

HI/HLS Department Newsletter

SUMMER '19 RECAP & BACK TO SCHOOL NEWS

AUP HI/HLS Department Newsletter

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AUP Students Travel to Texas

This past June, eight AUP students travelled to Texas to volunteer at Karnes Detention Facility, located in a rural patch of land in southern Texas, where migrants are detained. The students who participated were all History or History, Law, and Society (HLS) majors: Sydney Scarpa '20 (HLS), Paula Aguirre '21 (HLS), Eva Bonsignour '20 (HLS), Safira Newton Matza '20 (History), Alessandra Campbell '20 (HLS), Sofia Kaligorou '19 (HLS and ICP), Lauren Nanes '21 (HLS and Journalism), and Indigo Golub '20 (HLS & MEP).



AUP students and Prof. Kuo in Texas

Special thanks to Sydney Scarpa for providing this photo

Led by Professors Kuo and Wu, students got a firsthand glimpse of what detained migrants endure. They learned both about the legal process itself as well as the nature of immigration to the US. Among their wide-ranging duties, students did intake, gathered information, helped prepare asylum seekers for interviews with asylum officer, drafted legal declarations, and gave guidance to migrants who were being released. The bulk of their work was “CFI prep,” or “Credible Fear Interview.” By law, an asylum seeker needs to prove that he or she face imminent danger of being persecuted on the basis of race, religion, nationality, membership of a social group ,or political opinion if not granted asylum in the US. Students worked one-on-one with detained migrants, helping to prepare them for their interviews with asylum officers.

Students report that some of the most difficult work was having to tell a detained migrant that he or she has been denied asylum and will be deported. However, students then were also able to work on appeals for these decisions, as they were tasked with writing legal declarations that were submitted to immigration judges.

Students worked grueling shifts at Karnes from 9 AM to 8 PM Monday through Friday. These shifts do not include the one hour commute from San Antonio to Karnes, or the many late nights—often past midnight—spent drafting and submitting legal notes on the cases.

The planning of this project began over a year ago. Last summer, Professors Kuo and Wu—disturbed, moved, and compelled by stories of children being separated at the border—traveled together to Texas to volunteer at RAICES (Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services) for a month. RAICES, one of the America’s leading non-profits, provides legal services to detained migrants and also leads social actions to defend the rights of migrants.

Professors Kuo and Wu volunteered at a detention center, where they helped recently united families apply for asylum. Mobilized by their experience, Profs. Kuo and Wu told RAICES staff that their college students at AUP would bring energy and passion if given the opportunity to volunteer. This planted the seed for a partnership with AUP. AUP’s George and Irina Schaeffer Center for the Study of Genocide, Human Rights and Conflict Prevention has generously helped support the travel and work of the students.

Indigo Golub ‘20, a double major in History, Law, and Society and Middle Eastern Pluralities, said that for her the most difficult aspect of her time with RAICES was the endurance it required: “My time volunteering with RAICES required incredible stamina. I put a lot of effort into each legal form, case, and individual. Given the importance of the work, I felt that every job, whether it be a photocopy or a declaration, deserved my full attention and effort. This, of course, made the days extremely exhausting. By 8 pm, I was emotionally and physically drained.” Indigo also said that the work helped her understand the challenges of doing direct legal aid full-time: “I felt that if I was this exhausted after one week of this work, how would I be able to sustain this as a life-long career?” Still, Indigo remains undeterred, and says that the experience mobilized her to pursue a career devoted to migrant justice following graduation.

Lauren Nanes ‘21, a History, Law, and Society major, struggled especially with having to tell a detained migrant that her asylum claim was not granted. “My discussion of ‘next steps’ felt futile against the knowledge that she would be deported. It felt like disappointment, like defeat.” In spite of smaller victories, she felt wearied by seeing asylum seekers

get their petitions denied. The experience at Karnes motivated Lauren to continue and deepen her advocacy of migrants’ rights.

Safira Newton Matza ‘20, a History major, was particularly struck by the high influx of migrants from Cuba that she encountered at the facility. As Safira put it, “The most pervasive narrative in our media, whether it be from the left or the right, is that most migrants come from Mexico or other countries near the border—while all of us expected a variety of countries to be present, the overwhelming Cuba number was surprising.”

Another surprising thing students witnessed was the fact that the detention center was run by a private company, The GEO Group. Safira said, “There was only one member of ICE present because of this - I only recall one ICE guard at a time, accompanying the third part company.

