

JORDAN B. SMITH

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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENT

2024-present **Associate Professor of History**, Widener University, Chester, Pennsylvania
2018-2024 **Assistant Professor of History**, Widener University, Chester, Pennsylvania

EDUCATION

2018 **Ph.D., History, Georgetown University** (with Distinction)
Dissertation: “The Invention of Rum”
Dissertation Committee: Alison Games (advisor), John McNeill, Adam Rothman
2013 **M.A. in passing, History, Georgetown University**
2010 **B.A. in History, with Honors, Carleton College**
Concentration in African-American Studies; Graduated *magna cum laude*

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

[2025] [*The Invention of Rum: Creating the Quintessential Atlantic Commodity*](#),
University of Pennsylvania Press. In press.
2024 “The Future is in the Archives: Glimpses of Americans and Innovation in the
Powel Family Papers,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 148: 3
(Oct. 2024). Essay solicited for special issue commemorating the bicentennial of
the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
2022 “‘The Native Produce of this Island:’ Processes of Invention in Early Barbados,”
Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal 20, no. 4 (2022): 714-37.
2022 “‘For How Could We Do Without Sugar and Rum?’ Anti-Consumption,
Commodity Substitution, and the Global Expansion of Plantation Production” in
[*Global Commerce and Economic Conscience in Europe, 1700-1900: Distance
and Entanglement*](#), ed. Felix Brahm and Eve Rosenhaft (Oxford University Press),
143-70.
2021 “Short Teaching Module: A Human History of Commodities,” *World History
Commons*, [https://worldhistorycommons.org/short-teaching-module-human-
history-commodities](https://worldhistorycommons.org/short-teaching-module-human-history-commodities).
Forthcoming “Hidden Histories of Widener: Town & Gown Relations in Chester,” (with
M’Nya Preston and Madison Smith) in *Home, Neighborhood and Community in
the Context of Urban Decline*, ed. Chris Mele (SUNY Press).

Book reviews:

[2026] Review: Fragile Empire Slavery in the Early English Tropics, 1645–1720, by
Justin Roberts, *American Historical Review*

- 2025 Review: *Eating the Empire: Food and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, by Troy Bickham, *Eighteenth-Century Life*
- 2024 Review: *Dibia's World: Life on an Early Sugar Plantation*, by William Jennings, *New West Indian Guide*
- 2021 Review: *The Fabric of Empire: Material and Literary Cultures of the Global Atlantic, 1650-1850*, by Danielle Skeehan, *H-Net*
- 2019 Review: *Contested Bodies: Pregnancy, Childbearing, and Slavery in Jamaica*, by Sasha Turner, *Labor: Studies In Working Class History*
- 2019 Review: *Race and Nation in the Age of Emancipations*, Edited by Whitney Stewart and John Marks, *Slavery and Abolition*
- 2018 Review: *Indentured Migration and the Servant Trade from London to America, 1618-1718* by John Warering, *North Carolina Historical Review*

AWARDS

- 2024 **Excellence in Research Award**, Widener University Humanities Division
College of Arts and Sciences nominee for Fitz-Dixon Innovation in Teaching Award (with Christine Woody), Widener University
- 2023 **Wayne D. Rasmussen Award for best article on agricultural history not published in *Agricultural History***, Agricultural History Society
- 2020 **Dissertation Prize Finalist**, World Historical Association
- 2019 **SHEAR Dissertation Prize**, Society for Historians of the Early American Republic and the University of Pennsylvania Press
- 2010 **Dennis Reinhartz Transatlantic History Award for Best M.A. or B.A. Student Essay**, University of Texas-Arlington
- 2010 **Margaret Dalton Curran Prize for Most Accomplished Academic Essay**, Carleton College

SELECTED FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

External

- 2025-2026 **Vera Wolfe Earhart Week-Long Fellowship**, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan
- 2025 **Folger Institute Micro Fellowship**, Folger Shakespeare Library
- 2024 **Implementation Grant**, Philadelphia Funder Collaborative for the Semiquincentennial
- 2024-2025 **Archie K. Davis Fellowship**, North Caroliniana Society
- 2024 **Civic and Voter Engagement Fellowship**, Project Pericles
- 2023 **CIC Faculty Seminar on the Legacies of American Slavery**
- 2022-2024 **Bright Institute Fellow**, Knox College
- 2020-2021 **National Endowment for the Humanities Post-Doctoral Fellowship**, Library Company of Philadelphia

