

Curriculum Vitae  
Matthew Crow  
Professor of History  
Chair, Department of History and Law and Society Program  
Hobart and William Smith Colleges

**Personal Information**

b. November 23, 1982

Institutional Address

- Department of History, 300 Pulteney Street, Geneva, NY 14456

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- 315-781-4625

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- crow@hws.edu

**Education**

University of California, Los Angeles

- Ph.D., History, June 2011

- M.A., March 2007, C. Phil., April 2008

Dissertation Title: *In the Course of Human Events: Jefferson, Text, and the Potentialities of Law*

Examination Fields: US, Early Modern Europe, Political Theory [Committee: Michael Meranze, Craig Yirush, Perry Anderson, Kirstie McClure]

Revelle College, University of California, San Diego

- B.A., History, Philosophy Minor, *Cum Laude* with Honors and Highest Distinction in History

**Books**

- *Even in the Lawless Seas: Legal Imagination and Oceanic History in the World of Herman Melville*, forthcoming from Cambridge University Press.

- *Thomas Jefferson, Legal History, and the Art of Recollection* (Cambridge University Press, 2017). Series: Cambridge Historical Studies in American Law and Society.

**Articles, Essays, and Chapters**

- "But Only Positive Law: *Somerset* and the Nature of Discretion," in *Somerset v. Stewart and America*, David Waldstreicher and Matthew Mason, eds., (Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and University of North Carolina Press), forthcoming.

- "The Declaration as Political Rhetoric," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Declaration of Independence*, Mark Graber and Michael Zuckert, eds., Cambridge University Press, forthcoming.

- "Jefferson's Preambles, Prefaces, and Persistence," in *Framing Devices and Global Legal Traditions: From the Ancient World to the Modern Nation State*, Susan Longfield Karr and Lauren Colbertson, eds., Studies in Comparative Legal History (Routledge, 2025), pp. 183-198.

- "Equity in the Time of *Moby-Dick*," in *Situation Critical: Critique, Theory, and Early American Studies*, Brian Connolly and Max Cavitch, eds. (Duke University Press, 2024), pp. 241-62.
- "The Understory," *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth Century Americanists* 9.2 (Fall 2021), Pleasure Reading, pp. 293-302.
- "Jefferson's Whale: Race, Climate, and Commerce in Early America," *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (Fall 2020), pp. 435-463.
- "Littoral Leviathan: Histories of Oceans, Laws, and Empires," *Empire and Legal Thought: Ideas and Institutions from Antiquity to Modernity*, Edward Cavanagh, ed. (Brill Studies in the History of International Law, 2020), pp. 362-387.
- "A Melvillean Moment: Law, History, and Empire from Gibbon to Melville," *Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (June, 2020), pp. 24-37.
- "British North America to the Late Nineteenth Century," *Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*, Edward Cavanagh and Lorenzo Veracini, ed. (Routledge, 2016), pp. 95-108.
- "Thomas Jefferson and the Uses of Equity," *Law and History Review*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Feb., 2015), pp. 151-180.
- "History, Politics, and the Self: Jefferson's 'Anas' and Autobiography," *Blackwell Companion to Thomas Jefferson*, Frank D. Cogliano, ed. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).
- "Jefferson, Pocock, and the Temporality of Law in a Republic," *Republics of Letters: A Journal for the Study of Knowledge, Politics, and the Arts* (December 15, 2010): <http://rofl.stanford.edu/node/79>.

## Papers and Presentations

- "Cetacean Constitutions: Legal Pluralism and Melville's Oceanic Politics," Fourteenth International Melville Society Conference, Mystic, CT, 16-19 June, 2025.
- "Legality and the Problem of Power at Sea in Herman Melville's *Redburn* and *White-Jacket*," NYU Atlantic History Seminar, 17 September, 2024.
- "The Judicious Hooker's Forms," W.G. Hart Legal Workshop, *Historicizing Jurisprudence*, Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, London, 26-27 June, 2024.
- "The Binding of Equity," (Chapter 4), Second Book Workshop, Society for Historians of the Early American Republic, Philadelphia, PA, 13-16 July, 2023.
- "Ancient Constitutions and Pacific History," National Association for the Study of Oceanic History Conference, San Diego Maritime Museum, 18-20 May, 2023.
- "Legal and Aesthetic Theory in *Billy-Budd* or, 'Something of the Royal Remains,'" *Melville's Styles*, Melville Society Panel, Modern Language Association, San Francisco, 5-8 January, 2023.

