

PATH IFI Alumni Fellows 2017-2026

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Kevan Malone
kqmalone@ucsd.edu

Kevan Malone is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History at the University of California- San Diego. His research examines the political ecology of urbanization in the San Diego-Tijuana Borderlands during the twentieth century and the role of international diplomacy in the governance of these cities. Kevan has received a graduate fellowship for the Mellon Sawyer Seminar on Cities at UCSD's International Institute, a James and Sylvia Thayer Research Fellowship for work in the UCLA Library Special Collections, a Kenneth and Dorothy Hill Fellowship for research in the UCSD Special Collections and Archives, and a Tinker Field Research Grant. He has also received a Jane and Jiao Fan '94 Prize for Best Advocate for Graduate Research and represented UCSD at the University of California's Graduate Research Advocacy Day in 2018. Kevan began his higher education at the Borough of Manhattan Community College of the City University of New York (CUNY) and completed his Bachelor of Arts at New York University's Gallatin School of Individualized Study. He earned a Master of Arts in American studies at the CUNY Graduate Center. Kevan's pedagogy seeks to emphasize that studying history is not about understanding the past for its own sake, but rather about understanding the present. Ultimately, he plans to hold a university faculty position and pursue research that will engage local urban communities, policymakers, and the public more broadly.

He received his Ph.D. in 2023, and is currently a visiting history professor at the University of Miami.



Kevan Aguilar
aguilar.kevan@gmail.com

Kevan Antonio Aguilar is a PhD candidate in the Department of History at UC San Diego. He received his BA in History at CSU Long Beach and his MA in Latin American Studies at UC San Diego. His doctoral research examines the social and political relationships between Mexican communities and Spanish political exiles during and after the Mexican Revolution and Spanish Civil War. Aguilar's research has received support from the Fulbright-Hays program and the Social Science Research Council.

He recieved his Ph.D. in 2021, and is currently a professor history at UC Irvine.



Betty Ramirez

blramirez@ucsd.edu

Betty Ramirez is a doctoral student in the UCSD Department of Literature. Her dissertation deals with innovations in the Latin American and Latino/a detective genre and analyzes how these novels configure a number of economic and political issues in Mexico, Chile, the U.S.-Mexico border and the greater U.S. region and urban centers. A bilingual Literature student with a strong background in the Humanities, she has worked for several years as a Teaching Assistant in the Revelle Humanities program teaching literature and composition. Since coming to UCSD Betty has worked with a variety of student affairs departments, including the Office of Graduate Studies upon her arrival to UCSD. She has also worked as an assistant in the UCSD Summer Training Academy for Research Success (STARS) program. As an elected officer in the Graduate Student Association, she has helped graduate students present their requests to the UCSD administration for assistance with housing, rent control, transportation and community development.

She received her Ph.D. in 2021, and is currently the associate director of the UC San Diego Writing Hub.



Maria Carreras

mvcarrer@ucsd.edu

Maria Carreras is a PhD Candidate in the Department of History. Her higher education career began in Long Beach, Ca, where she was born and raised, and received an BA and MA in History from California State University, Long Beach. Carreras has TA'ed for the Making of the Modern World writing program, served as the program's Academic Support TA, and will be a lecturer for the program in the summer teaching a course on 20th century world history. She was awarded the Don Tuzin TA excellence award for 2019-2020. As a Summer Graduate Teaching fellow, Carreras taught a course on the History of Childhood, emphasizing how ethnic and racial identities are forged and transmitted, how gender identity is constructed, and how social class is passed on from one generation to the next. Her dissertation, "A Local Affair: 'Civilizing' Barcelona's Children during the Franco Dictatorship, 1939-1975" looks at the way in which the people of Barcelona challenged the Spanish state's efforts to unify and homogenize the nation by organizing and conceptualizing modernity at the local level. By using childhood as a category of analysis, it looks at way in which the urban sphere can be used as a space to establish new forms of governance, challenging the national political structure. Recently, Carreras published an article in the peer-reviewed journal *The International Journal of the History of Sport*. Lastly, given her interdisciplinary research focus, she has been able to include a series of theoretical and methodological approaches from disciplines in the humanities and social sciences to her teaching.

She received her Ph.D. in 2022, and is currently an instructor in the Southwestern Community College District.



