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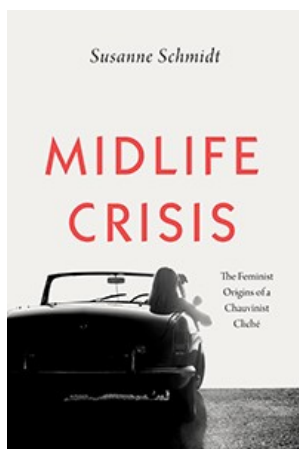
Highlights for Spring 2020

History of Ideas & Psychology

MIDLIFE CRISIS: THE FEMINIST ORIGINS OF A CHAUVINIST CLICHÉ

By Susanne Schmidt – 280 pages | 12 halftones | 6x9 | © 2020 - March

Rights sold: Japanese



The phrase “midlife crisis” today conjures up images of male indulgence and irresponsibility—an affluent, middle-aged man speeding off in a red sports car with a woman half his age—but before it become a gendered cliché, it gained traction as a feminist concept. Journalist Gail Sheehy used the term to describe a midlife period when both men and women might reassess their choices and seek a change in life. Sheehy’s definition challenged the double standard of middle age—where aging is advantageous to men and detrimental to women—by viewing midlife as an opportunity rather than a crisis. Widely popular in the United States and internationally, the term was quickly appropriated by psychological and psychiatric experts and redefined as a male-centered, masculinist concept.

The first book-length history of this controversial concept, Susanne Schmidt’s *Midlife Crisis* recounts the surprising origin story of the midlife debate and traces its movement from popular culture into academia. Schmidt’s engaging narrative telling of the feminist construction—and ensuing antifeminist backlash—of the midlife crisis illuminates a lost legacy of feminist thought, shedding important new light on the history of gender and American social science in the 1970s and beyond.

Susanne Schmidt is a Research Associate and Lecturer in History at Freie Universität Berlin.

Author nationality: German

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1. Introduction
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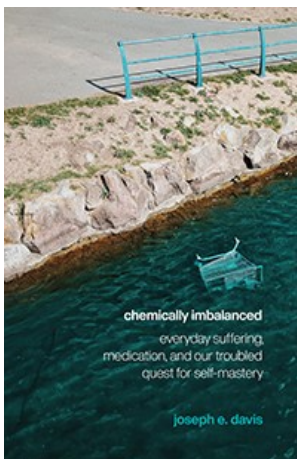
Highlights for Spring 2020

Psychology & Cognitive Science

CHEMICALLY IMBALANCED: EVERYDAY SUFFERING, MEDICATION, AND OUR TROUBLED QUEST FOR SELF-MASTERY

By Joseph E. Davis – 256 pages | 6x9 | © 2020 - February

Rights sold: Korean



Everyday suffering—those conditions or feelings brought on by trying circumstances that arise in everyone’s lives—is something that humans have grappled with for millennia. But the last decades have seen a drastic change in the way we approach it. In the past, a person going through a time of difficulty might keep a journal or see a therapist, but now the psychological has been replaced by the biological: instead of treating the heart, soul, and mind, we take a pill to treat the brain.

Chemically Imbalanced is a field report on how ordinary people dealing with common problems explain their suffering, how they’re increasingly turning to the thin and mechanistic language of the “body/brain,” and what these encounters might tell us. Drawing on interviews with people dealing with struggles such as underperformance in school or work, grief after the end of a relationship, or disappointment with how their life is unfolding, Joseph E. Davis reveals the profound revolution in consciousness that is underway. We now see suffering as an imbalance in the brain that needs to be fixed, usually through

chemical means. This has rippled into our social and cultural conversations, and it has affected how we, as a society, imagine ourselves and envision what constitutes a good life. Davis warns that what we envision as a neurological revolution, in which suffering is a mechanistic problem, has troubling and entrapping consequences. And he makes the case that by turning away from an interpretive, meaning-making view of ourselves, we thwart our chances to enrich our souls and learn important truths about ourselves and the social conditions under which we live.

Joseph E. Davis is Research Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Virginia.

