

# Kathryn S. Olmsted

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University of California  
Davis, California 95616

## EDUCATION

Ph.D. in History, University of California, Davis	1993
Bachelor of Arts with honors and distinction in History, Stanford University	1985

## ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Professor of History, University of California, Davis	2005-present
Associate Professor of History, University of California, Davis	2003-2005
Assistant Professor of History, University of California, Davis	2001-2003
Lecturer in History, University of California, Davis	1993-2000

## ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS

Associate Dean of the Faculty for Social Sciences, UC Davis	2023-present
Interim Chair, Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies	2018-2023
Chair, Department of History, University of California, Davis	2013-2016

## BOOKS

*The Newspaper Axis: Six Press Barons Who Enabled Hitler*. Yale University Press, 2022;  
Audio edition, 2022. Winner of Sperber Prize for the best journalism memoir or  
biography, 2023.

*Right Out of California: The 1930s and the Big Business Roots of Modern Conservatism*.  
The New Press, 2015. Paperback edition, 2016.

*Real Enemies: Conspiracy Theories and American Democracy, World War I to 9/11*.  
Oxford University Press, 2009. Paperback edition, 2010. Tenth anniversary  
edition with a new chapter on Donald Trump, 2019. Audio edition, 2019.

*Red Spy Queen: A Biography of Elizabeth Bentley*. University of North Carolina Press,  
2002. Paperback edition, 2004.

*Challenging the Secret Government: The Post-Watergate Investigations of the CIA and  
FBI*. University of North Carolina Press, 1996. Paperback edition, 1996.

## CO-EDITED COLLECTION

*The Central Intelligence Agency: Security Under Scrutiny.* With Athan Theoharis, Richard Immerman, Loch Johnson, and John Prados, eds. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2006.

## FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, and AWARDS

Sperber Book Prize, 2023  
Fellowship, Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Cambridge, 2014  
Fellowship, Clare Hall, University of Cambridge, 2014  
Herbert Young Society Fellowship, College of Letters and Science, UCD, 2012-2015  
Excellence in Teaching Award, Northern California Phi Beta Kappa, 2009  
Distinguished Teaching Award, UCD Academic Senate, 2006  
Davis Humanities Institute Fellowship, 2005-06  
Faculty Development Award, University of California, Davis, 2005  
Distinguished Lecturer, Organization of American Historians  
Phi Beta Kappa  
Life member, Clare Hall, University of Cambridge

## ARTICLES and BOOK CHAPTERS

“Trust No One: An Intellectual and Cultural History of U.S. Deep State Conspiracy Theories,” in *What Do You Think Spies Are?: Intelligence, Culture and Society*, ed. Simon D. Willmetts and Constant W. Hijzen. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2024 (forthcoming).

“A New Deal for Wine,” co-written with Eric Rauchway, *Journal of Policy History*, summer 2024 (in press).

“From Depression to Civil Rights: 1929-1968,” co-written with Eric Rauchway, in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the United States*, ed. Nicholas Guyatt. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024 (in press).

“The 1930s Origins of California’s Farmworker-Church Alliance,” *Pacific Historical Review* 88:2 (Spring 2019), 240-261.

“George W. Bush,” co-written with Eric Rauchway, in *Presidential Misconduct*, ed. James Banner. The New Press, 2019, 451-464.

“George H. W. Bush,” co-written with Eric Rauchway, in *Presidential Misconduct*, ed. James Banner. The New Press, 2019, 421-429.