Alexis Meza

A5meza@ucsd.edu

Alexis Meza is a PhD candidate in the Department of History at UC San Diego. She is from the San Fernando Valley and received her bachelor's degree in History and Latin American and Iberian Studies from UC Santa Barbara. Her dissertation research examines the politics of historical and collective memory of the Salvadoran diaspora. In her work she centers migrant and refugee oral history, memory, and epistemologies. As a graduate student Alexis has worked with the state-wide organization the Unión Salvadoreña de Estudiantes Universitarios and UCSD's Student-Worker Collective. Alexis has previously taught courses on Latina/o Studies, Immigration and Refugee Studies, and the U.S.-Mexico Border in the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of San Diego. She has also taught in the Chicana/o Studies Department at San Diego City College as part of the Concurrent Enrollment College and Career Access Pathways program. In the San Diego community, she is active in transborder migrant and refugee justice and solidarity movements.

She received her Ph.D. in 2024, and is currently an assistant professor of ethnic and women's studies at Cal Poly Pomona.



Ivana Polić

ipolic@ucsd.edu

Ivana Polić is a doctoral candidate in Modern European History in the History Department at University of California San Diego, where she also works as a Teaching Assistant for Eleanor Roosevelt's well-regarded Making of the Modern World Program. Her research focuses on the history of childhood and youth. She explores the importance of these generations in large scale processes such as modern nation and state building. Her dissertation project, "The (Re)Making of Young Patriots: Children and Nation Building in Wartime Croatia (1990-1995)," looks at the centrality of children and childhood in 1990s Croatia, where nation building took place in the midst of an ethnic conflict unseen in Europe since the Second World War. This dissertation research has been supported by the Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies Research Grant, Association for Women in Slavic Studies Graduate Research Award, UC's Frontiers of Innovation Scholars Program fellowship, UCSD's International Institute Research Grant, and Friends of the International Center Fellowship. She was born in Rijeka, Croatia, where she also received her Bachelor's and Master's degree in History and English, both teaching-oriented majors. After moving to San Diego in 2014, her capacity as an international student at UCSD as well as engagement with the (South)Eastern European immigrant community in the wider San Diego area allowed her to gain some insights related to the concerns of students attending the city's community colleges.

She received her Ph.D. in 2023 and is currently an assistant teaching professor at Florida State University.



Thomas Chan
tac015@ucsd.edu

Thomas Chan is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD). He completed his BA in History at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities before coming to UCSD in 2015. His dissertation, “Public Sacrifices of the Living Dead: Creative Violence and the Pathologization of Drug Criminals in Twentieth-Century China” analyzes how 20th century Chinese governments used historical memory, international medical studies, and communal anger to dehumanize drug users and traffickers from 1906 to 1953. His research has been supported by national and international organizations and foundations such as the American Council of Learned Societies, the Esherick-Ye Family Foundation, the Fulbright Foundation, the China National Scholarship Council, the UCSD Chancellor’s Interdisciplinary Collaboratory, and the Institute of Arts and Humanities at UCSD. He contributed a project on the precarity of migrant workers in Taiwan films to the edited volume *Locating Taiwan Cinema in the Twenty-First Century* in 2020. He teaches Chinese and East Asian history, with a critical focus on histories of science, violence and policing in the UCSD History Department, and has taught in the Dimensions of Culture College Writing program at UCSD’s Thurgood Marshall College as a teaching assistant. He has also served as the History Department’s Graduate Diversity Representative.

He received his Ph.D. in 2023 and is currently an assistant professor at Indiana University Bloomington.



Heather Paulson
hpaulson@ucsd.edu

Heather is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Literature at UCSD. Her research examines the ways that feminist communal communities help create healing spaces for working-class people of multiracial backgrounds during periods of environmental and economic crisis. Heather was the first in her family to attend college and is an alum of San Diego Miramar College and UC Berkeley, graduating with the highest honors in English and Gender and Women’s Studies. She taught various educational levels predominantly in low-income schools for nearly a decade while also earning a Master of Education degree at the University of Hawai’i, Mānoa before returning to get her Ph.D. at UCSD. Both her experience as a first-generation college student and her research on labor, gender, and race continue to influence her pedagogical philosophy centering social justice and equity.

She is currently an assistant professor of English at San Diego Miramar College.



