

Pembroke Center Associates

Newsletter



“As Brown approaches its 250th anniversary, we look to our history and our future,” said Brown University President Christina H. Paxson. “The Pembroke Center Archives allow us to appreciate Brown and Rhode Island women and the feminist theory that provides a framework for understanding women’s roles not only at Brown and in Rhode Island but also in the wider world.”

Building an Endowment for the Pembroke Center Archives

The Pembroke Center is pleased to announce that it has launched a \$3.5 million campaign to endow its archives. The endowment will provide the funds necessary to employ a full time archivist, to add new collections, and to make the archives more accessible and useful for teaching and research.

“This campaign supports the very heart of the Pembroke Center’s mission to advance interdisciplinary research and teaching,” said Kay B. Warren, director of the Pembroke Center. “With dedicated staff and funding, these signature archives will spark new research and provide new opportunities for students to engage with women’s history and feminist theory.”

Since its founding in 1981, the Pembroke Center has worked to ensure that women’s contributions to Brown and Rhode Island history are fully recognized and documented. As a major contributor to the development of feminist theory, the Center has an equally strong commitment to preserving the intellectual history of feminist scholars. The Center carries out this work through its two complementary archives – the Christine Dunlap Farnham Archive and the Feminist Theory Archive, which may be visited online at www.pembrokecenter.org/archives.

Containing materials such as correspondence, diaries, oral histories, and photographs, the Farnham Archive documents the history of Brown/Pembroke and Rhode Island women. The Feminist Theory Archive has received or been promised the papers of more than 100 leading scholars whose work is at the core of the intellectual history of this area of scholarship. Together, these archives ensure that the achievements and struggles of women – as students, professionals, family members, activists, teachers, researchers, scholars, and more – are recognized, preserved, and studied by future generations.

Pembroke Center Associates Council chair Nancy L. Buc’65 is leading the campaign effort. “I want to make sure that Brown’s archives comprehensively cover both the history of women at Brown and the feminist theory scholarship in which Brown has been a leader,” said Buc. “I’ve made a gift, and I’m very pleased that a number of others have joined me to raise about a third of what we need. We are calling on all who care about the Pembroke Center and these archives to help us reach our goal.”

For more information about the Pembroke Center Archives Endowment, please contact Christy Law Blanchard at 401-863-3650 or Christy_Law_Blanchard@brown.edu.

Pembroke Center Associates Council

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From the Director

With the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall approaching in 2014, we decided to focus this year's Pembroke Seminar on "Socialism and Post-Socialism." Led by Linda Cook, Professor of Political Science, scholars are exploring 20th-century socialism and life in market economies after socialism from different disciplinary perspectives, interpreting its legacies, and considering how the past influences and informs the political imagination of the present.



Lilia Topouzova, Duy Lap Nguyen, Xiao Liu, Haizhou Wang

This milestone anniversary is striking for anyone who has seen the iconic photos of the collective destruction of the Berlin Wall and witnessed this turning point in world history. The global transitions that took place were challenging and full of paradoxes and conflicts. How do the people who lived these transitions – and their children and grandchildren – come to understand this dramatic change? Scholars are working to develop nuanced views of these processes of transformation and to trace the historical roles of states, different forms of governance, and the impact of market economies in East Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and other world regions. As socialism wanes and the market economy triumphs in different world regions, the seminar explores issues such as the implications of national security monitoring in the past and present, new technologies and the gathering of consumer data by different interests, and worries about the erosion of individual freedoms of expression and privacy rights in democracies, old and new.

Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women

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The seminar convenes weekly for the entire academic year and counts among its participants Brown faculty, postdoctoral fellows, visiting scholars from other institutions, and students. I'm pleased to introduce four scholars who are in residence this year at the Pembroke Center and key members of the Pembroke Seminar:

Xiao Liu

Carol G. Lederer Postdoctoral Fellow

Liu earned her Ph.D. in Modern Chinese Literature and Film from the University of California, Berkeley in 2013. In her research project, "Information Fantasies and Chinese Culture in the Era of Reforms," she seeks to contribute to the growing body of studies that situate "information" in both global exchanges of knowledge and local cultural production. She investigates the historical and theoretical connections between post-socialism and the purported "information society." Her recent publications include "Small Videos, Hu Ge Impact: Parody Videos in Post-Socialist China" (*Journal of Chinese Cinemas*, 2010) and "From the Glaring Sun to Flying Bullets: Aesthetics and Memory in the 'Post-' Era Chinese Cinema" (*China's iGeneration: Cinema and Moving Image for the Twenty-First Century*, forthcoming 2014). Liu will teach a course next semester, "Reinventing Cinema and Media in Post-Mao China," which will focus on the cinematic production and new media culture in Mainland China since the late 1970s and examine the role that cinema plays in China's drastic transformations to post-socialism.