Author nationality: American

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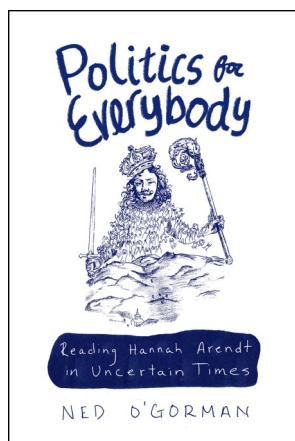
Highlights for Spring 2020

Philosophy & Political Science

POLITICS FOR EVERYBODY: READING HANNAH ARENDT IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

By Ned O’Gorman – 192 pages | 10 halftones | 6x9 | © 2020 - March

Rights sold: Korean



In this age of nearly unprecedented partisan rancor, you’d be forgiven for thinking we could all do with a smaller daily dose of politics. In his provocative and sharp book, however, Ned O’Gorman argues just the opposite: *Politics for Everybody* contends that what we really need to do is engage more deeply with politics, rather than chuck the whole thing out the window. In calling for a purer, more humanistic relationship with politics—one that does justice to the virtues of open, honest exchange—O’Gorman draws on the work of Hannah Arendt (1906–75). As a German-born Jewish thinker who fled the Nazis for the United States, Arendt set out to defend politics from its many detractors along several key lines: the challenge of separating genuine politics from distorted forms; the difficulty of appreciating politics for what it is; the problems of truth and judgment in politics; and the role of persuasion in politics. O’Gorman’s book offers an insightful introduction to Arendt’s ideas for anyone who wants to think more carefully

Ned O’Gorman is Associate Professor of Communication and a Conrad Humanities Scholar at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is the author of *Spirits of the Cold War: Contesting Worldviews in the Classical Age of American Security Strategy*.

Author nationality: American

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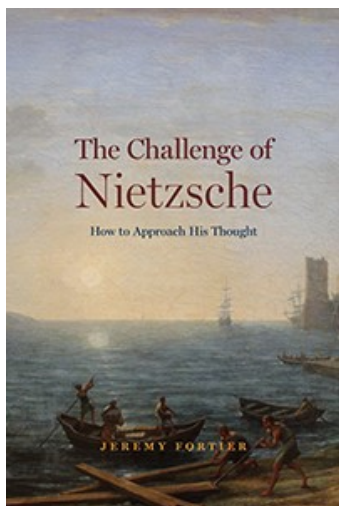
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Highlights for Spring 2020

Philosophy & Political Science

THE CHALLENGE OF NIETZSCHE: HOW TO APPROACH HIS THOUGHT

By *Jeremy Fortier* – 256 pages | 6x9 | © 2020 - February



Friedrich Nietzsche is one of the most widely read authors in the world, from the time of his death to the present—as well as one of the most controversial. He has been celebrated as a theorist of individual creativity and self-care but also condemned as an advocate of antimodern politics and hierarchical communalism. Rather than treating these approaches as mutually exclusive, Jeremy Fortier contends that we ought instead to understand Nietzsche's complex legacy as the consequence of a self-conscious and artful tension woven into the fabric of his books.

The Challenge of Nietzsche uses Nietzsche as a guide to Nietzsche, highlighting the fact that Nietzsche equipped his writings with retrospective self-commentaries and an autobiographical apparatus that clarify how he understood his development as an author, thinker, and human being. Fortier shows that Nietzsche used his writings to establish two major character types, the Free Spirit and Zarathustra, who represent two different approaches to the conduct and understanding of life: one that strives to be as independent and critical of the world as possible, and one that engages with, cares for, and aims to change the world. Nietzsche developed these characters at different moments of his life, in order to confront from contrasting perspectives such elemental experiences as the drive to independence, the feeling of love, and the assessment of one's overall health or well-being. Understanding the tension between the Free Spirit and Zarathustra takes readers to the heart of what Nietzsche identified as the tensions central to his life, and to all human life.

Jeremy Fortier teaches in the Department of Political Science at the City College of New York.