- “Richard M. Nixon,” co-written with Eric Rauchway, in *Presidential Misconduct*, ed. James Banner. The New Press, 2019, 371-387.
- “Conspiracy Theories in U.S. History,” in *Conspiracy Theories and the People Who Believe Them*, ed. Joseph Uscinski. Oxford University Press, 2018, 285-297.
- “Terror Tuesdays: How Obama Refined Bush’s Counterterrorism Policies,” in *The Presidency of Barack Obama: A First Historical Assessment*, ed. Julian Zelizer. Princeton University Press, 2018, 212-26.
- “Fringe Paranoia Goes Mainstream.” *Modern American History* 1 (July 2018): 243-46.
- “British and U.S. Anticommunism between the World Wars.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 53:1 (January 2018), 89-108.
- “Resurgence: Conservatives Organize Against the New Deal,” in *American Literature in Transition, 1940-1950*, ed. Christopher Vials. Cambridge University Press, 2017, 212-26.
- “U.S. Intelligence Agencies During the Ford Years,” in *A Companion to Gerald R. Ford and Jimmy Carter*, ed. Scott Kaufman. Wiley-Blackwell, 2015, 114-29.
- “Bleeding Edge: New Deal Farm Labor Mediation in California and the Conservative Reaction.” *Journal of Policy History* (Fall 2013), 48-72.
- “The Truth Is Out There: Citizen Sleuths from the Kennedy Assassination to the 9/11 Truth Movement.” *Diplomatic History* 35:4 (September 2011), 671-693.
- “Quelling Dissent: The Sacramento Conspiracy Trial and the Birth of the New Right.” *Boom: A Journal of California* (Summer 2011), 59-74.
- “Government Secrecy and Conspiracy Theories.” In *Government Secrecy: Research in Social Problems and Public Policy*, Susan Maret, ed. Emerald Publishing, 2011, 91-102.
- “Linus Pauling: A Case Study in Counterintelligence Run Amok,” in *Handbook on Intelligence Studies*, Loch Johnson, ed. Routledge, 2007, 269-278.
- “Lapdog or Rogue Elephant? CIA Controversies from 1947 to 2004,” in *The Central Intelligence Agency: Security Under Scrutiny*, Athan Theoharis, Richard Immerman, Loch Johnson, Kathryn Olmsted, and John Prados, eds. Greenwood Press, 2006, 189-229.

“Blond Queens, Red Spiders, and Neurotic Old Maids: Gender and Espionage in the Early Cold War.” *Intelligence and National Security* 19:1 (Spring 2004), 78-94.

“Reclaiming Executive Power: The Ford Administration’s Response to the Intelligence Investigations.” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 26:3 (Summer 1996): 725-37.

“‘An American Conspiracy’: The Post-Watergate Press and the CIA.” *Journalism History*, 19:2 (Summer 1993): 51-58.

## **EXHIBITION CATALOG ESSAYS**

“‘We’re in Serious Trouble Now’: Robert Arneson’s Anti-Nuclear Politics,” in *Robert Arneson: The Anti-War Works, 1982-1986*, ed. Eva Rivlin. New York: George Adams Gallery, 2019, 5-11.

“History and Conspiracy,” in *Everything Is Connected: Art and Conspiracy*, eds. Douglas Eklund and Ian McAlteveer. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2018, 158-165.

## **ENCYCLOPEDIA ENTRIES**

“Elizabeth Terrill Bentley” and “Church Committee” in Douglas M. Charles and Aaron J. Stockham, eds., *The Federal Bureau of Investigation: History, Powers, and Controversies of the FBI*, ABC-CLIO, 2022.

“Samuel A. Adams,” “Philip Agee,” “Aldrich Ames,” “William Francis Buckley,” “Porter Goss,” “Victor Marchetti,” “Valerie Plame,” and “Frank Snepp,” in Athan Theoharis et al, eds., *The Central Intelligence Agency: Security under Scrutiny* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2006).

## **SELECTED PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

Articles and Op-eds published the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, CNN.com, *Le Monde*, *The Baffler*, and other publications. Profiled in the *Los Angeles Times*. Lecturer for U.S. State Department in the United Kingdom. Host of four-episode podcast series for Crooked Media. Interviewed on CBS News, NPR’s “Morning Edition,” WGBH’s “Innovation Hub,” and NPR affiliates in New York, Los Angeles, and elsewhere. Lecturer for Gilder Lehrman Institute, National Humanities Center, and the History Project. Interviewed in documentaries produced for Amazon Prime, Sky TV, Netflix, KQED San Francisco, the History Channel, and BuzzFeed News.