Duy Lap Nguyen

Artemis A.W. and Martha Joukowsky Postdoctoral Fellow

Nguyen earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of California, Irvine in 2012. His research project, "Trần Đức Thảo: Language, Labor, Consciousness," explores a collection of writings by Vietnamese philosopher Trần Đức Thảo, who played an important part in the debates on Marxism and phenomenology in France during the 1950s. Nguyen's recent publications include, "The Universal Province: A Critique of Provincializing Europe" (*Interventions*, 2013), "The Commodity Fetish and the Angel of History: Walter Benjamin's Philosophy of History and the Marxian Critique of Political Economy" (*Telos*, forthcoming), and "Le Capital Amoureux: Imaginary Wealth and Revolution in Jean Genet's Prisoner of Love" (*Historical Materialism*, 2010). Nguyen is teaching a course this semester, "Commodity Fetishism: Theoretical and Historical Perspectives," which explores Marx's analysis of capitalism as a social formation founded on the fetishism of commodities and examines the relationship between Marxism and other methodologies of critique, including feminist theory, deconstruction, and psychoanalysis.

Lilia Topouzova

Nancy L. Buc Postdoctoral Fellow

Topouzova is an interdisciplinary scholar, a historian, and a documentary filmmaker. She earned her Ph.D. in History from the University of Toronto in 2013. Her research project, "Reclaiming Memory: Concentration Camps in Communist Bulgaria," explores the history of the Bulgarian gulag during the early socialist period (1944-1962) and the post-1989 attempts of trying to make sense of and come to terms with what took place behind barbed wire. She is also a visiting fellow at the international research project "Physical Violence and State Legitimacy in Late Socialism" at the Center for Contemporary History in Potsdam, Germany. Topouzova is the writer of *The Mosquito Problem & Other Stories*, which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival, and she received the Human Rights Award at the Sarajevo Film Festival in 2007. Her second documentary, *Saturnia*, premiered at the 2012 Moving Image Film Festival and received the Toronto Showcase Award. Topouzova will teach an undergraduate multi-media course next semester, "The Communist Experience in Eastern Europe," which aims to bridge the gap between the fictional representation of pre-1989 communism and lead to a more nuanced understanding of socialism as a lived-experience and its present-day consequences for the lives of ordinary people.

Haizhou Wang

Visiting Associate Professor

Wang earned his Ph.D. in Political Science from Nanjing University in 2010. He is an associate professor in the School of Government at Nanjing University and last year was a resident research scholar at Nanjing University's Institute for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences and the Humanities. His main research interests are in political philosophy, political sociology, and political culture studies. He is the author of *Political Rituals: Production and Reproduction of Power* (forthcoming), *Fighting for Legitimacy: Multiple Inscriptions of Political Memory*, published by Jiangsu Renmin Press in 2008, and co-author of *Political Philosophy: Keywords*, published by Jiangsu Renmin Press in 2006. While at the Pembroke Center this year, Wang is working on a book, *Political Symbols and the Construction of a National Image*, and continues his interdisciplinary study of images of militia women in Chinese political posters.

As we continue our work this academic year with these fine scholars, please know that your support is essential to the Pembroke Center's success. We look forward to providing more updates as the year progresses, and we thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,



Kay B. Warren
Director

Supporting New Faculty Research at Brown

The Pembroke Center's research program provides Brown faculty with opportunities to pursue innovative research projects that they might not otherwise be able to undertake. The Pembroke Center launched its faculty seed grant program in 2012 and provides grants of up to \$10,000 for transnational research projects. Made possible by the generosity of donors who contributed to the Pembroke Challenge, we are pleased to announce our second round of grants.