- "But Only Positive Law: 'Somerset' and the Nature of Discretion," *Somerset v. Steuart* @ 250: Facts, Interpretations, and Legacies, David Center for the American Revolution and the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1-2 December, 2022.
- "Oceanic History in the Agrarian Mind: Jefferson's Atlantics," Northeast American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies, online, 5-7 November, 2021.
- "The Constitutions of Herman Melville," Missouri Regional Seminar on Early American History, 1 October, 2021.
- "Jefferson's Ocean: Political Thought and the Terraqueous Globe," University of Missouri, Kinder Center for Constitutional Democracy Colloquium, 1 October, 2021, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Fx8lC\\_fbYk&t=366s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Fx8lC_fbYk&t=366s)
- Comment on Jeffrey Insko's *History, Abolition, and the Ever-Present Now in Antebellum American Writing*, American Literature Association and Catharine Sedgwick Society, San Diego, CA, 21-24 March, 2020 (postponed to Boston, 2021).
- "The Allegory of Prerogative Power in Melville's Pacific," Nineteenth Century Studies Association, 11-13 March 2021.
- Moderator for Panel, Prefaces, Prologues, and Preliminaries, online workshop, 28 January 2021.
- "Law's Islands: Ancient Constitutions in Pacific Imaginaries," Constituting Boundaries: Identities, Politics, and Colonial and Postcolonial Constitution-Making, Pembroke College, University of Oxford, 20-21 April, 2020 (postponed).
- "Jefferson's Whale: Saltwater Politics in the Age of Revolutions," The Drowned World: Water, Politics, and the Future, Fisher Center of HWS, 4 December, 2019.
- Comment on Carrie Hyde's *Civic Longing: The Speculative Origins of U.S. Citizenship*, Annual Meeting of the American Studies Association, Honolulu, HI, 7-10 November, 2019.
- Second Book Workshop, Annual Meeting of the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic, 18-21 July, 2019.
- "Herman Melville, Philip Hoare, and the Desire for Deep Knowing in Law and Literature," The Twelfth International Melville Society Conference, NYU, 17-20 June, 2019.
- "The Understory: Early Modern Kelp Forests and the Methods of Legal Oceanography," Zones and Lines, Water and Land: New Conversations on Borders, Cardiff University, 22-24 May, 2019.
- "Melville's *Bartleby* and the Political Life of Equity," Panel: Conscience, Constitution, and Law in a Slaveholder's Republic," Annual Meeting of the Organization of American Historians, Philadelphia, PA, 4-6 April, 2019.

