religious identities, found ways to speak and leave behind traces of their intellectual and spiritual traditions. Being an 18th-century scholar in this context means reading critically across paradoxical archives to not only recover their voices but to also challenge the very frameworks that sought to silence them.

What to you are the challenges and opportunities presented by studying the eighteenth century?

One of the biggest challenges of studying the eighteenth century is the fragmented and often distorted nature of its archives, especially when examining the writings of enslaved African Muslims, which predominately appear through inaccurate translations and other mediated forms. Yet, these distortions provide me with an opportunity to rethink reading epistemologies and to develop new methodologies attuned to absence, translation, and erasure. Through this approach, the eighteenth century becomes a site of meaning-making that allows us to center the voices that have been silenced by colonialism and to challenge the legacies of racial and religious exclusion.

Jack Casey

New York University

What does it mean to you to be an 18th-century scholar?

As a scholar of the Age of Revolutions in Central America and the Caribbean, I am always fascinated by the eighteenth century's central role in forming modern social, political, and economic institutions. I consider it incredibly important to understand the contours of the eighteenth century in the Atlantic world not only for their relevance to the period, but also for today. For me, this





means being attentive to the role of slavery, resistance, and revolutionary movements in shaping eighteenth-century political and social discourses around republicanism and liberalism that are still around today.

What to you are the challenges and opportunities presented by studying the eighteenth century?

For my research, the eighteenth century presents a unique opportunity to understand how liberalism and slavery reached an apotheosis together while also witnessing the largest slave insurrection in world history.

Jessica Johnson
University of Oregon

What does it mean to you to be an 18th-century Scholar?

As an 18th-century scholar, I feel inclined to help highlight stories of people's lives from various classes and ethnicities, especially those whose voices have been largely ignored or forgotten in history. I view myself as tasked with the responsibility of helping to bring these stories to light and illustrate

their relevance to the present. Overall, as an 18th-century scholar, I hope my work will have a public impact by facilitating connections between the past and the public, thereby fostering a sense of community through cultural understanding.

What to you are the challenges and opportunities presented by studying the eighteenth century?

At times, studying the 18th century can be challenging on a practical level, as it can sometimes be difficult to identify and find resource materials. However, processing archival material is an enjoyable challenge, as I see each source as a piece of a large puzzle. Other times, the material can be emotionally challenging, especially when the source expresses racist, sexist, or imperialist ideologies; however, my work helps me feel connected to a complex and diverse past and demonstrates the long history of resilience by marginalized peoples.





Tim Soriano
University of Illinois, Chicago

What does it mean to be an 18th-century scholar?

An 18th century scholar anchors one's historical viewpoint in both the 17th and early 19th centuries. The 17th century provided for the western Europeans the political and religious underpinnings in the establishment of their respective "first" empires. By the early 19th century, the "first" European empires had been established, laying the foundation for the "second" waves of empire building, dominated by the effects upon the Industrial Revolution on their respective colonies. The 18th century served as the transmission between these periods, by slowly pulling away from the influence of religion and uniting a European capitalist economy with an imperial mindset.

What to you are the challenges and opportunities presented by studying the eighteenth century?

Examining the 18th century empires requires knowledge of the religious and philosophical and influences on their empire's development. Therefore, one must go beyond the archival record of a colony to ascertain the underpinnings of their respective historical events. By going "beyond the record", tighter linkages can be made between the European metropolises and their nascent colonies. As a result, other fields, such as art history, architecture, cartography and natural sciences, can come into conversation with the colonial historical record.

Myriam Iuorio
University of Toronto



What does it mean to be an 18th-century scholar?
Being an historian of the 18th century has allowed me to better understand how early modern socio-cultural events have deeply shaped our world. To me, observing how 18th-century people have influenced so many of the cultural, social and political structures we live in today, and their implications on a global scale, can provide important insights to understand and address

current issues – such as the interconnection of discriminating attitudes I address in my own research. Dealing with the complexity and contradictions emerging from 18th century documents has also been a fun and unique opportunity to sharpen my critical thinking and learn to constantly question my assumptions.

What to you are the challenges and opportunities presented by studying the eighteenth century?

