

Sean H. Vanatta

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Economic and Social History
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EMPLOYMENT AND APPOINTMENTS

- 2020- Lecturer in U.S. Economic and Social History, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Glasgow
- 2023- Senior Fellow, Wharton Initiative on Financial Policy and Regulation, Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania
- 2019-2020 Visiting Assistant Professor, Gallatin School of Individualized Study, New York University
- 2018-2019 Lecturer, Princeton Writing Program, Princeton University
- 2018 NEH Hagley Postdoctoral Fellow in Business, Culture, and Society, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE
- 2017-2018 Quin-Morton Teaching Fellow, Princeton Writing Program, Princeton University

EDUCATION

- 2022 Post Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice, University of Glasgow
- 2018 Ph.D., History, Princeton University
- 2011 M.A., History, University of Georgia
- 2007 B.A., History and B.B.A., Marketing, University of Georgia

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Plastic Capitalism: Credit Cards and the Making of Modern Consumer Finance (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, *forthcoming*)

The Banker's Thumb: A History of Bank Supervision in the United States, with Peter Conti-Brown (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, *forthcoming*)

Journal Articles

- 2023 “[Surveillance Archive: Using Reports in Business History](#),” with Grace Ballor and Gabriela Recio (*Management and Organizational History*, firstview)

- 2021 [“The Frail Bonds of Liberalism: Pensions, Schools, and the Unraveling of Fiscal Mutualism in Postwar New York,”](#) with Michael R. Glass, *Capitalism: A Journal of History and Economics* 2, no. 2 (Summer 2021): 427-472
- 2021 [“The Logic and Legitimacy of Bank Supervision: The Case of the Bank Holiday of 1933,”](#) with Peter Conti-Brown, *Business History Review* 95, no. 1 (Spring 2021): 87-120
- 2018 [“Charge Account Banking: A Study of Financial Innovation in the 1950s,”](#) *Enterprise & Society* 19, no. 2 (June 2018): 352-390
- 2016 [“Citibank, Credit Cards, and the Local Politics of National Consumer Finance, 1968-1991,”](#) *Business History Review* 90, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 57-80 (winner of the 2016 Henrietta Larson Award for the best article in the *Business History Review*)
Media: [Washington Post](#) (October 14, 2021), [Bloomberg](#) (October 16, 2021)

Articles in Preparation

- “The Financialization of U.S. Public Pensions, 1945-1974” (revise and resubmit, *Review of Social Economy*)
- “Revolving Door Governance: Bank Supervisors in the United States, 1865-1933,” (in preparation)
- “Supervision, Discretion, and the Rule of Law,” with Peter Conti-Brown (in preparation)
- “The Ascent of the Prudent Man: State Trust Rules and the Origins of Financialization” (in preparation)

Book Chapters

- 2018 “Economics and Capitalism—a Historiographical Survey,” *Routledge History of the 20th Century United States*, Darren Dochuk and Jerald Podair, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2018), 104-115
- 2017 “Executive Stewardship of America’s Credit Card Economy,” *The American President and Capitalism Since 1945*, Roger Biles and Mark Rose, eds. (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2017), 188-206
- 2017 “Protecting Plastic: Credit Card Fraud in Historical Perspective,” *The Book of Payments: Historical and Contemporary Views on the Cashless Economy*, Bernardo Batiz-Lazo and Leonidas Efthymiou, eds. (London: Palgrave, 2017), 167-176

Policy Reports

- 2019 [“The Municipal Banking Movement: An Opportunity for Baltimore,”](#) *The Abell Report* 32, no. 6 (July 2019), Abell Foundation, Baltimore, MD

Working Papers

- 2013 [Conflicts of Interest: Regulated Self-Regulation and the 1963 SEC Special Study](#), Rethinking Regulation Working Paper Series, Kenan Institute for Ethics, Duke University

Conference Papers

- 2020 [“Histories of Bank Supervision,” Bank Supervision: Past, Present, and Future](#), Federal Reserve, December 11, 2020