This coming academic year, Professors Kuo and Wu plan to bring AUP students back to volunteer in Texas. Professors Kuo and Wu are creating a two-credit spring course, titled “Migrant Justice Workshop,” and four-credit summer practicum, “Migrant Justice Practicum.” These courses immerse students in asylum law and the history of migration, while also preparing them to volunteer at a detention center. They draw upon their experiences with RAICES and Professor Kuo’s prior experience as a public interest lawyer. The course will be application-based. Students with Spanish-speaking fluency and/or interest in doing direct services work with migrants are especially welcome to apply.

Professor Kuo said that she believed the experience was “life-changing” for the students who participated. She continued, “These eight women did extraordinary work. I was so inspired by them. They were thoughtful, energetic, compassionate—and most wonderfully, they approached their work with genuine humility. They came out of it asking all the right questions: How do I live meaningfully, ethically? How can I do more, learn more? How do I change the system; where should I place myself?”

Despite the arduous and sometimes daunting nature of their work, students had their share of success as well. Alessandra Campell ‘20, an HLS major and our current elected Student Government Representative for the History Department, experienced tangible victory when she took a case involving a young woman from El Salvador. With the guidance of Professor Kuo, she worked tirelessly past midnight drafting a declaration, a legal document that is submitted to an immigration judge in order to appeal the asylum officer’s denial. The declaration stated the legal case for asylum, which involved religious discrimination and harassment. In the morning, Indigo then helped Alessandra revise the declaration, fervently typing and proof-reading on the one-hour car ride to the detention center. Two days later, Indigo and Alessandra received word that their declaration was a success and the young woman was granted asylum by the judge. Indigo “felt genuine pride for the asylum seeker, for Alessandra, and myself. It was truly a team effort and I absolutely relished the empowerment we shared.”

To find out more about RAICES and their mission, head to www.raicetexas.org

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: JASMINE COWEN & TEACHING IN TAIWAN

AUP student Jasmine Cowen ‘21, a double major in History and Global Communications and one of the two Communications Directors for the HI/HLS Executive Board, returned to Taiwan for the summer. Jasmine said she was inspired to do so after traveling in March with the AUP History department as a part of the revolutionary class called “Practicing Democracy in Taiwan,” led by Professors Kuo and Wu. “During our trip, we visited Tainan, a port city in Southern Taiwan, and the old capital of Taiwan,” Jasmine said. “I think I was instantly drawn to Tainan because it reminds me a lot of my mom’s hometown in Hokkaido (located in Japan), which was also once a prosperous port city but has been widely abandoned by younger generations moving to more urban areas in recent years. Since we only had two days in Tainan during the trip, I really wanted to find a reason to go back and stay for a little longer.”



AUP students and Profs. Kuo & Wu in Texas

Special thanks to Sydney Scarpa for providing this photo

Jasmine then sought out an internship through the Taiwanese Ministry of Education as an elementary school English teacher. Jasmine said that at first it was difficult adjusting because she had no experience teaching young students and did not know how to speak Mandarin or Taiwanese. To add to the language complexity, students in Tainan regularly switch between both languages. Once she became more comfortable, Jasmine said that she fell in love with teaching. The student's eagerness to learn English and mentorship of older teachers helped her to improve her classroom management skills and lesson plans.



Connecting back to her trip to Taiwan with AUP, Jasmine said that working in Tainan allowed her to meet native Taiwanese people who had lived through Japanese colonization first-hand. Jasmine said that she “had the opportunity to speak with locals about their experience with national identity, and how they thought their identity as a Taiwanese person has changed throughout the course of their lives. The idea of an evolving Taiwanese identity is something we discussed deeply during the practicum, and I'm really grateful for the knowledge from the course which allowed me to ask more thoughtful questions while talking to locals.”

Thank you to Jasmine for sending these photos



A New Club Comes to AUP this Fall: Migrant Justice Club

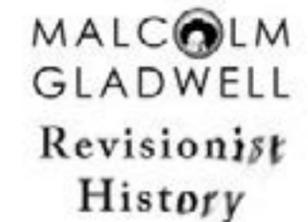
This semester, consider joining the newly formed Migrant Justice Club. Led by Alessandra Campbell '20, this club's mission is to provide hands on international opportunities to go out and work firsthand with organizations in their efforts to help migrants. This may include traveling to volunteer at a detention center in Texas; working at a legal aid organization; and doing humanitarian work at refugee camps across Europe. Through connections made with organizations, the club aims to supply club members with opportunities and the tools needed to be resourceful. Upon return they can share their experiences with the rest of the club and the university community.