	Mellon Periclean Faculty Leader , Project Pericles
	Folger Institute Research Fellowship , Folger Shakespeare Library, <i>subsequently honored as American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Selection</i>
	Short Term Fellowship , New-York Historical Society [<i>cancelled due to Covid-19</i>]
2019	Omohundro Institute Scholars Workshop , Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture
2017-2018	Barra Dissertation Fellow in Art and Material Culture , McNeil Center for Early American Studies, The University of Pennsylvania
2018	AHA Council Annual Meeting Travel Grant , American Historical Association
2016	Stern Grant , North American Conference on British Studies
2015	Fellowship for Graduate Research in Slavery and Print Culture , Lapidus-Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture
	Library Associates Fellowship , John Carter Brown Library
	Cosmos Scholars Grant , Cosmos Club Foundation
	Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship , Massachusetts Historical Society
	Program in Early American Economy and Society One-Month Fellowship , Library Company of Philadelphia
	New England Regional Fellowship Consortium Grant
	Phillips Library Fellowship , Peabody Essex Museum
2014	IHR Mellon Pre-Dissertation Fellowship , Institute of Historical Research
	William Keck Foundation Fellow , Huntington Library
	Graduate Student Travel Research Award , Mid-Atlantic Conference on British Studies
2013	Dissertation Proposal Development Fellowship , Social Science Research Council
2009	Gilder-Lehrman History Scholar One-Week Finalist , Gilder-Lehrman Foundation
Internal	
2025-2026	Provost's Research Grant , Widener University
2024-2025	One Semester Sabbatical , Widener University
	Provost's Research Grant , Widener University
2023-2024	Faculty Development Grant , Widener University
	Provost's Research Grant , Widener University
2022-2023	Faculty Development Grant , Widener University
2021-2022	Faculty Development Grant , Widener University
2020-2021	Faculty Development Grant , Widener University
	Provost's Research Grant , Widener University [<i>cancelled due to Covid-19</i>]
2019-2020	Trainer Faculty Fellow , Oskin Leadership Institute, Widener University

2016-2017 **Royden B. Davis Teaching Fellowship**, Georgetown University
 2011-2016 **Graduate Fellowship in the History of the Early Modern World** (enhanced), Georgetown University
 2014 **Piepho Research Travel Grant**, Georgetown University
 2013 **International Conference Travel Grant**, Georgetown University

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

[2026] **Ford Evening Book Talk: *The Invention of Rum***, The George Washington Presidential Library at Mount Vernon

2025 **Coffee and Rum Joint Book Talk with Michelle Craig McDonald**, Program in Early American Economy and Society, Library Company of Philadelphia
“Rum: Gold of the West Indies,” Spirits Museum Virtual Lecture

2024 **“Philadelphia Distilleries in the Eighteenth Century: Connecting the Atlantic World and the Pennsylvania Backcountry,”** Braddock Road Preservation Association 36th Annual French and Indian War Seminar, Ligonier, PA

2022 **“Rum and the History of Drink,”** Dr. Lindsay O’Neill’s class at the University of Southern California (also presented in 2021)

2021 **“Constructing the ‘Most Uncertain Estate in Nature,’”** Yale Early American Historians Seminar, New Haven, CT
“The Caribbean Origins of European Craftsmanship: A Case Study in Rum,” Rienzi Symposium, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX, <https://vimeo.com/647847563>
“The Native Produce of this Island,” Dr. Tessa Murphy’s class at Syracuse University
“The Invention of Rum,” Fellows Colloquium, Library Company of Philadelphia
“Civil Rights and School Segregation in 1960s Chester,” Delaware County Historical Society, Chester, PA

2020 **“Slavery and the Work of Making Rum,”** McNeil Center for Early American Studies Friday Seminar Series, Philadelphia, PA