Public History

- 2020 “The Gift,” with Randall Todd Pippenger, in *Building on Stone: Perspectives on the Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies at Fifty*, Angela Creager, ed., Shelby Cullom Davis Center, Princeton University, 7-13
- 2019 [Let’s Have at It: The Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies at Fifty](#), with Randall Todd Pippenger, Shelby Cullom Davis Center, Princeton University

Book Reviews

- 2022 Review of *The Long Crisis: New York City and the Path to Neoliberalism*, by Benjamin Holtzman, *Enterprise & Society* 23, no. 2 (Spring 2022): 594-596
- 2021 Review of *Automating Finance: Infrastructures, Engineers, and the Making of Electronic Markets*, by Juan Pablo Pardo-Guerra, *Business History Review* 94, no. 4 (Winter 2021), 855-858
- 2019 Review of *Market Rules: Bankers, Presidents, and the Origins of the Great Recession*, by Mark H. Rose, *Business History Review* 93, no. 1 (Spring 2019), 215-218
- 2018 Review of *Finance in America: an Unfinished Story*, by Kevin R. Brine & Mary Poovey, *Economic History Review* 71, no. 4 (November 2018), 1438-1439
- 2018 Review of *J.C. Penney: The Man, the Store, and American Agriculture*, by David Delbert Kruger, *The Annals of Wyoming* 90, no. 1 (Winter 2018), 34-35
- 2017 Review of *Jumping the Abyss: Marriner S. Eccles and the New Deal, 1933-1940*, by Mark Wayne Nelson, *Journal of Economic History* 77 (December 2017), 1236-1238
- 2015 Review of *Banking in Oklahoma, 1907-2000*, by Michael J. Hightower, *The Annals of Wyoming* 88, no. 3 (Summer 2015), 37-38
- 2011 [Review of *Investing in Life: Insurance in Antebellum America*](#), by Sharon Ann Murphy, *Common Place: The Interactive Journal of Early American Life* 11 (March 2011)

Select Non-Peer Reviewed Articles

- 2022 [“Biden Just Made the Credit System More Fair, but Didn’t Fix All Its Flaws,”](#)
Washington Post (April 24, 2022)
- 2021 [“The Retail Theft ‘Crisis’ Isn’t What You Think,”](#) *Washington Post* (October 14, 2021)
- 2021 [“Focus on Bank Supervision, Not Just Bank Regulation,”](#) with Peter Conti-Brown,
Brookings Series on Financial Markets Regulation (October 28, 2021)
- 2021 [“When South Dakota Became the New Cayman Islands for Banks and Finance,”](#)
Washington Post (October 14, 2021)
- 2021 [“Consumer Borrowing Was Heavily Restricted in 1940s to Curb Inflation – It’s Time We Did It Again,”](#) *The Conversation* (August 19, 2021)
- 2021 [“Theorizing Bank Supervision Through Its History,”](#) *Oxford Business Law Blog*
(March 11, 2021)
- 2020 [“The Next Covid-19 Victim? Public Pension Funds,”](#) with Michael R. Glass,
Washington Post (April 17, 2020)
- 2016 [“In the Hot Seat: Wells Fargo and Bank Supervision,”](#) with Peter Conti-Brown,
Law360.com (October 4, 2016)
- 2013 [“Swiped: The Political Economy of Debit Card Fees,”](#) *The American Interest* Vol. IX no. 2 (November/December, 2013), 34-40

Other Media

- 2022 Featured in [“the Bank Card,”](#) *The Secret Genius of Modern Life*, BBCTwo, November 10, 2022
- 2022 [“Finally, a Fed VC Supervision Nominee w/Sean Vanatta,”](#) *The Reserve*, January 18, 2022.