Author nationality: Canadian

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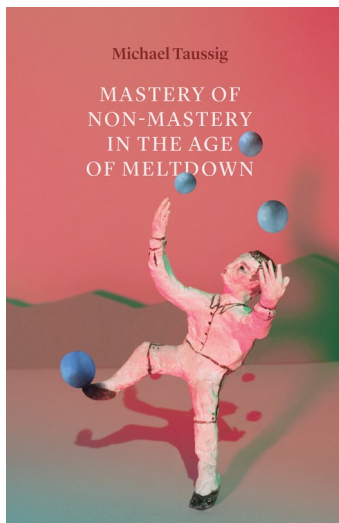
5. The Prospects for Self-Knowledge in *Ecce Homo* and the 1886 Prefaces

Highlights for Spring 2020

Anthropology

MASTERY OF NON-MASTERY IN THE AGE OF MELTDOWN

By Michael Taussig – 192 pages | 5 halftones | 5-1/2 x 8-1/2 | © 2020 - May



For centuries, humans have excelled at mimicking nature in order to exploit it. Now, with the existential threat of global climate change on the horizon, the ever-provocative Michael Taussig asks what function a newly invigorated mimetic faculty might exert along with such change. *Mastery of Non-Mastery in the Age of Meltdown* is not solely a reflection on our condition but also a theoretical effort to reckon with the impulses that have fed our relentless ambition for dominance over nature.

Taussig seeks to move us away from the manipulation of nature and reorient us to different metaphors and sources of inspiration to develop a new ethical stance toward the world. His ultimate goal is to undo his readers' sense of control and engender what he calls "mastery of non-mastery." This unique book developed out of Taussig's work with peasant agriculture and his artistic practice, which brings performance art together with aspects of ritual. Through immersive meditations on Walter Benjamin, D. H. Lawrence, Emerson, Bataille, and Proust, Taussig grapples with the possibility of collapse and with the responsibility we bear for it.

Michael Taussig is the Class of 1933 Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University. He is the author of several books, including *The Corn Wolf* and *Beauty and the Beast*, both published by the University of Chicago Press.

Author nationality: American

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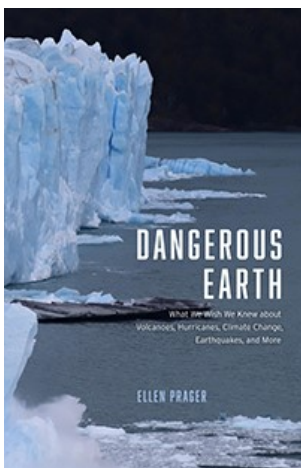
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Highlights for Spring 2020

Earth Sciences

DANGEROUS EARTH: WHAT WE WISH WE KNEW ABOUT VOLCANOES, HURRICANES, CLIMATE CHANGE, EARTHQUAKES, AND MORE

By Ellen Prager – 272 pages | 9 color plates, 24 halftones | 6x9 | © 2020 - March



The Earth is a beautiful and wondrous planet, but also frustratingly complex and, at times, violent: much of what has made it livable can also cause catastrophe. Volcanic eruptions create land and produce fertile, nutrient-rich soil, but they can also bury forests, fields, and entire towns under ash, mud, lava, and debris. The very forces that create and recycle Earth’s crust also spawn destructive earthquakes and tsunamis. Water and wind bring and spread life, but in hurricanes they can leave devastation in their wake. And while it is the planet’s warmth that enables life to thrive, rapidly increasing temperatures are causing sea levels to rise and weather events to become more extreme.

Today, we know more than ever before about the powerful forces that can cause catastrophe, but significant questions remain. Why can’t we better predict some natural disasters? What do scientists know about them already? What do they wish they knew? In *Dangerous Earth*, marine scientist and science communicator Ellen Prager explores the science of investigating volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, landslides, rip currents, and—maybe the most perilous hazard of all—climate change. Each chapter considers a specific hazard, begins with a game-changing historical event (like the 1980 eruption of Mt. St. Helens or the landfall and impacts of Hurricane Harvey), and highlights what remains unknown about these dynamic phenomena. Along the way, we hear from scientists trying to read Earth’s warning signs, pass its messages along to the rest of us, and prevent catastrophic loss.

A sweeping tour of some of the most awesome forces on our planet—many tragic, yet nonetheless awe-inspiring—*Dangerous Earth* is an illuminating journey through the undiscovered, unresolved, and in some cases unimagined mysteries that continue to frustrate and fascinate the world’s leading scientists: the “wish-we-knews” that ignite both our curiosity and global change.