How is the Migrant Justice Club different that AUP Campus UNICEF and BV Syria? BV Syria is focused on helping specially Syrian refugees, while the MJC hopes to connect students with refugees from all parts of the globe. Additionally, while UNICEF offers opportunities for engagement in Paris, the MJC hopes to provide students with a network to find opportunities across the world.

Listening Suggestions from our Professors

Looking for a new podcast to listen to? Looking to get into podcasts but don't know where to start?

-Profs. Kuo and Wu recommend Serial Season 3. Many of you may have binge-listened to Season 1. But do check out Season 3—it's a riveting look at the criminal justice system; you'll hear conversations in courtrooms, judges' chambers, prosecutors' offices. This season focuses on “the extraordinary stories of ordinary cases.” <https://serialpodcast.org>



-If you're curious about law school and the LSAT Profs. Wu and Kuo recommend this particular episode of “Revisionist History,” on the LSAT, law school admissions, and the illusion of meritocracy. <http://revisionisthistory.com/episodes/31-puzzle-rush>

-They also recommend “The Daily,” a daily, M-F current events podcast from The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/column/the-daily>

Faculty Spotlight — Prof. Spieler on the Research Process

Our distinguished Professor Spieler is currently working on a new book, *Slaves in Paris*. Professor Spieler's first book, *Empire and Underworld: Captivity in French Guiana* (Harvard Historical Series, Harvard University Press, April 2012) was awarded the prestigious the J. Russell Major Prize (2013) and the George L. Mosse Prize (2013) from the American Historical Association.



Prof. Spieler

Thank you to Prof. Spieler for providing this photo

To get a sense of a professional historian's research process, Prof. Spieler graciously agreed to answer some questions about how she goes about her work, how she writes, and how she got inspired to do her project. She also discussed potential projects coming to AUP that stem from her new research.

Professor Spieler said that the book began as a research accident: “I was conducting research for a different project—about naming, name-changing—compulsory and voluntary—the usurpation of other people's names, and similar puzzles related to a person's legal and social identity. Toward that end, I was flipping through

the index to the print catalogue of the archives known as the Archives de la Bastille—a trove of police documents from the seventeenth and eighteenth century—police files, mostly. I was looking for the key word ESCROC and was surprised to come across the word ESCLAVE in the index. I decided to look up all the materials in the index and initially intended to present a few of those materials in a special dossier for an academic journal with a translation, introduction and commentary. The sources that I found described slaves being hunted by the Paris police, typically at the request of their masters, usually because they were seeking freedom in Paris.”

Prof. Spieler believes that Paris has a unique relationship with slavery, saying that, “When we think about the relationship between plantation slavery and domestic France, we normally think about French port cities– Bordeaux, Nantes, Le Havre–with maritime economies that revolved around the slave trade.” Paris has long been seen as a “haven” city for slaves with the law being principally opposed to slavery. However, as Prof. Spieler discovered in the Bastille files, the documents “draw attention to the role of administrators and even lawyers in helping masters with unruly domestics who sought to become free in the city.” Discovering this difference is important, she explains: “So long as we picture imperial slavery as a marginal phenomenon in France, an oddity of the Atlantic coastline, French imperial slavery will remain extrinsic to the general narrative of French history. My book aims to connect eighteenth-century Paris– the hub of French finance, the seat of national courts, the center of intellectual life, of aristocratic society, and of European consumerism– to plantation slavery and the slave trade.”