- "Enchanted Humanities: Pacific Narratives, Ethnography, and the Knowledge of Cetacean Culture," Society of Early Americanists Biannual Conference, 28 February-2 March, 2019.
- "Thomas Jefferson's Aqueous Worlds: From Ravaged Coasts to the Freedom of the Seas," Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture Conference, Williamsburg, VA, 14-17 June, 2018.
- "Littoral Leviathan: Discretion, the Law of the Sea, and the History of Political Thought," Seminar: Law and Empire in the Longue Durée, by invitation, University of Cambridge, 23-24 March, 2018.
- "Buttons for Nature: Possible Histories of Melville's Handsome Sailor," Maritime Matters: Politics, Revolution, and Ecology, Fisher Center of HWS, 12 March, 2018.
- "Ancient Constitutions, Melvillean Moments, and Antipodean Perspectives: Melville's Philosophical Histories of Law and Empire," The Eleventh International Melville Society Conference, King's College, University of London, 27-30 June, 2017.
- "*Even in the Lawless Seas*: Melville's Jurisprudence of the Nonhuman," Melville Society Panel, American Literature Association Conference, San Francisco, 26-29 May, 2016.
- "Governing the Usufruct of the Living: Print and Political Economy in Jefferson's Empire," Ithaca/Central New York Early Modern Seminar, 9 April, 2016.
- "Equity in the Time of *Moby-Dick*," Conference: Situation Critical: Critique, Theory, and Early American Studies, McNeil Center for Early American Studies, University of Pennsylvania, March 31-April 2, 2016.
- "Creolizing Custom," British Legal History Conference, University of Reading, UK, 8-11 July 2015.
- "Jefferson on Use and Recollection," and Conference Co-Organizer with Michael Meranze, Civic Arts: Enlightenment and the Subjects of Liberal Learning, Clark Memorial Library, UCLA, 24-25 October, 2014.
- Invited Fellow, Jack Miller Center Summer Institute and UCLA Center for the Liberal Arts and Free Institutions, Science, Enterprise, and Law in the Making of the Modern Commercial Republic, 30 June-11 July, 2014, Pasadena, CA.
- "The Government of Use: Legal Theory and the Roots of Jeffersonian Political Economy," Early American History Seminar, Columbia University, 11 March, 2014.
- "The Public Philosophy of Jeffersonian Democracy," SHEAR Annual Meeting, 18-21 July, 2013.
- "Forms of Life: The Culture of Law as a Culture of Use," Legal Theory and Legal History: A Neglected Dialogue? Annual Conference of the International Association of Social and Legal Philosophy UK, Queen Mary, University of London, 12-13 April 2013.

- “Subjects of Natural History: Natural Law, Natural History, and the History of Thought,” Society of Early Americanists Bi-Annual Conference, Savannah, GA, 28 February- 3 March, 2013.
- Invited Participant, Machiavelli Workshop, University Center for Human Values, Princeton University, 7-9 February, 2013.
- “Jefferson’s Fragments: Language, Text, and Usage,” Fellow’s Forum, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library, Colonial Williamsburg, 26 June, 2012.
- “Equity and Usage: Reading Law in Jeffersonian Democracy,” Jeffersonian Democracy: From Theory to Practice, Princeton University, 17-19, May 2012.
- “Textuality and Law in the American Revolution,” Inscriptions: The Material Contours of Knowledge, UC Riverside, 10-11 March 2011, part of the international series, The Disorders of Things: Predisciplinarity and the Divisions of Knowledge, 1660-1850, UC Riverside and Birbeck College, University of London 2009-2011.
- “The Growth of Ages’: Records, Rhetoric, and British Legal Memory in Colonial Virginia,” Justice: Europe in America, 1500-1825, Annual Seminar on the International History of the Atlantic World, Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History, Harvard University, 2-10 August, 2010.
- “Radical Jurisprudence and Constitutional Text-Making: Jefferson’s Writings and Rewritings,” Comparative Perspectives on Constitutions: Theory and Practice, W.G. Hart Legal Workshop, Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, University of London, 29 June to 1 July, 2010.
- “Jefferson’s Writings and Rewritings,” UCLA Graduate Student Colloquium, 25 May 2010.
- “Jefferson and Natural Jurisprudence: The Language of Equity,” Fellow’s Forum, Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies, 18 February, 2010.

### Reviews, etc.

- “The Returns of Philosophical History: Legal Historiography and the American Revolution,” *Law and History Review* (2026).
- Introduction to Forum on Gerald Leonard and Saul Cornell, *The Partisan Republic: Democracy, Exclusion, and the Fall of the Founders’ Constitution* (Cambridge, 2019), *Federal History*, April 2024.
- Review, Gerard N. Magliocca, *Washington’s Heir: The Life of Justice Bushrod Washington* (Oxford, 2022), *Journal of Southern History* Vol. 89, No. 3 (August 2023), pp. 555-6.
- Review, John O’Keefe, *Stranger Citizens: Migrant Influence and National Power in the Early American Republic* (Cornell, 2021), *Journal of the Early Republic* (Fall 2022), pp. 464-6.
- Review, Harry N. Scheiber, Nilufer Oral, and Moon-Sang Kwon, eds., *Ocean Law Debates: The 50-Year Legacy and Emerging Issues for the Years Ahead* (Brill, 2018), *The Pacific Circle*, No. 46 (April 2021), pp. 48-50.
- Review, Joanne B. Freeman and Johann N. Neem, eds., *Jeffersonians in Power: The Rhetoric of Opposition Meets the Realities of Governing* (Virginia, 2019), *Journal of the Early Republic* (Spring 2021), pp. 138-140.
- “Context as Environment: A ‘Workmanlike’ Approach,” comment in *Journal of the History of the Present*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (April, 2020), pp. 169-171.