A sweeping tour of some of the most awesome forces on our planet—many tragic, yet nonetheless awe-inspiring—*Dangerous Earth* is an illuminating journey through the undiscovered, unresolved, and in some cases unimagined mysteries that continue to frustrate and fascinate the world’s leading scientists: the “wish-we-knews” that ignite both our curiosity and global change.

Ellen Prager, a marine scientist, was formerly the Chief Scientist at the world’s only undersea research station, Aquarius Reef Base in the Florida Keys. She is the author of several books, including *Chasing Science at Sea* (2009), and *Sex, Drugs, and Sea Slime* (2011), both published by UCP.

Author nationality: American

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5. Hurricanes
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Recommended Reading and References

Among the natural disasters featured in this book are:

- ◇ The 1783 Laki volcanic eruption, Iceland
- ◇ The 1906 San Francisco earthquake, California
- ◇ The 1980 Mount St. Helens volcanic eruption, Washington
- ◇ The 1985 explosion of the Nevado del Ruiz volcano, Colombia
- ◇ The 1991 eruption of Mount Pinatubo, Philippines
- ◇ The 2002 collapse of West Antarctica’s Larsen B Ice Shelf
- ◇ The 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami of the Northwest coast of Sumatra, Indonesia
- ◇ The 2011 megaquake and tsunami in Tohoku, Japan
- ◇ The 2017 Hurricane Harvey, Texas and Louisiana
- ◇ The 2018 eruption of the Kīlauea volcano, Hawaii
- ◇ The 2018 Camp wildfire in California

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Highlights for Spring 2020

Science & History

SURROUNDINGS: A HISTORY OF ENVIRONMENTS AND ENVIRONMENTALISM

By Etienne S. Benson - 296 pages | 16 halftones | 6x9 | © 2020 - April

Given the ubiquity of environmental rhetoric in the modern world, it's easy to think that the meaning of the terms environment and environmentalism are and always have been self-evident. But in *Surroundings*, we learn that the environmental past is much more complex than it seems at first glance. In this wide-ranging history of the concept, Etienne S. Benson uncovers the diversity of forms that environmentalism has taken over the last two centuries and opens our eyes to the promising new varieties of environmentalism that are emerging today.

Through a series of richly contextualized case studies, Benson shows us how and why particular groups of people—from naturalists in Napoleonic France in the 1790s to global climate change activists today—adopted the concept of environment and adapted it to their specific needs and challenges. Bold and deeply researched, *Surroundings* challenges much of what we think we know about what an environment is, why we should care about it, and how we can protect it.

Etienne S. Benson is Associate Professor in the Department of History and Sociology of Science at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the author of *Wired Wilderness: Technologies of Tracking and the Making of Modern Wildlife*.

Author nationality: French and American

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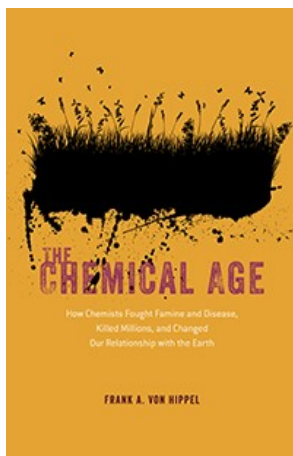
Highlights for Spring 2020

Chemistry & Environmental History

THE CHEMICAL AGE: HOW CHEMISTS FOUGHT FAMINE AND DISEASE, KILLED MILLIONS, AND CHANGED OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EARTH

By Frank Von Hippel— 368 pages | 28 halftones | 6x9 | © 2020 - May

Rights sold: Japanese, Korean



For thousands of years, we've found ways to scorch, scour, and sterilize our surroundings to make them safer. Sometimes these methods are wonderfully effective. Often, however, they come with vast unintended consequences—typically not truly understood for generations.

The Chemical Age tells the captivating story of the scientists who waged war on famine and disease with chemistry. With depth and verve, Frank A. von Hippel explores humanity's uneasy coexistence with pests, and how their existence, and the battles to exterminate them, have shaped our modern world. Beginning with the potato blight tragedy of the 1840s, which led scientists on an urgent mission to prevent famine using pesticides, von Hippel traces the history of pesticide use to the 1960s, when Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* revealed that those same chemicals were insidiously damaging our health and driving species toward extinction. Telling the story of these pesticides in vivid detail, von Hippel showcases the thrills and complex consequences of scientific discovery. He describes the invention of substances that could protect crops, the emergence of our understanding of the way diseases spread, the creation of chemicals used to kill pests and people, and, finally, how scientists turned those war-time chemicals on the landscape at a massive scale, prompting the vital environmental movement that continues today.

