Undergraduate Research Opportunity

PROJECT

Beyond Violence: A Global History of Guns in Modern Times
Prof. Lei Duan
History

This project, “Beyond Violence: A Global History of Guns in Modern Times,” explores the social and cultural history of guns in a global and comparative perspective. Guns have been studied by military historians mainly as instruments of state sponsored destruction. Starting from the early nineteenth-century, innovations in small arms technology began advancing by leaps and bounds. These modern guns’ greater penetration, accuracy, and ease of operation spurred many non-military individuals to arm themselves. Private gun ownership, as a global phenomenon, brought about profound and diverse social and political implications in different societies. In the process, guns became invested with social and symbolic meanings. By placing the gun in its social and cultural contexts, this project attempts to investigate the interwoven relationships between privately-owned guns and broad processes of social change in a comparative perspective. Based on current secondary scholarship, this book length project seeks to examine the following questions. How did global arms transfers in the nineteenth and twentieth century affect indigenous patterns of social change? How did private gun ownership lead to changes in the state-society relationship? How did different countries carry out gun control policies?

STUDENT

Research assistant’s duties: The student research assistant will collect and read current scholarship on the subject of the history of gun control, social history of firearms, violence, global arms trade, and many others. The student will categorize the most recent scholarship. The student will also meet the faculty regularly to discuss the research findings.

Required skills or qualifications: Trained in the fields of history or international studies; Academic writing skills; Proficiency in MS Office especially Excel; Able to meet deadline.

Skills student will acquire: The student will be able (a) to have better understanding of the multifaceted role guns played in different countries and time periods; (b) to have a global and comparative view on the issue of private gun ownership and gun control; (c) to develop stronger critical thinking, writing, and analytical skills.