Youngoh Jung
yok013@ucsd.edu

Youngoh Jung is a PhD candidate in the History Department and the Critical Gender Studies Graduate Specialization Program. He specializes in Asian American history with a focus on transpacific militarism during the Cold War. His dissertation, *Unsettling Militancy: Rethinking the Korean Diaspora in the Militarized Transpacific*, examines the history of diasporic Korean militarism and alternative identity/community formations in the Korean diaspora beyond the realm of the US Military Empire in the Asia-Pacific. Before starting his doctorate program at UCSD, Jung received his M.A. in East Asian Studies from the University of Toronto where he specialized in the history of authoritarian militarization in South Korea. His work in Korean history has been published in the *Trans-Humanities* Journal in 2014. Jung served as the teaching assistant for the Race and Oral History in San Diego course for the last three years, the course component of the larger Race and Oral History in San Diego project. This course focuses on fostering community knowledge and voices over extractive academic methodologies through empathetic forms of oral history as well as building relationships between institutions of higher education and local communities. Jung is an alumnus of San Diego Mesa College, transferring to UCSD in 2008, and has been involved with youth initiatives in the San Diego Korean American community.

He received his Ph.D. in 2024, and is currently an assistant professor at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.



Meaghan Baril
mbaril@ucsd.edu

Meaghan Baril is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Literature Department at UC San Diego. Before beginning her doctoral degree in 2017, Meaghan was an undergraduate at the University of Alabama where she received her B.A. in Psychology and English. Her dissertation, titled “Together Through the End: Theorizing Community in Apocalypse Literature,” explores the intersections between religious, racial, and gender identities and those relationships to community formation. This project shows how different perspectives on apocalypse allow for alternative understandings of the formation and importance of community and the social justice opportunities that community is capable of and has been supported by Institute of Arts and Humanities at UCSD. In addition to her academic work, Meaghan has been a long-time teaching assistant for the Making of the Modern World program at UCSD where she has also served as the Senior and Administrative Support TA. Meaghan has further experience as an educator and mentor teaching upper-division Literature courses at UCSD, volunteering for the Everyone-A-Reader Program, and mentoring through the Access Youth Academy. Her focus on building community through education is also reflected in her organization of several graduate student conferences at UCSD. As an IFI fellow, Meaghan looks forward to continuing learning how to create, facilitate, and participate in vibrant educational communities in San Diego that strive towards social justice, equity, and support.



Lauren Wood
lewood@ucsd.edu

Lauren Wood is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History at UC San Diego. She completed her BA in History at Brescia University in Owensboro, Kentucky before moving to California and obtaining her MA in History from Cal State Fullerton in 2015. Since arriving at UCSD, Lauren has taught a variety of courses as a Teaching Assistant and as an Associate-In, for both the Making of the Modern World writing program and for the History Department. In 2018, she became a Summer Graduate Teaching fellow and worked alongside faculty to craft a history course that concentrated on using equitable pedagogical practices and has become a staple during the summer sessions for the last five years. She was awarded the Don Tuzin TA excellence award for the 2020-2021 academic year and recognized for her work in helping students transition into the online learning environment that was required as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Lauren's research is heavily guided by feminist studies and an impulse to bring agency back to those who are generally overlooked or consigned to stereotypes in medieval history. In her dissertation, "From the Devil We Came: Reimagining Female Agency with the Monstrous Mélusine," Lauren analyzes the particular ways in which two various houses in the High Middle Ages used the fictional character of Mélusine in a competitive form of social memory. By emphasizing monstrosity and gender as categories of analysis, her dissertation assesses the ways in which a highly religious and misogynistic society was able to justify its support of a sexualized, maternal demon as an ancestress.

As a community college transfer student herself, Lauren was the second in her family to go to college and the first to complete a graduate degree. In addition to her experiences as a student and teacher, she is also a parent, an added obstacle as a student but one that brings with it its own learning experiences and perspective. As a fellow of the Mellon Integrated Initiative, Lauren hopes to bring her understanding as a former community college student, transfer student, and graduate student together with a pedagogical philosophy that centers on equity and inclusion.

She received her Ph.D. in 2023 and is currently an assistant professor at University of Wisconsin Stevens Point.