For fans of Jared Diamond and Rachel Carson, *The Chemical Age* is a dynamic and sweeping history that exposes how humankind's affinity for pesticides made the modern world possible—while also threatening its essential fabric.

Frank Von Hippel is a Professor of Ecotoxicology at Northern Arizona University and creator of a podcast, "Science History", which explores important moments and motifs in science. He has published more than eighty-five articles in peer-reviewed journals. This will be his first book for general readers.

Author nationality: American

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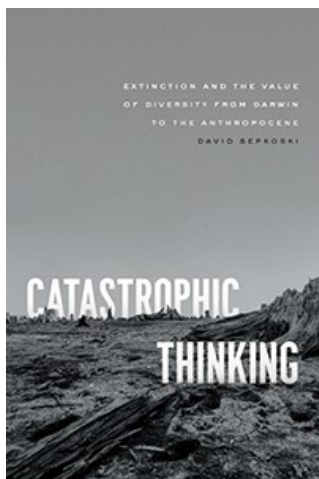
Glossary of People

Highlights for Spring 2020

Culture Studies & History of Science

CATASTROPHIC THINKING: EXTINCTION AND THE VALUE OF DIVERSITY FROM DARWIN TO THE ANTHROPOCENE

By David Sepkoski – 360 pages | 15 halftones | 6x9 | © 2020 - June



We live in an age in which we are repeatedly reminded—by scientists, by the media, by popular culture—of the looming threat of mass extinction. We're told that human activity is currently producing a sixth mass extinction, perhaps of even greater magnitude than the five previous geological catastrophes that drastically altered life in the past. Indeed, there is a very real concern that the human species may itself be poised to go the way of the dinosaurs, victims of the most recent mass extinction some 65 million years ago.

How we interpret the causes, consequences, and moral imperatives of extinction is deeply embedded in the cultural values of any given historical moment. And as David Sepkoski reveals, the history of scientific ideas about extinction over the past two hundred years—as both a past and current process—are implicated in major changes in the way Western society has approached biological and cultural diversity. It seems self-evident to most of us that diverse ecosystems and societies are intrinsically valuable, but the current fascination with diversity is a relatively recent phenomenon. In fact, the way we value diversity depends crucially on our sense that it is precarious—that it is something actively threatened, and that its loss could have profound consequences. In *Catastrophic Thinking*, Sepkoski uncovers how and why we learned to value diversity as a precious resource at the same time as we learned to think catastrophically about extinction.

David Sepkoski is the Thomas M. Siebel Chair in the History of Science at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. He is the author of several books, most recently *Rereading the Fossil Record: The Growth of Paleobiology as an Evolutionary Discipline*, also published by the University of Chicago Press.

Author nationality: American

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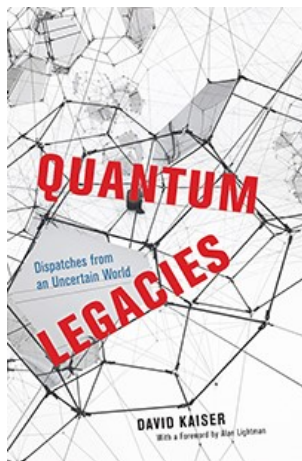
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Highlights for Spring 2020

History of Science

QUANTUM LEGACIES: DISPATCHES FROM AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

By David Kaiser – 360 pages | 47 halftones | 5-1/2 x 8-1/2 | © 2020 - April



The ideas at the root of quantum theory remain stubbornly, famously bizarre: a solid world reduced to puffs of probability; particles that tunnel through walls; cats suspended in zombielike states, neither alive nor dead; and twinned particles that share entangled fates. For more than a century, physicists have grappled with these conceptual uncertainties while enmeshed in the larger uncertainties of the social and political worlds around them, a time pocked by the rise of fascism, cataclysmic world wars, and a new nuclear age.