Discovering East Asia in American History and Visual Culture

By retrieving the significance of Asian interaction with the Americas to the cultural, political, and economic development of American societies from the 16th through the 19th centuries, researchers will re-examine prevailing historical narratives from a new perspective that challenges the dominant colonial/imperial legacies and framework of U.S. and Latin American histories. The project will examine resources in the John Carter Brown Library devoted to the study of the Americas that relate to Asia. European discovery of the Americas took place within the context of trying to reach Asia, and exploration of the Americas was framed by maritime and commercial ambitions regarding Asia. Scholars will explore how these two regions were intertwined during this period.

Seed grant funding will support a symposium and related workshops as steps toward the goal of forming an interdisciplinary, transnational consortium for the study of East Asia and the Americas, to be housed in Brown's Department of American Studies. The consortium will bring valuable archival and visual resources reflecting the important

historical place of Asian interaction with Americans to the forefront, placing them in an academic context, which allows scholars to use them.

- **Evelyn Hu-DeHart**, (project director), Professor of History
- **Caroline Frank**, Visiting Assistant Professor of American Studies
- **Robert G. Lee**, Professor and Chair of American Studies
- **Margot Nishimura**, Deputy Director and Librarian of the John Carter Brown Library



Bartholomew Burges,
Series of Indostan Letters,
New York, 1790.

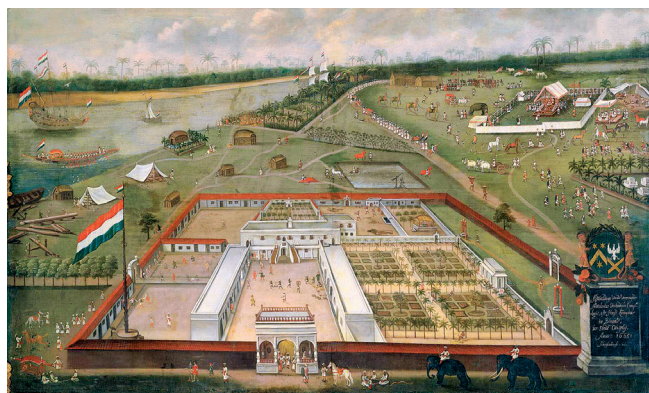
IMAGE COURTESY OF
THE JOHN CARTER BROWN LIBRARY

The Global Lowlands in the Early Modern Period: 1300 – 1800

During the early modern period, the Global Lowlands (now Belgium and the Netherlands) connected outwards to every part of the globe through trade, colonization, expanded knowledge, material culture, and consumption. Trade enabled the Lowlands to import many things into its culture, art, and science. Exotic eastern objects such as Turkish scimitars and rugs were prominently featured in Dutch art, and physicians formed botanical collections with specimens from as far away as China, Africa, and the Americas. Likewise, indigenous communities around the globe were changed forever through exchanges with the Lowlands.

This project will organize a yearlong seminar for faculty, graduate students, and scholars from other institutions that will culminate in an international conference, "The Global Lowlands: Dutch and Flemish History and Culture in a Worldwide Perspective," to explore this period of global exchange. Its interdisciplinary approach will encourage scholars to take up questions germane to religion, language, gender, commerce, and labor that transcend contemporary notions of national boundaries and traditional field-bound methodologies.

- **Evelyn Lincoln** (project director), Professor of the History of Art and Architecture
- **Hal Cook**, Professor of History; Director of the Program in Renaissance and Early Modern Studies
- **Jeffrey Muller**, Professor of the History of Art and Architecture



Hendrik van Schuylenburgh, *Factory of the Dutch East India Company at Hougly in Bengal*, 1665.

Incarceration, Disparities, and Health in America in the Age of Healthcare Reform

A complex array of laws, policies, and practices has resulted in an epidemic of incarceration and recidivism in the U.S. criminal justice system. The lack of adequate access to community-based care for mental illness and addiction has created a public health and human rights crisis in both criminal justice settings and in the largely poor, nonwhite communities from which most criminal justice populations come and to which most will return. The Affordable Care Act extends Medicaid coverage to most low-income citizens, which should lead to increased availability in the community of Medicaid-financed mental health and substance abuse treatment services. But financial barriers are not the sole reason people fail to get healthcare. Health behaviors are embedded in social, economic, cultural, and policy frameworks.