## **SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS, INVITED TALKS, and PUBLIC LECTURES**

“Transatlantic Perspectives on Churchill’s Battle with Appeasers in the Media,” American Political Science Association annual conference, Los Angeles, California, September 1, 2023.

“The Death of the Progressive Narrative,” Writing American History in Uncertain Times conference, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK, June 22, 2023.

“A New Deal for Wine,” with Eric Rauchway, Boston-California-London-Georgia conference on U.S. History, Stanford University, March 26, 2023.

“Defining the Enemy: Public-Private Anticommunist Crusades in the Interwar United States,” *Ennemi : Les sociétés contemporaines et les menaces intérieures* conference, at Université Paris Cité (hybrid), December 2, 2022.

“The Newspaper Axis,” Jewish Community Library, San Francisco, California, September 13, 2022 (zoom).

“The Newspaper Axis,” Foreign Press Association, New York, New York, September 1, 2022 (zoom).

“It’s Not the Coverup, It’s the Crimes,” Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association annual conference, Portland, Oregon, August 11, 2022.

“The Newspaper Axis,” Roosevelt Reading Festival, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York, June 18, 2022.

“The Newspaper Axis,” Free University of Berlin (hybrid), June 8, 2022.

“The Fascist-Friendly Media of the 1930s,” Fresno State University, Fresno, California, May 7, 2022.

“Real Conspiracies and Conspiracy Theories,” Keynote Speaker, Humanists in Conversation about Conspiracy Theories, University of Rochester (zoom), April 16, 2022.

“Puzzling Beliefs,” New York University (zoom), March 29, 2022.

“Cocktail Colonialism: Rum in Modern U.S. Policy and Culture,” with Eric Rauchway, Bocalonga conference, Boston University, March 24, 2022.

“Democracy Under Siege: The Problem of American Ultraconservatism,” American Historical Association conference (zoom), February 26, 2022.

“Conspiracy Theories and American Democracy,” Stanford Alumni Club of Greater Los Angeles (zoom), June 8, 2021.

“Navigating the Storm: Qanon,” University of California, Los Angeles (zoom), June 3, 2021.

“Conspiracy Theories in Eastern Europe: Tropes and Trends,” Association for the Study of Nationalities Conference, Columbia University (zoom), May 8, 2021.

“Conspiracy Theories and American Democracy,” Tahoe Environmental Research Center (zoom), April 22, 2021.

“Conspiracy Theories: Past, Present, and Future,” Dallas Holocaust Museum (zoom), April 22, 2021.

“Red Spy Queen: How Being a Woman Made Elizabeth Bentley a Better Spy and a Worse Defector,” Women in Intelligence Network, King’s College, London (zoom), April 7, 2021.

“Conspiracy Theories and American History,” International Women’s Forum, Atlanta, Georgia (zoom), February 16, 2021.

“Conspiracy Theories and the Current Political Moment,” Cal Performances, UC Berkeley (zoom), October 22, 2020.

“Bacchus Unbound: The California Wine Industry’s Quest for Federal Regulation, 1933-1935,” Third International Wine Studies Conference, University of California, Davis, February 8, 2020.

“On Conspiracy Theories,” San Francisco Public Library’s Night of Ideas, San Francisco, February 1, 2020.

“Presidential Misconduct: Richard Nixon,” American Historical Association annual conference, New York, New York, January 5, 2020.

“Deep State Conspiracy Theories,” North American Society for Intelligence History annual conference, Washington, D.C., October 20, 2019.

“Fringe Politics in the West,” Roundtable discussion, Western History Association annual conference, October 17, 2019.

“Guns and Conspiracy Theories,” Campus Community Book Project, UC Davis, October 9, 2019.

“Lords of Isolation: Max Beaverbrook and Joe Patterson, 1935-1939,” Boston-California-London conference on U.S. History, University of London, May 24, 2019.