In *Quantum Legacies*, David Kaiser introduces readers to iconic episodes in physicists' still-unfolding quest to understand space, time, and matter at their most fundamental. In a series of vibrant essays, Kaiser takes us inside moments of discovery and debate among the great minds of the era—Albert Einstein, Erwin Schrödinger, Stephen Hawking, and many more who have indelibly shaped our understanding of nature—as they have tried to make sense of a messy world.

Ranging across space and time, the episodes span the heady 1920s, the dark days of the 1930s, the turbulence of the Cold War, and the peculiar political realities that followed. In those eras as in our own, researchers' ambition has often been to transcend the vagaries of here and now, to contribute lasting insights into how the world works that might reach beyond a given researcher's limited view. In *Quantum Legacies*, Kaiser unveils the difficult and unsteady work required to forge some shared understanding between individuals and across generations, and in doing so, he illuminates the deep ties between scientific exploration and the human condition.

David Kaiser is the Germeshausen Professor of the History of Science and Professor of Physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is the author of several books, including *How the Hippies Saved Physics: Science, Counterculture, and the Quantum Revival*, and is coeditor of *Groovy Science: Knowledge, Innovation, and American Counterculture*, also published by the University of Chicago Press.

Author nationality: American

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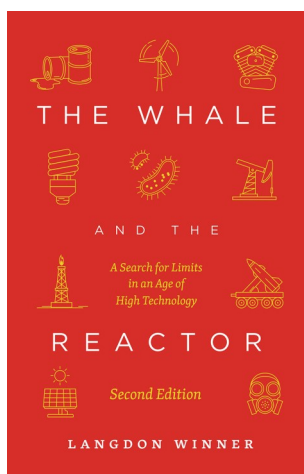
Highlights for Spring 2020

History of Science

THE WHALE AND THE REACTOR: A SEARCH FOR LIMITS IN AN AGE OF HIGH TECHNOLOGY 2ND EDITION

By Langdon Winner— 240 pages | | 6x9 | © 2020 - March

Rights sold: French



“In an age in which the inexhaustible power of scientific technology makes all things possible, it remains to be seen where we will draw the line, where we will be able to say, here are possibilities that wisdom suggest we avoid.”

First published to great acclaim in 1986, Langdon Winner’s groundbreaking exploration of the political, social, and philosophical implications of technology is timelier than ever. He demonstrates that choices about the kinds of technical systems we build and use are actually choices about who we want to be and what kind of world we want to create—technical decisions are *political* decisions, and they involve profound choices about power, liberty, order, and justice. A seminal text in the history and philosophy of science, this new edition includes a new chapter, preface, and postscript by the author.

Langdon Winner is the Thomas Phelan Chair of Humanities and Social Sciences in the Department of Science and Technology Studies at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He is the author of numerous books, including *Autonomous Technology*.

Author nationality: American

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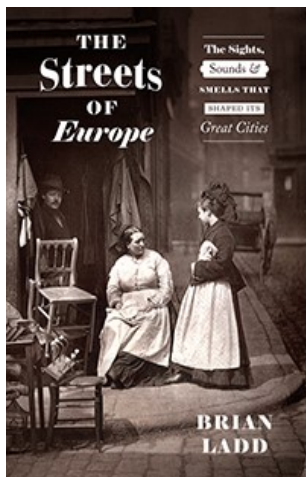
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Highlights for Spring 2020

History

THE STREETS OF EUROPE: THE SIGHTS, SOUNDS, AND SMELLS THAT SHAPED ITS GREAT CITIES

By Brian Ladd – 320 pages | 60 halftones, 4 maps | 6x9 | © 2020 - April



Merchants' shouts, jostling strangers, aromas of fresh fish and flowers, plodding horses, and friendly chatter long filled the narrow, crowded streets of the European city. As they developed over many centuries, these spaces of commerce, communion, and commuting framed daily life. At its heyday in the 1800s, the European street was the place where social worlds connected and collided.