Seed grant funds will be used to bring together medical, public health, and social science researchers at Brown to identify and address non-financial barriers to care. The Miriam Hospital's Center for Prisoner Health and Human Rights will organize a series of interdisciplinary symposia on campus, drawing on Brown's strengths in researching issues affecting criminal justice-involved populations. This forum will explore the potential synergies between medical, public health, and social science faculty and researchers to develop the multidisciplinary response required by the nation's entwined epidemic of incarceration and the health crisis in its most vulnerable communities – low income

and predominantly of color. The project hopes to translate research into practical solutions to barriers to care that will be of direct utility to policymakers and public agencies that implement the new healthcare laws.

- **Josiah D. Rich (project director)**, Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology
- **Nicole Alexander**, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Internal Medicine
- **Lundy Braun**, Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine and Africana Studies
- **Jennifer Clarke**, Associate Professor of Medicine
- **Jennifer Johnson**, Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Human Behavior
- **David Lewis**, Professor Emeritus of Community Health and Medicine
- **Glenn Loury**, Professor of Social Sciences and Economics
- **Amy Nunn**, Assistant Professor of Medicine
- **Dannie Ritchie**, Clinical Assistant Professor of Family Medicine
- **Tricia Rose**, Professor of Africana Studies and Director of the Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America
- **Nickolas Zaller**, Assistant Professor of Medicine

Medicine and Social Movements

Medicalization has been studied as a consequence of the ever-expanding reach of medical institutions in post-industrial capitalist societies, whereby processes such as birth, emotion, or poverty are recast as objects of medical intervention. Medical professionals have long been involved as clinicians in a range of political, social, and nationalist projects where they have used the language and authority of medicine to counter repressive and problematic governmental practices. This project will examine the role of medicine in movements for social change – be they progressive, radical, conservative, or reactionary.

A working group will examine a range of clinician-led and -affiliated social movements, such as: attacks on Arab doctors who are perceived to side with the rebels in the Syrian conflict; U.S.- and European-based surgeons who provide surgical care as part of social justice agendas in poor countries; race-based genomic medicine and attempts to address health disparities and inequalities with implications for pathologizing and medicalizing race and racial difference; and the socialization of doctors in the U.S. and the de-politicization of community health and social medicine. Faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students will engage in a year-long facilitated reading group and conclude with a symposium that brings together participants and invited scholars to workshop papers and new projects.



Doctors and medical staff treating injured rebel fighters and civilians in Aleppo, Syria.

- **Adia Benton (project director)**, Assistant Professor of Anthropology
- **Sherine Hamdy**, Assistant Professor of Anthropology
- **Soha Bayoumi**, Lecturer in the History of Science (Harvard University)
- **Dianne Ritchie**, Adjunct Clinical Assistant Professor of Family Medicine
- **Harold Cook**, Professor of History
- **Lundy Braun**, Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine and Africana Studies

Our Bodies Belong to God: Organ Transplants, Islam, and the Struggle for Human Dignity in Egypt



Sherine Hamdy and Debbie Weinstein discuss organ transplantation in Egypt.

As part of Brown University's Family Weekend in October, the Pembroke Center Associates hosted a conversation with Sherine Hamdy, Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Kutayba Alghanim Professor of Social Sciences, and Debbie Weinstein '93, Assistant Director of the Pembroke Center, about Hamdy's research on cross-cultural approaches to medicine, health, and the body. Weinstein began by asking Hamdy about the phrase "Our bodies belong to God," which is also the title of Hamdy's book. Hamdy explained that the phrase came from a popular Egyptian television personality who declared that you could not donate an organ such as a kidney because it is not yours to give. He argued that God owns the body. The comment created a huge uproar in Egypt because it seemed as if he was making a religious argument against a potentially helpful medical treatment. People pointed out that Islam could not be against medical benefits or stand against interventions that could be lifesaving.

Hamdy's research explores the complex arguments around organ transplantation from multiple perspectives. She interviewed patients in need of organs, physicians who are working on organ transplantation, religious

scholars, and journalists covering the issue. The statement that bodies belong to God was a common refrain, but Hamdy noticed that the phrase could have different meanings. For example, a mother thanked God for creating her with two kidneys so that she could give one to her daughter and save her life. Hamdy observed others who pointed to issues of environmental justice and argued that toxins dumped on the land contributed to Egypt's high rate of kidney failure. These people made a case that because "our bodies belong to God," bodies should be treated with respect and not exposed to toxins. Still others stated that because bodies belong to God they could not be cut up and given to others. "I became more and more interested in what people meant and why," said Hamdy. "Where does religious authority and medical authority lie when there are so many differences of opinion?"