Jessica Aguila
jea035@ucsd.edu

Jessica Aguilar is a PhD Candidate in the Literature Department at UC San Diego. She completed her BA in Spanish Literature and Latin American Studies at UCSD and earned an MA in Spanish at New Mexico State University. Before starting her PhD program, Jessica worked at a shelter for unaccompanied minors where she conducted family reunifications of migrant youth. Jessica worked with children as young as six years old who sometimes only spoke indigenous languages, and young girls and boys who had experienced trauma during their journeys. As a Case Manager, Jessica saw how language and racial differences served as tools for systematic discrimination and barriers to access resources. She also witnessed the prejudice against indigenous minors and children of African heritage who would continuously pronounce that they felt as if their voices didn't matter. This experience prompted Jessica to go back to pursue a PhD in Literature.

In addition, Jessica's experiences as a first-generation, transfronteriza student from the San Ysidro – Tijuana borderlands, also informs her understandings of border relations, [im]migration, social mobility, language studies, and education access. Her current research interrogates how fictional narratives of Central American transmigration contribute to a production of migrant identity/ies. Her main question explores how literature and cultural productions challenge and assist the construction of "racializing assemblages" to fit the [im]migrantbody into categories of the human.

She received her Ph.D. in 2024 and is currently the College Access Program Manager at Breakthrough San Juan Capistrano.



Henry Argetsinger

hargetsi@ucsd.edu

Henry Argetsinger is a Ph.D. candidate in the Philosophy Department at UCSD. His research focuses on moral responsibility and the ethics of blame. His dissertation and recent publications are concerned with the gaps between our day-to-day practices of judging and holding one another responsible and the way in which philosophical theories of responsibility ground these judgments. He is particularly interested in the failures of traditional theories to account for systemic biases (of racism and sexism, for example) and dynamics of social power. Henry has a BA from Beloit College, an MA from UW-Milwaukee, and has taught at the high-school and college level for over a decade. He is excited to explore teaching at the community college level and to continue to center issues of marginalization and power in his pedagogy.

He received his Ph.D. in 2023 and is currently a management analyst in the Public Works department of the City of Chula Vista.



Sean Compas

scompas@ucsd.edu

Sean Compas is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Literature at the University of California, San Diego. Originally from Orange County and San Diego North County, Sean holds his B.A. in Political Science from UC San Diego, an A.M. in Cultural Studies from Dartmouth College, and a C.Phil. in Literature from UC San Diego. He is also an alum of the University of Virginia's inaugural Semester at Sea voyage through the Institute for Shipboard Education. His academic interests are in disability theory, cultural studies, queer theory, critical gender studies, and media. Sean's dissertation, "Surviving Dystopia: Desiring Disability and Deliberate Crippling in Apocalyptic Film", explores the ways in which disability is recentered in dystopian films as a valuable and necessary embodiment for survival. More specifically, his work looks at how disability is reconfigured as a requirement for futurity/world building or the ways in which able-body/mind people must "crip up" their lives as a modality for survival or what he calls the Apocacrip. His dissertation asks how it is advantageous to theorize the body and human experience to desire disability in moments of catastrophe. Sean has previously taught in the Dimensions of Culture (DOC) and Culture, Art, and Technology (CAT) programs at UC San Diego. He has previously received funding from PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) and his work has been presented at The Futures of American Studies Institute, Dartmouth College (2018, 2022). As a Mellon PATH Fellow, Sean is elated to be working with and support students at the San Diego Community College District transfer to four-year institutions and to explore career paths teaching at SDCCD.

He recieved his Ph.D. in 2023 and is currently a faculty lecturer at UC San Diego.



Rosie Dwyer

rsdwyer@ucsd.edu

Rosie Dwyer is a PhD candidate in Music with a concentration in Critical Gender Studies. She researches how popular music cultures are implicated in the gendered and raced relationships of domination that characterize life under neoliberalism. In her dissertation project, tentatively titled “Work It: Popular Music, Neoliberal Crisis and the ‘Hype-Up Work Ethic,’” she explores race, gender and the work ethic in post-Great Recession popular music. Rosie is also a teacher, and she has taught subjects ranging from sound art to classic literature as a teaching assistant in the music department and the Humanities Program at Revelle College. In her teaching, Rosie uses equitable and evidence-based pedagogy, especially active learning activities, to engage her students and promote a non-hierarchical classroom culture. Outside of the classroom, Rosie is active in the San Diego chapter of the UC Academic Student Worker’s Union, where she serves as Head Steward. Rosie also makes experimental pop music, which she has performed at venues in San Diego and Tijuana. As an Integrated Fellow, Rosie wants to learn about diversity and inclusion efforts in campus arts programming. She also looks forward to guest lecturing on topics in popular music and gender, and to facilitating a reading and creative practice group.