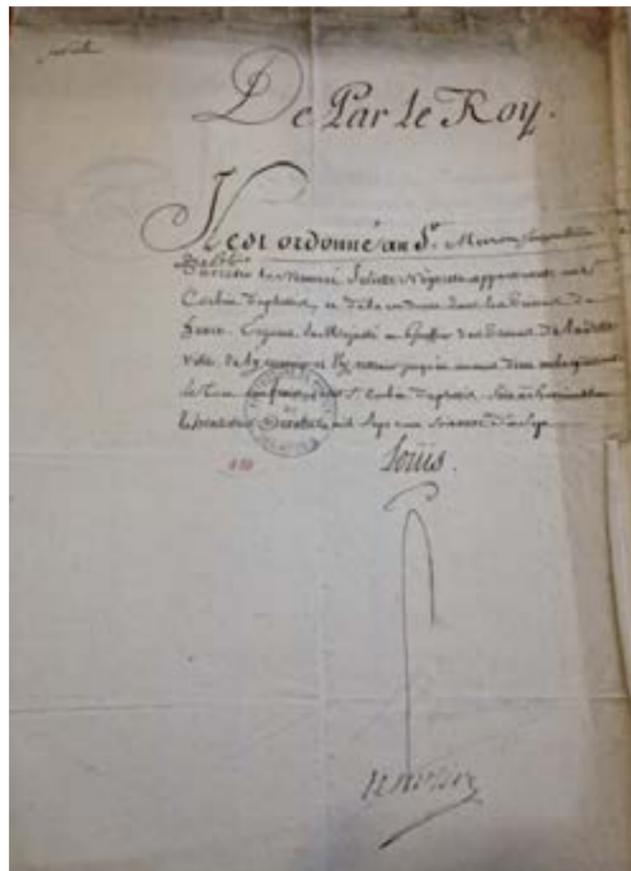
Prof. Spieler hopes that her students discover the pleasure of conducting archival research and that they understand the “detective-like quality” of what historians and researchers do. Prof. Spieler’s extensive use of not only primary sources, but also unpublished primary sources, certainly highlights how exciting archival research can be! Using these sources as her guide, Prof. Spieler will be able to portray a new perspective on the lives of slaves in Paris. To help inspire the love of research, Prof. Spieler aims to include primary source research into all of her classes.

In exciting news, this semester Prof. Spieler will hold a workshop about some unpublished sources she is using in her book. These sources relate to slave trading and the lives of enslaved domestics in Paris. A sample of possible materials for this workshop would include correspondence about a French naval campaign to destroy British slave ships and intercept slaves off the coast of Africa; a slave trading account book; a Parisian police file involving the stakeout of a slave woman; and a Parisian marriage contract in which the bride’s property consists of a huge slave plantation in

Keep your eyes peeled in future newsletters for the exact date.

Additionally, there will be other opportunities to acquaint students with these materials in spring 2020, when Prof. Spieler is teaching both a course on comparative slavery and a seminar with Professor Kuo called “Becoming Free.” The course “explores the lives of former slaves and former convicts” and considers the “problem of liberation in the Americas, Africa, the Indian Ocean, and Asia from the eighteenth century to the present.”

Prof. Spieler’s book is under contract with the Harvard University Press. Although a work in process, she hopes to finish the book by Summer 2020.



Pictured is one of the pages of the primary sources Prof. Spieler is working with in the archives. Thank you to Prof. Spieler for sending the photo.

Upcoming Events

HLS Open House—Open House for those interested in the History, Law, and Society major.
September 12th, 6:30 PM on the 8th floor of Quai

Interested in applying for fellowships and not sure where to start? Stuck on writing your personal statement in an application? There are a number of fellowships, including the Fulbright (due date is coming up: October 8th!), the Truman, the Coro Fellowship, and others, that will financially support your travel, research, or desire to do social justice work. Please come to a session led by Albert Wu, Assistant Professor of History and Department Chair of the History Department. Professor Wu is the recipient of fellowships such as the Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellowship for Postdoctoral Researchers; the Fulbright IIE for Germany; and the Academia Sinica, Taiwan, Fellowship for Doctoral Candidates in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Additionally, Professor Kuo, recipient of fellowships such as the Truman, the Soros, and the Skadden, will Skype in for this session. It will take place on **September 12th, 4:30 to 5:30 PM, in C-104.**

Elizabeth Foster, Associate Professor of History at Tufts, researches the French empire and African history. She will be giving a talk on Catholicism and the decolonization of Africa. This takes place on **Wednesday, Sept. 18 at 6 PM, in C-104.**

A l’occasion du 75ème anniversaire de la Libération de Paris
Led by The First Alliance, a foundation which promotes the bilateral relationship between the United States and France, this upcoming colloquium will feature presentations by prominent historians and a number of current and recently retired French and American senior officers. For more information or to register, contact mecenat@musee-armee.fr or +33 (0)1 44 42 32 72.
Friday Sept. 13 from 9 AM to 4:30 PM at the Grand salon - musée de l’Armée - Hôtel national des Invalides.

This edition of the newsletter was brought to you by Zach Egan, the Newsletter Editor. If you have anything you want to share with our community, such as local events, book and podcast recommendations, internship experiences, or suggestions please reach out to me at a102513@aup.edu to be featured in upcoming editions!

HLS/HL Executive Board is run jointly by two of our majors: Sydney Scarpa, the Director of the History/HLS Executive Board, and Alessandra Campbell, our Student Government Senator (SGA).

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