Encyclopedia Entries

- 2011 With Dan Du, [“Industry and Manufacturing in Confederate Georgia,”](#) in John Inscoe, ed., *The New Georgia Encyclopedia*; rpt. in John Inscoe, ed., *War in Georgia: A New Georgia Encyclopedia Companion* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011)

TESTIMONY

- 2022 “HB-984: Maryland Public Bank Task Force – Establishment,” testimony before the Maryland House Economic Matters Committee in support of HB 984, “Maryland State Bank Task Force – Establishment” (March 2022)

2021 “The Time Has Come for Public Banking: Testimony in Favor of Maryland House Bill 41,” testimony before the Maryland House Economic Matters Committee in support of HB 41, “Maryland State Bank Task Force – Establishment” (January 2021)

AWARDS, GRANTS, AND HONORS

2022 Carnevali Small Research Grant, Economic History Society

2022 Early Career Researcher Support Fund Grant, University of Glasgow, School of Social and Political Sciences

2021-2023 Member, FRASER Advisory Board

2017 Henrietta Larson Award, *Business History Review*

2015 Alfred D. Chandler Jr. Travel Fellowship, Harvard Business School

2015-2016 John E. Rovensky Fellow in U.S. Business and Economic History, the University of Illinois Foundation and the Business History Conference

2014 Oxford Journals Doctoral Colloquium, Business History Conference

2013-2014 Research Affiliate, Center for the Study of Social Organization, Princeton University

2013-2014 Teagle Teaching Fellowship, McGraw Center for Teaching and Learning, Princeton University

2013 History Project Research Grant, the History Project and Institute for New Economic Thinking

2013 Moody Research Grant, Lyndon Baines Johnson Foundation

2012 Program in American Studies Summer Research Prize, Princeton University

2011 Dean's Award in Arts and Humanities, University of Georgia Graduate School

2010 Gregory Graduate Research Award, University of Georgia History Department

PUBLIC HISTORY

2018-2019 Davis@50: During the summer of 2018, I began managing an ongoing project to document the history of Princeton's Davis Center, evaluating the ways the center has shaped historical writing since its founding in 1969 and examining how the center has changed over time. Central to the project a series of oral history interviews with past directors and fellows of the center, and a digital history component, making these materials available online for future researchers.

2013-2017 Oral History for Prof. Alan Krueger, former Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers: Beginning in the summer of 2013, I worked with Professor Krueger to

document his service, first as Deputy Treasury Secretary, 2009-2010, and then as the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, 2011-2013, under President Barak Obama.

[Finding Aid for Alan Krueger Papers](#), The Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

- 2023 “Reinventing Bank Supervision during the New Deal, 1933-1938,” panelist on “The Great Inflation,” and comment on “Protect America Again,” Business History Conference, Detroit, MI
- 2023 Comment on “Early Forms of Control in the United States” panel, Varieties of Supervision: The Surveillance of Banks in a Long-Term Perspective conference, Conservatoire Des Arts Et Metiers, Paris, France
- 2022 “Hiring the Pros: The Professionalization of State Pension Fund Investment, 1945-1974,” Fifth Conference on Law and Macroeconomics, Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
- 2022 “Bank Examiner’s Reports Are Not Boring: A Talk about Form[s] and Method[s],” Method and Madness: Historical Interpretation in a New Age of Extremes, Business History Conference, virtual
- 2022 “Risk, Discretion, and Bank Supervision,” Accountability & Monetary Policy Conference (Annual Conference of the Journal of Financial Regulation), Columbia University Law School, New York, NY
- 2022 “Revolving Door Governance: Bank Supervisors in the United States, 1865-1933,” World Economic History Congress, Paris, France
- 2022 “The Ascent of the Prudent Man: State Trust Rules and the Origins of Financialization,” Association of Business Historians Conference, University of Strathclyde Business School, Glasgow, UK
- 2022 Panel chair, Business, Banks and the Making of Europe’s Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), 1957-1992, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK
- 2022 “The Ascent of the Prudent Man: State Trust Rules and the Origins of Financialization,” Business History Conference, Mexico City, Mexico
- 2022 “Hiring the Pros: The Equity Revolution and the Professionalization of State Pension Fund Investment, 1955-1975,” Workshop on Financialization and the Social Economy, sponsored by the Review of Social Economy and the Department of Economics, University of Massachusetts, Boston, MA
- 2021 “The Bankers Thumb: A History of Bank Supervision in the United States,” with Peter Conti-Brown, “Financial Regulation Book Retreat,” Workshop on Financial Regulation, Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA

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- 2021 Discussant, “The Intellectual History of Shareholder-Centered Models in Economics and Finance,” by Geoffrey C. Friesen, “Economics, Policy, and Morality” Panel, Southern Economic Association Conference, Houston, TX (virtual)
- 2021 “From Professional Training to Professionalization: Bank Supervisors in the United States, 1865-1960,” Human Capital in the History of Financial Regulation and Supervision, 19th-21st Centuries, Uppsala Economic History Department, Uppsala, Sweden (virtual)
- 2021 “Federal Bank Supervision and Supervisory Discretion, 1863-1875,” Business History Conference, Cyberspace (formerly Detroit, MI)
- 2020 “Histories of Bank Supervision,” Bank Supervision: Past, Present, and Future, a virtual conference cohosted by The Federal Reserve Board, Harvard Law School, and Wharton School of Business
- 2020 “Splitting the Atom of State Finance: New York State Pensions and the Liberal Origins of Financialization,” Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, Washington, DC (Cancelled)
- 2020 “The Fall of Fiscal Mutualism: New York State Public Employee Pensions and the State Origins of Financialization,” Business History Conference, Charlotte, NC
- 2020 Discussant, “Making the World Safe for High Finance” Panel, Business History Conference, Charlotte, NC
- 2019 Discussant, “Finance Unbound: Offshore Banking in the Postwar Era” Panel, Business History Conference, Cartagena, Columbia
- 2018 “‘A Very Distasteful Subject:’ The Rise of the Compliance Ethic in Federal Bank Supervision, 1965-1985,” Policy History Conference, Tempe, AZ
- 2018 “‘How to Counterfeit Credit Cards and Get Away with It:’ Federalism, Criminal Law, and the National Credit Card Networks, 1966-1975,” Financial Regulation Conference, Zicklin Center for Business Ethics Research, Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
- 2018 “Consumers and the Rise of the Compliance Ethic in Federal Bank Supervision,” Business History Conference, Baltimore, MD
- 2017 “Federalism and the Postwar Financial System,” American Society for Legal History, Las Vegas, NV
- 2017 “Welfare Institution and Institutional Investor: New York State Employee Retirement System, 1954-1972,” Institutions and their History, Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
- 2017 “Federalism and America’s Postwar Credit System,” Financial Regulation and the Rule of Law Conference, Zicklin Center for Business Ethics Research, Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA

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- 2017 “Federalism and the Postwar Financial System,” Business History Conference, Denver, CO
- 2016 “Prices are Political: Credit Card Interest in the Age of Inflation, 1968-1980,” Law in the History of Capitalism: A Conference, American Bar Foundation, Chicago, IL
- 2016 “Charge Account Banking and the Political Origins of America’s Credit Card Economy, 1950-1958,” Policy History Conference, Nashville, TN
- 2016 “Guardians of Finance: Bank Supervision from the Civil War to the Global Financial Crisis,” Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, Providence, RI
- 2016 “Prices are Political: Credit Card Interest in the Age of Inflation, 1968-1980,” Business History Conference, Portland, OR
- 2015 “For Carter it was Never in the Cards: Reassessing Credit for Reagan’s Victory,” Business History Conference, Miami, FL
- 2014 “‘Where the Credit Card Craze is Taking Us:’ Unsolicited Credit Card Mailing and the Origins of Financialization in Congress,” Policy History Conference, Columbus, OH
- 2014 “Protecting Plastic: Credit Card Fraud and the Defense of America’s Credit Currency,” Business History Conference, Frankfurt, Germany
- 2013 “‘What the Fuck are We Collectors for American Express’: Credit Cards, Crime, and the Financial-Regulatory State,” Commerce, Corporations and the Law Conference, The History Project and Institute for New Economic Thinking, Princeton, NJ
- 2013 “The Anti-Usury Paradox; or How Robert Bork Reshaped America’s Consumer Credit Geography,” Annual Meeting of the Law and Society Association, Boston, MA
- 2013 “Accounting for Honor: Transparency, Financial Numeracy, and Masculine Identity in the Late Antebellum South,” Business History Conference, Columbus, OH
- 2012 “The Unintended Consequences of Unsolicited Card Mailing, 1958-1980,” Social Science History Association Conference, Vancouver, BC
- 2012 “Mapping State Deregulation onto the Federal Landscape: Citibank, South Dakota, and the Local Politics of National Consumer Credit Regulation,” Policy History Conference, Richmond, VA
- 2012 “‘Should I Stay or Should I Go?’ Federalism and Banking Mobility in America’s Age of Finance,” Business History Conference, Philadelphia, PA