Brian Ladd recounts a rich social and cultural history of the European city street, tracing its transformation from a lively scene of trade and crowds into a thoroughfare for high-speed transportation. Looking closely at four major cities—London, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna—Ladd uncovers both the joys and the struggles of a past world. The story takes us up to the twentieth century, when the life of the street was transformed as wealthier citizens withdrew from the crowds to seek refuge in suburbs and automobiles. As demographics and technologies changed, so did the structure of cities and the design of streets, significantly shifting our relationships to them. In today's world of high-speed transportation and imper-

sonal marketplaces, Ladd leads us to consider how we might draw on our history to once again build streets that encourage us to linger.

By unearthing the vivid descriptions recorded by amused and outraged contemporaries, Ladd reveals the changing nature of city life, showing why streets matter and how they can contribute to public life.

Brian Ladd is an independent historian who received his Ph.D. from Yale University. He has taught history at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and is a Research Associate in the History department at the University of Albany, State University of New York.

Author nationality: American

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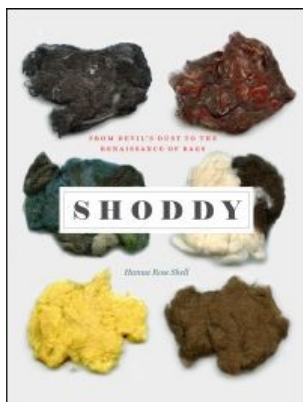
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Highlights for Spring 2020

History & Art

SHODDY: FROM DEVIL'S DUST TO THE RENAISSANCE OF RAGS

By Hanna Rose Shell – 272 pages | 4 color plates, 65 halftones | 6x8 | © 2020 - April



You know shoddy: an adjective meaning cheap and likely poorly made. But did you know that before it became a popular descriptor, shoddy was first coined as a noun? In the early nineteenth century, shoddy was the name given to a new textile material made from reclaimed wool. Shoddy was, in fact, one of the earliest forms of industrial recycling as old rags and fabric clippings were ground into “devil’s dust” and respun to be used in the making of suits, army uniforms, carpet lining, mattress stuffing, and more.

In *Shoddy*, Hanna Rose Shell takes readers on a vivid ride beginning in West Yorkshire’s Heavy Woolen District and its “shoddy towns,” and traveling to the United States, the developing world, and waste dumps, textile labs, and rag-shredding factories, in order to unravel the threads of this story and its long history. Since the time of its first appearance, shoddy was both pervasive and controversial on multiple levels. The use of the term “virgin” wool—still noticeable today in the labels on our sweat-

ers—thus emerged as an effort by the wool industry to counter shoddy’s appeal: to make shoddy seem *shoddy*. Public health experts, with encouragement from the wool industry, worried about sanitation and disease—how could old clothes be disinfected? Over time, shoddy the noun was increasingly used as an adjective that, according to Shell, captured a host of personal, ethical, commercial, and societal failings.

Introducing us to many richly drawn characters along the way, Shell reveals an interwoven tale of industrial espionage, political infighting, scientific inquiry, ethnic prejudices, and war profiteering. By exploring a variety of sources from political and literary texts to fabric samples and old military uniforms, antique and art photographs and political cartoons, medical textbooks, and legal cases, Shell unspools the history of shoddy to uncover the surprising journey that individual strands of recycled wool—and more recently a whole range of synthetic fibers from nylon to Kevlar—may take over the course of several lifetimes. The resulting fabric is at once rich and sumptuous, and cheap and tawdry—and likely connected to something you are wearing right now. After reading, you will never use the word *shoddy* or think about your clothes, or even the world around you, the same way again.

Hanna Rose Shell is Associate Professor in the Department of Art & Art History, the Department of Cinema Studies & Moving Image Arts, and the History Department at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and the author, most recently, of *Hide and Seek: Camouflage, Photography, and the Media of Reconnaissance* and a director of the film *Secondhand* [Pepe].