As an historian engaging with critical disability studies, I am eager to explore how adopting interdisciplinary methodologies can add fresh perspectives to understanding the 18th-century world. I am curious to see how more and more interdisciplinary projects, especially those focusing on understudied fields, can help address the complexity characterizing 18th-century social, cultural and political processes. Looking at the intersections of different research fields also calls for more collaboration between scholars, putting in dialogue different methodologies and expertise. While fostering more collaborative projects presents many practical difficulties, I believe it also provides the opportunity to experiment with new fruitful angles of investigation and broaden the depth of our individual knowledge.

Justine Ajao (Tola)
University of Toronto

What does it mean to you to be an 18th-century scholar?

To be an 18th century scholar of Africa and the diaspora means going beyond the confines of 19th century accounts of slavery and emancipation to understand what modernity and freedom have come to mean. The concepts that animated eighteenth-century revolutions in politics and epistemologies all gain a new valance



when considering the active role of 18th century Africa in fashioning systems and technologies which were instrumental to the acceleration and scaling up of newly entangled economies and worlds.

What to you are the challenges and opportunities presented by studying the eighteenth century?

Sources are rich but complex in the 18th century. For me, the deep trouble that comes from working with colonial archives is most eloquently expressed by Saidiya Hartman in *Venus in Two Acts*. I read her challenge to find the voice of Black subjects in these sources as holding out that possibility while always maintaining the forward and backward sight of a Sankofa.

Matthew Steele
Yale University

What does it mean to you to be an 18th-century Scholar?

What a wonderful question! Because my work regularly takes me from colonial debates to 9th-century texts, I will answer



it a slightly different way. Rather than what it means to be a scholar of the 18th century, I will try to answer what it means to be a scholar in the 18th century. And for the communities that I work on – Muslim jurists in Africa – the 18th century is a really exciting time to be thinking about law. Legal manuscripts are fairly easy to access, family libraries are spreading throughout the continent, and travel to study under specialists of law within and outside of Africa is widespread. The 18th century is also a time of really interesting tensions as jurists in Africa are wrestling with questions of textual authority and social practice in the communities within which they live. It isn't an accident then that period produces two of my favorite works on law, a 70 some volume commentary of a medieval handbook as well as a 1000-verse poem haranguing those that rely on the very same text.

What do you see as the challenges and opportunities presented by studying the eighteenth century?

Another excellent question. Beyond the value of studying the debates and scholarship I mentioned, the opportunities

are fairly straightforward. Very few people work on Islamic law or intellectual history in Africa in the 18th century. The reasons for this probably speak to your question of the challenges working on the period. Here I offer nothing new by pointing to the shadow cast by modernity and colonialism in discussion of Islam and Africa. With few exceptions, the 18th century has been left out of many these discussions to their detriment. My hope is that my current work on an 18th century iconoclast from Guinea, one whose writings remain a staple of reformists from South Asia to Saudi Arabia, will be a modest step toward taking the 18th century as seriously to the study of Islam and Africa as we have the 19th.

18th-Century Africa Publication
Fellowships were also awarded to:

Duangkamol Tantirungkij, City University
of New York

Ethan Key, Boston University

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AFFILIATE + CAUCUS NEWS

American Antiquarian Society

- <https://www.americanantiquarian.org/programs-events/calendar-events>

Bibliographic Society of America

- CA61 Panel: Bibliography's Unacknowledged Revolutions (sponsored by the Bibliographic Society of America)
- BSA ANNUAL MEETING: In person, New York City, Friday 23 January 2026, 10:00–11:30 am
- <https://www.bibsocamer.org/news/cfp-bsa26>

Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies

- <https://www.csecs.ca/en/news>

Daniel Defoe Society

- CA60 Panel: Weather, Climate, and the Anthropocene in Daniel Defoe (sponsored by the Daniel Defoe Society)

Eighteenth Century Scottish Studies Society

- 40th Anniversary Party at the ASECS annual meeting
- Will host 15 sessions at the ASECS annual meeting, and there's been talk of cake & bubbly at a reception. Be there!