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- 2012 Chair, “Museums, Monuments, and Money,” UnCivil Wars Conference, Athens, Georgia
- 2010 “Of Corn and Credit Cards: South Dakota, Citibank, and the Unlikely Unwinding of America’s Anti-Usurious Economy,” Cold War Cultures: Transnational and Interdisciplinary Perspectives, University of Texas at Austin
- 2010 “Investing in Masculinity: Gender Construction in the Banking Trade Press, 1945-1980,” Business History Conference, Athens, GA

CAMPUS TALKS AND INVITED PRESENTATIONS

- 2023 “The Financialization of U.S. Public Pensions, 1945-1974,” University of Michigan Law School, Ann Arbor, MI
- 2023 “Dividing the Field: The Gendered Origins of Bank Credit Cards in 1950s America,” Smithsonian American Women’s History Initiative Showcase, Centre for Gender History and the Andrew Hook Centre for American Studies, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland
- 2021 “Where Did All this Debt Come From? Citibank, Credit Cards, and the End of the New Deal Financial Economy,” Andrew Hook Centre for American Studies Seminar, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland
- 2019 “‘How to Counterfeit Credit Cards and Get Away with It:’ Fraud Risk, Federalism, and the Hazards of Financial Innovation,” Seminar in American Capitalism, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD
- 2019 “The Frail Bonds of Liberalism: Employee Pensions and Schools Bonds in New York State, 1955-1965,” with Michael R. Glass, Columbia University Seminar in Economic History, Columbia University, New York, NY
- 2019 “The Money Apocalypse: The Volcker Shock and the End of Financial Stability,” Russel Special Collections Libraries, University of Georgia, Athens, GA
- 2019 Commentator for Jasper Kunstreich, “Designing Rules for Failure – Bankruptcy in Germany 1815-1877,” Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ
- 2019 “Draft from The Banker's Thumb: A History of US Banking Supervision from the Civil War to Dodd-Frank,” with Peter Conti-Brown, Penn Economic History Forum, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
- 2018 “Plastic Capitalism: Credit Cards and the Making of Modern Consumer Finance,” Hagley Brown Bag Series, Hagley Museum & Library, Wilmington, DE
- 2017 “Peer Mentoring,” Teaching Transformations: Ivy+ Graduate Student Summit, Princeton University, Princeton NJ

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- 2017 “Federal Bank Supervision in the Nineteenth Century: A Preliminary Institutional History,” with Peter Conti-Brown, Money, History, and Finance Workshop, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ
- 2017 Discussant for Walter Licht, “The Rise and Embedding of the Corporation,” Penn Economic History Forum, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
- 2016 “Charge Account Banking: A Study of Financial Innovation in the 1950s,” Columbia University Seminar in Economic History, Columbia University, New York, NY
- 2016 “The Postwar Credit System,” Finance, Money, and Markets Colloquium, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ
- 2016 “Think of It as Money: Executive Stewardship of America’s Credit Card Economy,” Larkin Symposium on the American Presidency, Florida Atlantic University, Coral Gables, FL
- 2015 “Policing the Bottom Line: Credit Card Fraud and the Criminal Law, 1955-1970,” Triangle Legal History Seminar, Research Triangle Park, NC
- 2013 “Taking Credit: Credit Card Fraud, Bank Lobbying, and the Construction of the Fiscal-Penal State,” Center for the Study of Social Organization, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ
- 2012 “Filching the American Dream: A Research Update,” American Studies Graduate Student Salon, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ
- 2011 “Credit Comes in the Mail: Transformations in the Regulatory Geography of Consumer Credit, 1977-1982,” Seminar Series, Department of Economics, University of Georgia, Athens, GA
- 2010 “Of Credit and Confidence: Jimmy Carter’s Implementation of the Credit Control Act of 1969,” Student Speaker Series, History Graduate Student Association, University of Georgia, Athens, GA