- Review, Geoffrey Sanborn, *The Value of Herman Melville* (Cambridge, 2018), *Nautilus* (Spring 2019), pp. 112-114.
- Review, Wendell Bird, *Press and Speech Under Assault: The Early Supreme Court Justices, the Sedition Act of 1798, and the Campaign against Dissent* (Oxford, 2016), *Journal of the Early Republic* (Spring 2018), pp. 169-171.
- Review Essay, "Habits of Mastery," Annette Gordon-Reed and Peter S. Onuf, *Most Blessed of the Patriarchs*, *Reviews in American History* 45 (2017), pp. 224-8.
- "A Wrinkle in Maycomb County: Law, Equity, and Conscience in Harper Lee's *Go Set a Watchman*," *Cumberland Law Review* 47:1 (Jan., 2017), pp. 37-44.
- Review, Garrett Epps, *American Epic: Reading the Constitution* (Oxford, 2013), *Early American Literature*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (2015).
- Review, David G. Hackett, *That Religion in Which All Men Agree: Freemasonry in American Culture* (California, 2014), *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (Summer 2015).
- Review, John P. McCormick, *Machiavellian Democracy* (Cambridge, 2011), *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, Vol. 43 (2012).
- Review, Catherine O'Donnell Kaplan, *Men of Letters in the Early Republic: Cultivating Forums of Citizenship* (Chapel Hill, 2008), *New Directions in Cultural History*, Vol. 23 (2008).
- Review, Seth Mallios, *The Deadly Politics of Giving: Exchange and Violence at Ajacan, Roanoke, Jamestown* (Alabama, 2006), in *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, Vol. 38 (2007).
- Review, Sean P. Rice, *Minding the Machine: Languages of Class in Early Industrial America* (California, 2004), *New Directions in Cultural History*, Vol. 21 (2006).

### **Grants, Honors, Awards, and Fellowships**

- Principal Investigator, Mellon Foundation Call for Concepts, "Matters of Memory: Confronting Conflicting Narratives in a Small American City," Hobart and William Smith Colleges, 2024-2027, \$500,000.00.
- M.C. Lang Fellowship in Book History, Bibliography, and Humanities Teaching with Historical Sources, Rare Book School, 2024-2026
- Lapidus Fellow for the Study of Rare Early American Legal Texts, Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and Wolf Law Library of William and Mary Law School, 2022
- Fisher Center Faculty Research Fellow, HWS, 2019-2020
- NEH Summer Institute, Mystic Seaport Museum, July 2018
- Fisher Center Faculty Research Fellow, HWS, 2017-2018
- Research Fellowship, Huntington Library, June-August 2016
- HWS Faculty Research Grant, Summer 2015-2017, 2022
- Coffelt Fellow, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library, Colonial Williamsburg, June-July 2012
- Mayers Research Fellow, Huntington Library, July 2011
- Travel Grant, Chicago Conference on the American Revolution, February 2011
- Graduate Student Research and Teaching Fellowship, 2009-2010
- Research Fellow, International Center for Jefferson Studies, February 2010
- Mellon Foundation Fellow, Library of the American Philosophical Society, September 2009
- Gary B. Nash Graduate Fellowship in Early American History, UCLA, 2008-2009
- Graduate Division Summer Research Mentorship, 2007
- Graduate Division Summer Research Mentorship, 2006
- Five-Year Fellowship, Department of History, UCLA, 2005-2011
- Highest Distinction in the Department of History, UCSD, 2005
- UCSD History Department Undergraduate Honors Program, 2004-2005