Matthew Ehrlich

mehrlich@ucsd.edu

Matthew Ehrlich is a Ph.D. candidate in the History Department at UC San Diego. He attended California community college for four years before transferring to Hofstra University for his BA in History and Spanish. After working as a restaurant cook for several years in Vermont and New York, he attended Tufts University for an MA in Global History. His dissertation focuses on nineteenth-century Spanish nationalism through the lens of race, slavery, and colonialism during the Cuban wars of independence from 1868-1898. He has worked as a teaching assistant for the Making of the Modern World program for several years, as well as a summer instructor for the History Department. As a lifelong hard-of-hearing individual who has struggled with ADHD and other learning disabilities since childhood, his personal experiences as a student provide the basis for his advocacy for accessibility as an instructor. In addition, over a decade of continuing research into the legacies of inequality and intolerance make him a passionate critic of institutional oppression in all forms; commitments he pursues outside the classroom as a labor organizer, founding member of the Dollar Lunch Club, a UCSD mutual-aid initiative to address food insecurity, and Vice President of a living-history (“reenactment”) organization dedicated to combating white supremacy and gender- and sexuality-based discrimination within the field of interpretive public history. He is thrilled to return to his community college roots, work with our PATH program, and be a part of new generations of students in building equitable, diverse, and inclusive classrooms and communities.

He received his Ph.D. in 2025.



Marisol Cuong
mcuong@ucsd.edu

Marisol Cuong is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Literature Department Spanish Section at the University of California, San Diego. She completed her B.A in Spanish and Portuguese at the University of California, Berkeley and earned her MA in Literature at UCSD. Before starting graduate studies, Marisol worked for a non-profit charter school that helps non-traditional minority students that were teenage mothers, formerly incarcerated, and/or undocumented. Through such experiences she embraces community knowledge through femtorships, teach-ins, and advocacy. She is excited to integrate those ideals by being a part of our program here at PATH.

At UCSD, Marisol has taught Spanish Literature and Language classes in both the literature and linguistics department. Additionally, she has held Associate- In positions teaching Critical Gender Studies and Ethnic Studies courses that center the issues of race, class, and gender geared toward Latine communities. Marisol's dissertation Witnessing: The Fragmented Reality of Militarization and Displacement of Latine Communities examines where and how violence is created, condoned, and reproduced to juxtapose a domestic war and a legacy of imperialism through the militarization of communities of color. Marisol Cuong was born and raised in Los Angeles, California her upbringing defined her interests in immigration and violence against women. She is motivated to become the first in her family to graduate from a doctoral program.

She recieved her Ph.D. in 2024 and is currently a lecturer in the UC San Diego Department of Ethnic Studies.



Andrea Zelaya
azzelaya@ucsd.edu

Andrea Zelaya is a scholar, researcher, educator, writer, artist, translator, and cultural activist. A Central American immigrant, her cultural heritage and background inform her creative, academic, and social justice endeavors. She received her MA in Literature from the University of California, San Diego and her BA in both English and Spanish Literature from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi with minors in Latin American Studies and History, as well as a TESOL certification. She has served as a pro bono translator for various non-profit organizations and immigrant communities in South Texas. She is currently a PhD candidate in the Department of Literature at the University of California, San Diego. Her research interests include 20th & 21st century Latin American literature, with a special emphasis on Central America. Her theoretical interests include decolonial feminisms and theories of fragments, temporalities, bodies, and social space. Her creative work and current research center around themes of fragmentation, trauma, and memory of postwar Central America. She has published fiction and poetry in both English and Spanish. Some of her cross-disciplinary interests include art, cultural studies, history, psychology, architecture, music, film, mental health, neurodivergence, disability studies, and linguistics. As a Mellon PATH IFI fellow and a community college graduate and transfer student herself, Andrea looks forward to contributing to, supporting, and learning from the students, faculty, and administrators at the San Diego Community College District.