

Sean H. Vanatta

Princeton University
Princeton Writing Program
New South Building
Princeton, NJ 08544

(912) 441-7850
svanatta@princeton.edu

EMPLOYMENT AND APPOINTMENTS

- 2018- 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

- 2018 Ph.D., History, Princeton University
- Dissertation: "Making Credit Convenient: Credit Cards and the Political Economy
of Modern America," under the direction of Julian Zelizer
- General Examinations: completed with distinction
Major: United States After 1877, Julian Zelizer
Minor: Legal Histories of Early American Capitalism, Dirk Hartog and Jon Levy
Minor: Transnational Financial History, Harold James
- 2011 M.A., History, University of Georgia
- 2007 B.A., History (Magna cum laude, with Honors), University of Georgia
- 2007 B.B.A., Marketing (Magna cum laude, with Honors), 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: The Institutional and Evolutionary History of Bank
Supervision in the U.S., from the Civil War to Global Financial Crisis*, with Peter
Conti-Brown (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, *forthcoming*)

Journal Articles

- 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*)

Articles in Preparation

The Frail Bonds of Liberalism: Employee Pensions and Schools Bonds in New York State, 1955-1965, with Michael R. Glass (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

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

Book Reviews

- 2018 *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)

Policy Reports

“Municipal Banking in Baltimore: Trends and Approaches,” Abell Foundation, Baltimore, MD (in preparation)

Non-Peer Reviewed Articles

- 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
- 2013 “[Commentary: Paula Deen Has Not Been ‘Lynched,’](#)” *Savannah Morning News* (July 2, 2013), p. 13A
- 2013 “[How the Patent Office Helped to End Slavery](#),” *Echoes Blog, Bloomberg* (February, 2013)
- 2013 “[The Great Chicago Christmas Credit Card Fiasco of 1966](#),” *Echoes Blog, Bloomberg* (December, 2012)
- 2012 “[History Suggests Operation Twist Should Get More Airtime](#),” *Echoes Blog, Bloomberg* (December, 2012)
- 2012 “[An Ill-Fated Attempt to Mix Campaigns and Credit Cards](#),” *Echoes Blog, Bloomberg* (September, 2012)
- 2012 “[Libor’s Risks Emerged From Clubby London Banking Culture](#),” *Echoes Blog, Bloomberg* (August, 2012)
- 2012 “[History Offers an Ugly Precedent for a Greek Euro Exit](#),” *Echoes Blog, Bloomberg* (June, 2012)
- 2012 “[Wildcatters, Speculators and the Carried-Interest Fight](#),” *Echoes Blog, Bloomberg* (February, 2012)
- 2011 “[How the Insurance Industry Tried to Ban Christmas](#),” *Echoes Blog, Bloomberg* (December, 2011)

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)

AWARDS, GRANTS, AND HONORS

- 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

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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.

PUBLIC HISTORY

2018- 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- 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.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

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
- 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
- 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

- 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
- 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

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Referee

Business History Review
Enterprise & Society

Service

- 2019 Chief Adjudicator, Woodrow Wilson Class of 1876 Memorial Prize Debate in Politics
- 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

- 2016 Finance, Money, and Markets Colloquium, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ
- 2010 UnCivil Wars Conference, University of Georgia, Athens, GA

Workshops

- 2016-2017 Co-Chair, Readings in Capitalism and History, Princeton University
- 2013-2014 Co-Chair, Modern America Workshop, Princeton University
- 2012-2014 Co-Chair, Readings in Capitalism and History, Princeton University
- 2012 Founding Member, [Readings in Capitalism and History](#), Princeton University
- 2011-2012 Faculty Liaison, History of Capitalism Reading Group, University of Georgia
- 2010 Founding Member, [History of Capitalism Reading Group](#), University of Georgia
- 2010 Founding Member, Georgia's Writers Bloc, University of Georgia

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

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

REFERENCES

Professor Julian E. Zelizer
Malcolm Stevenson Forbes, Class of 1941 Professor of History and Public Affairs
Department of History and Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs
Princeton University
211 Dickinson Hall
Princeton, NJ 08544-1017
(609) 258-8846
jzelizer@princeton.edu

Professor Hendrik Hartog
Class of 1921 Bicentennial Professor in the History of American Law and Liberty
Department of History
Princeton University
214 Dickinson Hall
Princeton, NJ 08544-1017
(609) 258-4166
hartog@princeton.edu

Professor Jonathan Levy
Professor of US History, Fundamentals, and the College
Department of History
The University of Chicago
1126 E. 59th Street, Mailbox 32

Chicago, IL 60637
(773) 702-8369
jlevy@uchicago.edu

Professor Meg Jacobs
Research Scholar
Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs
Princeton University
311 Robertson Hall
Princeton, NJ 08544-1013
(609) 258-0559
megj@princeton.edu

Dr. Amanda Irwin Wilkins
Director
Princeton Writing Program
Princeton University
S002 Baker Hall
Princeton, NJ 08544
(609) 258-2703
awilkins@princeton.edu

Dr. Sarah L. Schwarz
Associate Director, Teaching Initiatives and Programs
The McGraw Center for Teaching & Learning
Princeton University
236 Lewis Library
Princeton, NJ 08544
(609) 258-4184
sschwarz@princeton.edu