Goethe Society of North America

- CA36 Panel: Archives, Collections, Object Making (sponsored by the Goethe Society)

Historians of Eighteenth-Century Art & Architecture

- CA42 Panel: Anne Schroder New Scholars Session (sponsored by the Historians of Eighteenth-Century Art and Architecture (HECAA))

Ibero-American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies

- CA33 Panel: The Pursuit of Progress and Happiness: Debating the Declaration of Independence in Iberoamerica (sponsored by the Ibero-American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies)

Lessing Society

- CA62 Panel: Lessing's Materials/Materialities (sponsored by the Lessing Society)

Mozart Society of America

- CA56 Panel: Mozart in the Americas (sponsored by the Mozart Society of America)
- Call for Papers: H. C. Robbins Landon at 100. Conference to be held at Boston University, Boston, March 5-7, 2026. Please submit proposals by email no later than December 15, 2015 to jsmackay@loyno.edu (program chair)

North American British Music Studies Association

- CA48 Panel: Music and the British Empire in the Eighteenth Century (sponsored by the North American British Music Studies Association)

Rousseau Association

- CA39 Panel: Recent Research on Rousseau (sponsored by the Rousseau Association)

Society of Early Americanists

- CA52 Panel: Borderlands As Method (sponsored by the Society of Early Americanists)

Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing (SHARP)

- CA58 Roundtable: Making the Material Book (sponsored by the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing (SHARP))
- <https://sharpweb.org/sharpnews/>

South Central Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies

- CA38 Panel: Sizing Up the Long Eighteenth Century: The Big, the Small, Everything In-Between, Scale, Magnitude (sponsored by the South Central Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies)
- 2026 Conference: Sports, Recreation, Leisure, and All Manners of Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century, Pinehurst, NC - February 19-21, 2026. More information at: <https://www.scsecs.net/>

Southeast Asian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies

- CA65 Panel: Tropical Imaginaries: New Directions (sponsored by the Southeast Asian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies)

Southeastern Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (SEASECS)

- CA37 Roundtable: What Exactly are the New Perspectives in the Eighteenth-century?: Reimaginings, New Boundaries, Futures (sponsored by the Southeastern Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (SEASECS))
- The 52nd Annual Meeting of SEASECS, March 5-7, 2026 Cumberland University, Lebanon, Tennessee: "Through the Screen Darkly: The 18th Century in the Digital Age"

Voltaire Foundation

- CA63 Roundtable: 70 years of 18th-century scholarship: Oxford University Studies on the Enlightenment, 1955 to today (sponsored by the Voltaire Foundation)
- Call for Papers: International Conference: "A social question before the Social Question – Addressing poverty in the long eighteenth century". University of Oxford, 22-23 October 2026
 - The conference is organised by Damiano Bardelli (University of Oxford, Voltaire Foundation visiting fellow) with the support of the Voltaire Foundation and the Swiss National Science Foundation. Proposals in English, including an abstract of 250 words and a short biography and list of selected publications, should be sent to damiano.bardelli@ehess.fr by 31 December 2025. Applicants will be notified about the outcome of their submission by 31 March 2026.
- Other news: <https://www.voltaire.ox.ac.uk/blog/>

Western Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (WSECS)

- CA34 Roundtable: The Unwritten Word: Alternative Texts, Epistemologies, and Ontologies (sponsored by the Western Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (WSECS))
- 2026 WSECS Conference
 - Conference Theme: Eighteenth-Century Collaborations
 - Date: Friday, February 13 to Saturday, February 14
 - Location: Allan Hancock College, Santa Maria, California
- CfP here

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STUDIES

TUESDAY

 **Mark your calendars!** 
Giving Tuesday is December 2
How will you give?

10

Answer to Parliamentarian Corner's Quiz (p. 12):**Answer: D***A is not correct* because the names of seconds are not recorded.*B is not correct* because failed amendments are not recorded.*C is not correct* because minutes are a record of actions taken, not discussion—it's a bad idea to include discussion for many reasons, not the least of which is that it aggravates the secretary when, inevitably, people object to the paraphrasing.**D is correct:** Attendance is important and establishes that the meeting was quorate and included all necessary personnel.

**THE NEWS CIRCULAR OF THE
 AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY STUDIES (ASECS)**

-published three times per year-

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