



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

College of Arts & Sciences™

Department of History

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For the Fall 2017, I had the honor of serving as the inaugural Roosevelt Distinguished Visiting Professor at the newly reorganized Roosevelt Institute for American Studies (RIAS). While in residence at the RIAS, I participated in a variety of institute-organized activities, in addition to conducting my own ongoing research on the failed campaign for Universal Military Training during the administration of President Harry Truman in the United States (1945-1953). Entitled “A New Deal for the Military,” my book project examines the ways that concepts of state-building established during Franklin Roosevelt’s administration carried into the post-World War II period, redefining notions of citizenship in the United States along with the nation’s role in the world.

I presented some of my initial findings in one of the keynote lectures to the “Pursuing the Rooseveltian Century” conference organized by the RIAS in November 2017. In this lecture, I explored the way that the debate over Universal Military Training served as a proxy for broader discussions of the nature of the federal state, as proposed by Roosevelt and solidified by Truman. In addressing the larger question of the conference, I argued that the concept of the Rooseveltian Century has considerable potential utility.

My other major public address while at the RIAS was a lecture on contemporary politics and foreign policy in the United States, entitled “The Fate of the Rooseveltian Century in the Age of Trump.” In this lecture, which was open to the general public of Middelburg, I explored the extent to which the administration of President Donald Trump truly represents a departure from the larger patterns of U.S. history. I argued that, in the main, there are actually many precedents in the recent past for the major ideological strains of Trump-ism.

While at the RIAS, I also enjoyed the opportunity to interact with a number of graduate students. Primarily, this took place in the seminar that I ran on the United States and Empire, in which I led (along with various guest faculty) weekly discussions with the first two RIAS PhD students on a series of books (one per week for six weeks). I also participated in the graduate student seminar at the RIAS in November. Made up of PhD students from around the world working on a wide variety of research topics in U.S. history, I chaired one session on U.S. public diplomacy and contributed to the discussions of another dozen or so papers presented over two days.

Finally, I had the incredible opportunity to present my thoughts on economic inequality in the United States to the North American desk of the foreign ministry in den Haag. Sharing ideas about the United States with various Dutch experts in diplomacy was one of the highlights of my stay in the Netherlands. All in all, I had a tremendous semester and thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to serve as a visiting professor at the RIAS.

Justin Hart

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