2019 **“The Philadelphia ‘Spirit’: The Early Production of Rum in Philadelphia,”** The American Philosophical Society Museum, Philadelphia, PA
“‘Just by My Own Ideas’: Slavery and the Invention of Rum,” Widener University Humanities Colloquium, Chester, PA
“Illuminate Chester: Penn’s Landing,” Roundtable Discussion at MJ Freed Theater, Chester, PA

2018 **“Chester: Whose History is it Anyway?”** Roundtable Discussion with Steven Hahn, Delaware County Historical Society, Chester, PA
“The Best Plan of Those in the West Indies: British Anti-Consumption and East Indian Responses,” Johns Hopkins Atlantic Seminar, Baltimore, MD

- 2017 **“‘Rum May Always be Had:’ From Cane to Cup at Mount Vernon,”** For George Washington’s Mount Vernon, Washington, DC
- 2017 **“‘A Whetstone to Sharpen the Ingenuity of Other Men:’ Expertise, Mobility, and Cooperation,”** Georgetown University Early Modern Global History Seminar, Washington, DC
- 2016 **“‘A Treasure more Useful to this Kingdom than the Mines of Peru:’ British distilleries and the production of rum in the eighteenth century,”** McNeil Center for Early American Studies Wednesday Brown Bag Series, Philadelphia, PA
- 2015 **“The Invention of Rum: A View from Rhode Island,”** John Carter Brown Library Fellows Talk, Providence, RI
- “The Invention of Rum,”** Massachusetts Historical Society Brown Bag Series, Boston, MA

CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

- 2025 **“The Martin Family at War,”** Biography Workshop, Society for Historians of the Early American Republic Annual Meeting, Providence, RI
- “Teaching Early America to All Students”** (roundtable organizer), Where is Early America state-of-the-field conference, McNeil Center for Early American Studies, Philadelphia, PA
- “An Accommodating Father and Unforgiving Sons: The Martin Family Responds to Imperial Fissure,”** Pacific Coast Conference on British Studies, Palo Alto, CA
- 2024 **“‘To Extirpate from the Face of the Earth Such a Race of Monsters:’ Enslaved Experts, Fédon’s Rebellion, and the Limits of Commodity Substitution,”** Society for Historians of the Early American Republic Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA
- “Making Rum and Distilling Modernity in the Atlantic World,”** Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA
- 2022 **Roundtable Participant, “Connecting Classrooms to Communities: Empowering Students to Address Grand Challenges,”** Association of American Colleges & Universities Annual Meeting, Washington, DC
- 2021 **“Pennsylvania’s Plymouth Rock: Claiming and Forgetting Space at William Penn’s Landing(s),”** Pennsylvania Historical Association Annual Meeting
- “‘The Native Produce of this Island’: Processes of Invention in Early Barbados,”** Workshop on the 50th Anniversary of Richard S. Dunn’s *Sugar and Slaves*, McNeil Center for Early American Studies and the Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation at the University of Hull
- 2020 **“Tasting Revolution: Teaching the Politics of Non-Consumption with Labrador Tea,”** Roundtable on “Teaching Protest” at “Foundations of