Author nationality: American

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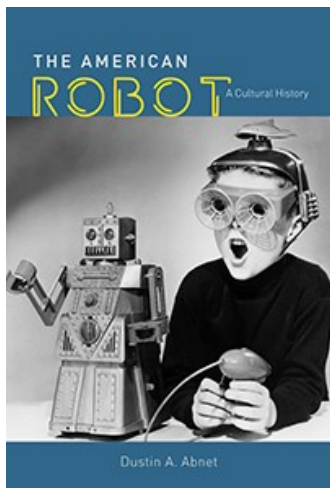
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Highlights for Spring 2020

History & Cultural Studies

THE AMERICAN ROBOT: A CULTURAL HISTORY

By *Dustin A. Abnet* – 360 pages | 26 halftones | 6x9 | © 2020 - March



Although they entered the world as pure science fiction, robots are now very much a fact of everyday life. Whether a space-age cyborg, a chess-playing automaton, or simply the smartphone in our pocket, robots have long been a symbol of the fraught and fearful relationship between ourselves and our creations. Though we tend to think of them as products of twentieth-century technology—the word “robot” itself dates to only 1921—as a concept, they have colored US society and culture for far longer, as Dustin A. Abnet shows to dazzling effect in *The American Robot*.

In tracing the history of the idea of robots in US culture, Abnet draws on intellectual history, religion, literature, film, and television. He explores how robots and their many kin have not only conceptually connected but literally embodied some of the most critical questions in modern culture. He also investigates how the discourse around robots has reinforced social and economic inequalities, as well as fantasies of mass domination—chilling thoughts that the recent increase in job automation has done little to quell. *The American Robot* argues that the deep history of robots has abetted both the literal replacement of humans by machines

and the figurative transformation of humans into machines, connecting advances in technology and capitalism to individual and societal change. Look beneath the fears that fracture our society, Abnet tells us, and you’re likely to find a robot lurking there.

Dustin A. Abnet is Assistant Professor of American Studies at California State University, Fullerton.

Author nationality: American

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Highlights for Spring 2020

History & Digital Humanities

EXCAVATING THE MEMORY PALACE: ARTS OF VISUALIZATION FROM THE AGORA TO THE COMPUTER

By Seth D. Long - 248 pages | 20 halftones, 11 line drawings | 6x 9 | © 2020 – June

With the prevalence of smartphones, massive data storage, and search engines, we might think of today as the height of the information age. In reality, every era has faced its own challenges of storing, organizing, and accessing information. While they lacked digital devices, our ancestors, when faced with information overload, utilized some of the same techniques that underlie our modern interfaces: they visualized and spatialized data, tying it to the emotional and sensory spaces of memory, thereby turning their minds into a visual interface for accessing information.

In *Excavating the Memory Palace*, Seth David Long mines the history of Europe's arts of memory to find the origins of today's data visualizations, unearthing how ancient constructions of cognitive pathways paved the way for modern technological interfaces. Looking to techniques like the memory palace, he finds the ways that information has been tied to sensory and visual experience, turning raw data into lucid knowledge. From the icons of smart phone screens to massive network graphs, Long shows us the ancestry of the cyberscape and unveils the history of memory as a creative act.

Seth David Long is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Nebraska. His writing has appeared in *Computers and Composition* and the edited collection *Rhetoric and the Digital Humanities*, published by The University of Chicago Press in 2014.

Author nationality: American

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Highlights for Spring 2020

Philosophy & Communication Studies

THE CHATTERING MIND: A CONCEPTUAL HISTORY OF EVERYDAY TALK

By Samuel McCormick— 336 pages | 5 line drawings, 3 tables | 6x 9 | © 2020 – March



From Plato's contempt for "the madness of the multitude" to Kant's lament for "the great unthinking mass," the history of Western thought is riddled with disdain for ordinary collective life. But it was not until Kierkegaard developed the term chatter that this disdain began to focus on the ordinary communicative practices that sustain this form of human togetherness.

The Chattering Mind explores the intellectual tradition inaugurated by Kierkegaard's work, tracing the conceptual history of everyday talk from his formative account of chatter to Heidegger's recuperative discussion of "idle talk" to Lacan's culminating treatment of "empty speech"—and ultimately into our digital present, where small talk on various social media platforms now yields big data for tech-savvy entrepreneurs.

In this sense, *The Chattering Mind* is less a history of ideas than a book in search of a usable past. It is a study of how the modern world became anxious about everyday talk, figured in terms of the intellectual elites who piqued this anxiety, and written with an eye toward recent dilemmas of digital communication and culture. By explaining how a quintessentially unproblematic form of human communication became a communication problem in itself, McCormick shows how its conceptual history is essential to our understanding of media and communication today.

Samuel McCormick is Associate Professor of Communication Studies at San Francisco State University.

Author nationality: American

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