
NEW FACULTY

Subho Basu

Professor Subho Basu recently joined the history faculty at Syracuse University after being educated in India and England and also teaching in England. For Professor Basu, history is a family vocation: his father was a professor of European history. Professor Basu specializes in Indian and South Asian history, especially 19th and 20th century labor politics and radical politics, such as communism and socialism. He is currently studying Bengali travel within the British Empire and the travel accounts of non-Europeans.

When doing his research, Professor Basu first visits the India Office Records at the British Library and then the National Archives of India in Delhi, as well as State and Municipal Archives in India. He also interviews key personalities in England and Scotland, as well as in India.

Professor Basu is enjoying life at Syracuse, (though, “not the winter”). He particularly enjoys teaching young American students, who are largely free of preconceived ideological notions regarding British Imperialism, and are more like a ‘blank slate’ compared with students in Britain.

When students register for one of Professor Basu’s classes, they sometimes think they are in a class about Native American history; but he uses this common misconception as a starting point for discussions of globalization. “What was Columbus looking for when he sailed to the Caribbean? India.”

“Life is interesting,” he remarks “Life is global. You don’t know where you’ll end up. History is unfolding everyday.”

Lydia Stamato

Michael Ebner

As a recent addition to the history department, Professor Michael Ebner’s main focus is Italian fascism. Professor Ebner has a B.A. in History and English from the University of Wisconsin, and an MA and a Ph.D. in History from Columbia University. He studied abroad in Italy, and, wanting to combine his interest in languages and travel with

literature, he settled on history. In graduate school, he began to study Italian unification, but then studied socialism and the working class.

By reading biographies of Italians of the early 20th century, he eventually moved to his current focus of the victims of Italian fascism. His research interests lie in Mussolini's victims who were sent to political detainment. Ebner began his career here at SU in fall 2005. He has taught History 316—Europe since 1945, and for the spring 2006 semester, he taught History 112—Europe since Napoleon and History 400—European Fascism, which covers fascism within Germany, as well as Italy.

In the future, he would like to teach a class on fascism in which watching films on the subject would be a major component of the class. In fall 2006, he will teach a History 401 class titled “Europe between the Wars”, which will focus on “the crisis of European civilization during the period between the First and Second World Wars”. In the future, he would like to teach a 401 course that focuses entirely on Italian fascism.

Theodore Van Houten

Olatunji Ojo

From a small village in Nigeria, Professor Olatunji Ojo has settled at Syracuse University; at least it is slightly warmer here than in Toronto, where he studied at York University. Professor Ojo studies and teaches African history, African Diaspora, and women and gender in Africa.

Though he originally wanted to study law, his father encouraged him to continue studying history instead. (If only we could all be so lucky!) By his second year in graduate school, he was convinced that his father was right all along.

Professor Ojo begins his research just as we students do: by reading contemporary literature to find out what is already known. He visits archives in the United States, Europe, Canada, and Africa. Then he interviews people; he asks about their parents—what do they remember? He also likes to conduct group interviews with between five and ten people.

The most enjoyable aspects of teaching for him are imparting knowledge to students who know very little about Africa, and changing preconceived notions they may have acquired from myth and the media.

To Professor Ojo, history is important because it affects the way we see things in everyday life. It can help people make informed opinions of current problems based on problems in the past. It is also useful in very practical situations, such as studying law and even buying stock.

“Be focused on what you enjoy,” he recommends, “be it sports, music, or history. See history as valuable to everything you do in life, and have a positive attitude.” In regards to both history and life in general, Professor Ojo believes that “tomorrow is a product of today,” and to be successful, we need to make a start now.

Lydia Stamato

We are all delighted to welcome our newest faculty to Syracuse!