- Independence” Conference, Institute for Thomas Paine Studies, New Rochelle, NY
- 2019 **“From Dissertation to Manuscript,”** Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture Annual Meeting, Williamsburg, VA (*organized roundtable and associated programming on strategies to begin converting a dissertation into a first book*) [canceled due to Covid-19]
- “Scotland’s Rum Distilleries and Caribbean Entanglements in the Seventeenth Century,”** Ports and People in Commodity History Workshop, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland
- “Making Rum ‘Atlantic’ in the Seventeenth Century,”** Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture Annual Meeting, Pittsburgh, PA (*organized panel on Commodities and Colonies in the Seventeenth-Century Atlantic World*)
- “The Invention of Rum,”** The Future of Early America: Lightning Round on Emerging Research at the Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA
- 2018 **“‘The Invention of this Noble Liquor:’ Free and Coerced Migrants and the Invention of Rum,”** Bucerius Young Scholar Forum: “Histories of Migration: Transatlantic and Global Perspectives,” Berkeley, CA
- “The Mobility of Enslaved Expertise: Quacqo’s Story,”** “Trans-American Crossings: Enslaved Migrations within the Americas and Their Impacts on Slave Cultures and Societies,” The Omohundro Institute and John Carter Brown Library, Providence, RI
- 2017 **“‘For How Could We Do Without Sugar and Rum?’: Anti-Consumption and the Morality of Production in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World,”** “Moralising Commerce in a Globalising World” Conference, German Historical Institute, London, England
- 2016 **“Rum on Gin Lane: The Gin Craze as an Imperial Event,”** North American Conference on British Studies Annual Meeting, Washington, DC (*organized panel on “Alcohol and Empire”*)
- “‘Essential in the Still House:’ Valuing Enslaved Expertise in the Caribbean Rum Complex,”** Association of Caribbean Historians Annual Meeting, Havana, Cuba
- 2015 **“Rum, the Black Atlantic, and a Productive History of the Atlantic World,”** New Scholarship on the Black Atlantic Workshop, Salt Lake City, UT
- 2014 **“An Atlantic Recipe for Virginia Rum,”** Virginia Forum, Fairfax, VA
- 2013 **“Liquor and Knowledge Transfer in Europe, Africa, and the Americas,”** Third Summer Academy of Atlantic History, Hamburg, Germany
- “Why Couldn’t the Caribbean-North American Molasses Trade Recover from the American Revolution?”** Annual Meeting of the Society of Historians of the Early American Republic, St. Louis, MO

PUBLIC HISTORY ENGAGEMENT

2021-present **Co-organizer, “[Revolutionary Reads](#),”** America250PA Delco

- Funded through a \$13,000 grant from the Philadelphia Funder Collaborative for the Semiquincentennial.

2020-present **Project Leader, “Hidden History of Widener Walking Tour,”** in collaboration with Widener students M’Nya Preston and Madison Smith

Committee Member, America250PA Delco

2020-2022 **Contributor, Widener University Timeline Extension**

MEDIA APPEARANCES

2023 **“Interview with Jordan B. Smith,”** *Early American Studies Miscellany*, <https://web.sas.upenn.edu/earlyamericanstudies/2023/08/17/interview-with-jordan-b-smith-wayne-d-rasmussen-award-recipient/>.

2022 **“William Penn once wanted Chester to be Philadelphia. Here’s what happened.”** *Philadelphia Inquirer*, <https://www.inquirer.com/news/philadelphia-william-penn-landing-chester-pa-20221028.html>.

2020 **“Enslaved Americans and the History of Distilling,”** *Drinking with Historians*, <https://youtu.be/op2tKf1H1aE>.

“History and Memory in Chester,” *The Friday Edition with Stefan Roots*, <https://youtu.be/IRYh7UaN5wo>.

2019 **“Invention of Rum,”** Interview with American History TV on CSPAN3, <https://tinyurl.com/y4r7k85z>.

2018 **“Penn Landed Here, and There...,”** *Illuminate Chester* Documentary Series, <https://tinyurl.com/y4ej5hbv>.

RELATED EMPLOYMENT

2020-Present **Project Historian, “Rum: America’s Spirit for Liberty,”** Third Wave Films

2009-2018 **Historic Trades Interpreter, Mount Vernon Estate, Museum, and Gardens**

Demonstrated and interpreted eighteenth-century trades including distilling, milling, farming, and blacksmithing. Regularly served as lead on-site interpreter and supervised college interns (2011-2012).

COURSES TAUGHT

Widener University

Introductory: American Civilization 1 (14x)

English 101: Recovering Black Voices (Fall 2022; co-taught with Christine Woody)

ASC 101: Thinking Through: The Golden Age of Piracy in History and Fiction (6x)

Seminars: Sugar, Alcohol, Slaves: A Commodity History of the Atlantic World (3x)

Women in Early America (Spring 2019)
 Pox, Priests, and Pirates: The Atlantic World, 1450-1850 (2x)
 Caribbean Revolutions (Honors Colloquium; 2x)
 Revolutionary America (2x)
 Practices in Public History: History and Memory in Chester (2x)
 Senior Research Seminar (2x)
 Slavery and the Environment in Early America (Fall 2021)
 Colonial America (Spring 2024)
 ASC 488: Transformations Capstone (Fall 2024; co-taught with Christine Woody)