- Revelle College Provost's Honors, Fall 2002- Spring 2005

### **Academic Employment and Appointments**

Professor of History, 2024-

Associate Professor of History, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, 2018-

Assistant Professor of History, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, 2012-2017

Lecturer, Department of History, UCLA, 2011-2012

Lecturer, Department of History, UC Riverside, Fall 2011

T.A., Department of History, UCLA, 2006-2008

### **Courses Offered**

Hobart and William Smith

- First Year Seminar 146: Hacking the Law

- First Year Seminar 191: Whales, Dolphins, and the Deep Blue Sea

- Bi-Disciplinary Seminar: Sovereignty, Power, and the People (with Jodi Dean, Politics)

- History 105: Introduction to the American Experience

- History 111: Topics in US History: US History in Oceanic Perspective

- History 111: Topics in US History: History of Los Angeles

- History 206: Colonial America

- History 207: The United States in the Age of Revolutions, 1776-1848

- History 233: American Thought to 1865

- History 234: American Thought since 1865

- History 243: US Legal and Constitutional History to 1865

- History 244: US Legal and Constitutional History since 1865

- History 301: The Enlightenment

- History 305: Seminar: The Early American Republic, 1763-1840

- History 308: Historian's Craft

- History 395: Seminar: Oceans, Laws, and Empires

- History 495: Honors Thesis

UCLA

- History 138C: US History, 1800-1850

- History 143A: US Constitutional History to 1865

UC Riverside

- History 30: US Presidential Campaigns

### **Institutional Service**

NCAA Faculty Athletic Representative and Chair of the Committee on Athletics, 2023-

Chair, History Department, 2023-2026

Chair, Law and Society Program, 2019-

Presiding Officer of the Faculty, 2019-2021

Colleague Review II Committee, Fall 2023

Colleague Review I Committee, Spring 2021

Colleague Review II Committee, Fall 2019

Colleague Review III Committee, Spring 2019

Faculty Athletic Fellow, Hobart Rowing, 2013-

History Department Seminar Organizer, 2013-2018  
 Sexual Violence Bystander Training Facilitator, 2014-2016  
 Mellon Project on Undergraduate Research, Provost's Office, Humanities Division, 2014  
 Colleague Review I Committee, Spring 2014  
 Public Policy Major Steering Committee, 2013-2016

### **Academic Community Service and Other Activities**

Coordinator, Central New York Early Modern Seminar, 2017-2020

Article Manuscript Reviewer: *Law and History Review*; *Journal of the Early Republic*; *Journal of Southern History*; *Criticism*; *Law, Text, Culture*; *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*; *William and Mary Quarterly*; *Jurisprudence*; *Clio*; *American Journal of Legal History*; *Studies in American Fiction*; *The Historian*

Book Manuscript Reviewer: Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, Brill

Podcast interview on first book with New Books Network,  
<https://newbooksnetwork.com/matthew-crow-thomas-jefferson-legal-history-and-the-art-of-recollection-cambridge-up-2017>

### **Languages**

Latin (reading knowledge, 4 years of study)  
 French (reading and limited speaking knowledge, 2 years of study)  
 German (limited reading knowledge, one semester of study).

### **Organizations**

Society for Historians of the Early American Republic  
 International Conference for the Study of Political Thought  
 North American Society for Oceanic History  
 Melville Society/American Literature Association  
 Modern Language Association

### **References**

Helen Rozwadowski, Department of History and Maritime Studies, University of Connecticut  
 Christopher Tomlins, Jurisprudence and Social Policy Program, UC Berkeley  
 Rachel Weil, Department of History, Cornell University  
 Aziz Rana, Boston College Law School  
 Matthew Kadane, Department of History, Hobart and William Smith Colleges  
 Brian Steele, Department of History, University of Alabama, Birmingham  
 Michael Meranze, Department of History, UCLA  
 Craig Yirush, Department of History, UCLA