Hamdy found that the contentious topic of organ transplantation was a useful lens to examine religious and medical authority at a time when both seemed in crisis. She observed people questioning the privatization of medicine and expressing deep anxieties about kidney theft. She also discerned

a questioning of religious authority. "For a very long time, the most vocal opposition groups against the military dictatorships and the brutal regime were voices who said they were speaking in the name of Islam. They would use the moral authority of Islam to speak out against government corruption and government brutality," said Hamdy. "At the same time, we saw people acting in the name of Islam doing things that ordinary Egyptians would have no trouble saying 'This is not Islamic at all. How can you attack a citizen? How can you bomb a tourist site?'" Ordinary Egyptians questioned whom they could trust around complicated issues such as organ transplantation that are not addressed directly in the Koran.

While organ transplantation poses questions for ordinary citizens, it also highlights one of the paradoxes of biomedicine. "We in the U.S. hear all of the positives about organ transplantation. The media became enraptured by this 'gift of life' metaphor and how people on the brink of life and death could have a new lease on life with a transplant," said Hamdy. "In its earlier experimental phase there were a lot of deaths of recipients and donors. As organ transplantation began to be practiced elsewhere, that rocky stage was disproportionately experienced by the poor and the most vulnerable. As the need for organs grew and more people got the skills to transplant organs, there became a black market and even more evidence that medicine does not just heal . . . The way that the patterns of organs were flowing were mirroring the flows of global capital, so organs were actually traveling from the bodies of the poor to the bodies of the rich, from the bodies of colored people to the bodies of white people, and from the bodies of women to the bodies of men. That kind of ambivalence of organ transplantation really provoked these wider crises in society." Hamdy explained that this

dynamic also exists within the family as more vulnerable relatives are pressured to donate organs to more powerful relatives.

In response to Weinstein's question about how organ transplantation prompts people to consider the very

meaning of life, Hamdy suggested that organ transplantation requires two conflicting narratives. On the one hand, a patient might be nervous that receiving an organ from a criminal might turn them into a criminal. In that scenario, the doctor likely would assure that patient that it is just an

organ and that it does not represent that patient's self. In contrast, when transplant coordinators encourage families to consider donation of a loved one's organs, they use arguments about how an organ donation will allow the deceased to live on in the life of somebody else.



PHOTO CREDIT: HANK RANDALL

Sherine Hamdy speaks with a family at the conclusion of the program.

Hamdy's New Research: Medical Neutrality

On trips to Egypt in 2011 and 2012, Hamdy observed high levels of political violence in the streets stemming from protests – first against military abuses and then against the government of Mohamed Morsi. In both instances, the military attacked doctors and other medical professionals who were treating – and documenting – the wounded. Hamdy was struck by the vulnerability of these doctors, which led her to explore the concept of medical neutrality that stems from the Geneva Conventions and international legal norms. The premise of medical neutrality stipulates that physicians treat patients regardless of political affiliation, race, class, gender, and so on. It also

mandates that other parties should allow for physicians to attend to the injured. “In both those cases, medical neutrality has been violated in Syria, Egypt, Iraq, and Palestine,” said Hamdy. “I think that should be studied.” She will consider under what conditions medical neutrality is followed and under what conditions it is easily violated.

“During the eighteen days that Tahrir Square was occupied, it was called the Egyptian Revolution, and Egyptians really did come together. In the field hospital there were people volunteering from every class and political persuasion. You’d have people from the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafis right next to people who were leftists

and secularists,” said Hamdy. “It was really an amazing sight, but it was very quick to devolve.” She explained that the Muslim Brotherhood began to develop their own hospitals and would only trust themselves because of their experiences being tortured by military physicians and police. But even in cases where members of the Muslim Brotherhood were being attacked, they refused help from physicians who had been treating people alongside them in Tahrir Square. Hamdy's new project seeks to understand why one group of doctors believes their roles as physicians transcend these divisions and another group of doctors disavows the notion of medical neutrality.

Please visit <http://www.brown.edu/research/pembroke-center/videos> to view videos of this and other programs sponsored by the Pembroke Center.

Pembroke Center
for TEACHING AND RESEARCH ON WOMEN

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