

Temple Community Interviews

This year CENFAD wanted to start a new section of *Strategic Visions* dedicated to highlighting the work and future projects of Temple graduate students and alumni across disciplines. Below are five interviews conducted by the Davis Fellow, Josh Stern. We would like to thank all those who participated and look forward to their future scholarship!



Dr. Joel Blaxland is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Western New Mexico University and author of *Insurgency Prewar Preparation and Intrastate Conflict: Latin America and Beyond* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020). He is currently working on a study analyzing insurgency group leadership emotions as a contributing factor to group success.

Dr. Blaxland graduated from Temple University with a doctorate in political science advised by Dr. Hillel Soifer. In the [interview](#), Dr. Blaxland talks about his experience at Temple and how he went on to produce his dissertation. The second section delves into his argument about the correlation between insurgent organization’s “incubation period” and their success in taking and holding power in a given society.



Dr. Kaete O'Connell is a postdoctoral fellow at Southern Methodist University's Center for Presidential History where she explores U.S. food diplomacy in the Cold War. She is also a graduate of Temple University's Department of History doctoral program and is a former Davis Fellow.

In the [interview](#), we discussed her new book project tentatively titled *Tasting Freedom: U.S. Occupied Germany and the Origins of Cold War Food Diplomacy* which bridges diplomatic history and food studies for a deeper look at the political, economic, and cultural consequences of food aid in postwar Germany. Specifically, some topics of discussion included: stable food sources in the development of strong family structures, international humanitarian organizations re-education campaigns in postwar Germany, Dr. O'Connell's goal of starting a digital oral history archive of postwar German children, and her worries regarding the United States' humanitarian role in the world declining.



Jared Pentz is a PhD candidate in Temple University's Political Science department. After spending six years in the military and several more the foreign service as a conflict resolution expert, Jared took his first-hand knowledge of insurgency and applied it to his research. View this [interview](#) for topics including: insurgency in the Middle-East and Africa, ideological factors within and between insurgent groups, international relations, and multilateral intervention.



Brian McNamara is a PhD candidate in Temple University's History department, former Davis Fellow, and an assistant editor of the journal *Diplomatic History*. We start the [interview](#) with Brian telling some anecdotes from his academic career, the influences Temple faculty made to his work, and the challenges of picking and finishing a dissertation. In his dissertation, tentatively titled "Conservative Black Internationalism in the Late Twentieth Century," he asks how the black conservative movement in the 1980s conceived of their international mission in African and how this reflected their conceptions of belonging in US society. View this interview for topics including: conservative black internationalism, the Cold War in Africa, transnational politics, and international relations.



Keith Riley is a PhD candidate in Temple University’s History department and an assistant editor of the journal *Diplomatic History*. [Our interview](#) starts with Keith talking about his influences for his dissertation tentatively titled “Cities of Solidarity: Anti-Imperialism at the Local Level, 1968-1992,” including growing up in the Bay Area. From his memories of his parents discussing Nicaraguan solidarity organizations, he decided to pick a dissertation project highlighting revolutionary solidarity politics at the city/municipal level. His dissertation analyzes transnational political organizations between the United States, El Salvador, and Nicaragua and how these groups influenced US foreign policy through convincing ordinary Americans to push for the end of the wars in Central America. View this interview for topics including: Cold War Central America, US foreign policy, the history of local left politics, transnational organizations, and the sister-city movement.