Georgetown University

Survey: Atlantic World (2x)

Seminar: Sugar, Alcohol, Slaves: A Commodity History of the Atlantic World (Fall 2016)

SERVICE TO PROFESSION

2025 **Manuscript Workshop Participant**, Program in Early American Economy and Society, Library Company of Philadelphia
Manuscript Reviewer, *Journal of Slavery and Data Presentation*
 2024 **Proposal Reviewer**, Project Pericles
 2023 **Manuscript Reviewer**, Cambridge University Press
 2022-Present **Consortium Committee**, McNeil Center for Early American Studies
 2022 **Fellowship Application Review Panel**, Library Company of Philadelphia
 2021-Present **Committee Member**, America250Delco semiquincentennial committee
 2021-Present **Advisory Committee**, Archaeology Education Planning Project, Newlin Grist Mill
 2019, '22-'24 **Faculty Commentator**, McNeil Center New Dissertation Fellows Workshop
 2019 **Manuscript Workshop Participant**, McNeil Center for Early American Studies
 2018-Present **Advisory Council**, McNeil Center for Early American Studies
 2014-2022 **Fellowships Editor**, *Uncommon Sense*, Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture
 2011- 2015 **Judge**, National History Day National Contest

SERVICE TO INSTITUTION

Widener University

University-Level

2025-2027 **Faculty Council Budget and Planning Assessment Committee**
 2023-2025 **Faculty Council Academic Affairs Committee**
 2023-2026 **Foundations and Transformations Advisory Board**
 2019-2025 **Faculty Council** (2023-25: *ex officio* as member of FC AA)
 2022-2024 **General Education Subcommittee of the Faculty Council Student Learning Assessment Committee**

Spring 2023	Faculty Council Student Learning and Assessment Committee
	Search Committee Member, Foundations and Transformations Director
2022-2023	Faculty Council Academic Affairs Committee (alternate)
	Member and project lead (x2) on Presidential Inauguration Committee
2020-2022	Faculty Council Library Committee (secretary, 21-22)
	Widener University Bicentennial Committee (co-chair, “Looking Back” sub-committee)
2020	Faculty Collaborator for online course “Decoding Pandemics: How Covid-19 is Changing Science and Society”

College-Level

2025-2027	Faculty Affairs Committee (<i>ex officio</i> as representative to FC BPA)
2023-2025	Curriculum and Planning Committee (<i>ex officio</i> as representative to FC AA)
Fall 2024	ASC 401 Pilot Group
Spring 2023	General Education Committee (<i>ex officio</i> as representative to FC SLA)
Fall 2022	Faculty Secretary (interim)
	Executive Committee (<i>ex officio</i> as Faculty Secretary)
	Curriculum and Planning Committee (<i>ex officio</i> as Faculty Secretary)
	ASC 101 Pilot Group
Since 2020	Public History Liaison for the College of Arts and Sciences
	Latin American and Caribbean Studies Working Group
2020	Art Collection Committee
Since 2019	African and African American Studies Advisory Council
2019-2022	Promotion, Tenure, and Academic Freedom Committee

Division-Level

Since 2022	Faculty Mentor to Dr. Joseph Metz
2022-2023	Search Committee Member, Assistant Professor of Musicology
2019-2022	Promotion, Academic Freedom, and Tenure Committee
2019-2020	Search Committee Member, Assistant Professor of Creative Writing

Department-Level

Since 2019	Academic Advisor to History Majors
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Georgetown University

2016-2018	Volunteer Researcher , Georgetown Slavery Archive
2012-2013	Participant , Georgetown History Department General Education Redesign Workshop Series
	Student Representative , Georgetown History Department Graduate Studies Committee

PROFICIENCIES

Intermediate proficiency in Spanish and French
Working knowledge of ArcGIS and SPSS

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Historical Association, Association of Caribbean Historians, Barbados Museum and Historical Society, Delaware County Historical Society, Forum on European Expansion and Global Interaction, Friends of the McNeil Center, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, North American Conference on British Studies, Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Society for Historians of the Early American Republic