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Glasgow

- 2022, 2023 Globalization of International Banking and Finance (post graduate)
- 2022 Money and Finance in United States Society (undergraduate)
- 2021 Oral History for Social Scientists (undergraduate)
- 2020, 2022 Research in Economic and Social History 1
- 2020-2021 Research in Economic and Social History 2
- 2020-2021 Tutor for Globalized Economy

2021 Tutor for Business in the Globalized Economy

New York University, Gallatin School of Individualized Study, as Lead Instructor

2019-2020 Capitalism at War with Itself: A History of Economic Thought

2019-2020 The History of Money and Finance in the United States

Princeton University Writing Program Courses, as Lead Instructor

2018-2019 Innovate Everything!

2017-2018 What We Owe

Princeton University Courses, as Assistant in Instruction

2017 American Studies: America Then and Now, Profs. Dirk Hartog and Vera Candiani

2016 US History from 1920 to 1974, Prof. Kevin Kruse

2014 Post-1974 US History, Profs. Kevin Kruse and Julian Zelizer

2013 History of American Capitalism, Prof. Jonathan Levy

University of Georgia Courses, as Teaching Assistant

2011 United States Survey to 1865, Prof. Michael Winship

2010 United States Survey from 1865, Prof. Montgomery Wolf

2009 United States Survey to 1865, Prof. Montgomery Wolf

University of Georgia Courses, as Grader

2009 United States Survey from 1865, Prof. James C. Cobb

2008 United States Survey to 1865, Prof. Stephen Mihm

Other Teaching

2014-2017 Graduate Teaching Fellow, McGraw Center for Teaching & Learning, Princeton University

Administered Teaching Assistant training sessions at the beginning of each semester and offered teaching observation and consultation during the academic year. Worked with Teaching Assistants from a variety of humanities disciplines to advance student-centered, active learning strategies.

2010 Lead Instructor, Upward Bound Program, University of Georgia

“The American Dream,” a six-week English literature course customized for 10th, 11th, and 12th grade classes, aimed at historicizing “the American Dream” through literature, while also providing relevant exercises in grammar and vocabulary building.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Referee

Business History Review
Enterprise & Society
Oxford University Press

Service

- 2021-2024 Member, Phil Scranton Best Article Prize Committee, Business History Conference (chair 2022-2023)
- 2021- Honors Exams Officer, Economic and Social History Subject, University of Glasgow
- 2021-2022 Member, Workload Model Study Group, School of Social Science, University of Glasgow
- 2019 Chief Adjudicator, Woodrow Wilson Class of 1876 Memorial Prize Debate in Politics, Princeton University
- 2018 Head of “Student Essays: Next Generation” project, Princeton Writing Program
- 2016 Graduate Student Member, Search Committee, United States Cultural and Intellectual History, Princeton University
- 2014-2015 Departmental Representative, Graduate Student Association, Princeton University
- 2011 Graduate Student Member, Search Committee, Assistant Professor, Latino-American History, Princeton University

Conferences Organized

- 2023 Varieties of Supervision, Conservatoire Des Arts Et Metiers Paris, France
- 2016 Finance, Money, and Markets Colloquium, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ
- 2010 UnCivil Wars Conference, University of Georgia, Athens, GA

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- 2022- Association of Business Historians
- 2022- Economic History Society

- 2014- American Historical Association
- 2012- Organization of American Historians
- 2010- Business History Conference
- 2012-2014 Social Science History Association