“Intelligence Interference in Domestic Politics: International and Historical Perspectives on Russiagate 2016,” roundtable discussion at American Historical Association annual conference, Chicago, January 4, 2019.

“Everything is Connected: Art and Conspiracy,” panel discussion at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York, September 20, 2018.

“The Press Lords and the ‘Dictator Bill’: Newspaper Opposition to FDR’s Foreign Policy,” Historians of the Twentieth-Century United States conference, Cambridge, United Kingdom, June 14, 2018.

“The Press Lords’ Opposition to Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Foreign Policies,” New Directions in Modern U.S. History conference, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, April 20, 2018.

“The Conservative Media and the Fight Against Intervention in World War II,” Organization of American Historians Annual conference, Sacramento, California, April 13, 2018.

“Just Because You’re Paranoid Doesn’t Mean They’re Not Out to Get You,” Pitzer College, Claremont, California, September 12, 2017.

“Right Out of California,” Bay Area Labor History Workshop, San Francisco, California, May 21, 2017.

“Right Out of California,” San Francisco Historical Society, San Francisco, California, January 31, 2017.

“Right Out of California,” UC Berkeley American Political History Seminar, September 16, 2016.

“The Transnational Turn in Intelligence History,” Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations conference, San Diego, California, June 25, 2016.

“Red Scare in the Churches: The Backlash Against Liberal Ministers’ Labor Activism in Depression-Era Los Angeles,” Policy History conference, Nashville, Tennessee, June 2, 2016.

“The U.S. Enters World War II, Seventy-five Years On,” Roundtable at the Organization of American Historians conference, Providence, Rhode Island, April 8, 2016.

“‘A Woman’s Place Is at the Polls’: Conservative Women Against Upton Sinclair,” Western Association of Women Historians conference, Sacramento, California, May 16, 2015.

“Schwartz’s Law of Misdirected Conspiracism: They’re Coming After Your Civil Liberties, But Not Through the Healthcare System,” Conspiracy Theory Conference, University of Miami, March 13, 2015.

“The America That First Overheard ‘The Conversation,’” Conference on *The Conversation* at 40: Privacy and Technology, Mr. Coppola and the Courts, UC Hastings, San Francisco, November 7, 2014.

“‘A Spectre Is Haunting the Atlantic’: Anglo-American Conservatism and the Transatlantic Threat,” University of Cambridge, United Kingdom, May 27, 2014.

“Right across the Atlantic: British and American Anticommunism between the World Wars,” University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom, May 15, 2014.

“Sob Sisters, Busybodies, and Mobs in Imperial Valley: The Unmaking of an Urban-Rural Alliance, 1934,” Conference on Rethinking the Rural-Urban Divide in the Modern West, Stanford University, April 5, 2014.

“‘Their Blood Is Strong’: Race, Reds, and Unions in Steinbeck’s fiction,” Symposium on the *Grapes of Wrath*, University of California, Davis, March 7, 2014.

“Assassination Redux,” Institute of North American Studies, Kings College London, United Kingdom, December 5, 2013.

“Understanding the JFK Assassination: Fifty years later,” Center for American Studies, University of Leicester, United Kingdom, December 4, 2013.

“Real Enemies: Conspiracy Theories and American Democracy,” Boroughmuir High School, Edinburgh, United Kingdom, December 3, 2013.

“Understanding the JFK Assassination: Fifty years later,” National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, United Kingdom, December 3, 2013.

“Understanding the JFK Assassination: Fifty Years Later,” Linen Hall Library, Belfast, United Kingdom, December 2, 2013.

“Understanding the JFK Assassination: Fifty Years Later,” Irish Association for American Studies, Queen’s University, Belfast, United Kingdom, December 2, 2013.

“Conspiracy Theories and Real-World Challenges,” Hammer Forum, University of California, Los Angeles, October 23, 2013.

“The Great Depression in California,” California State University, Fresno, March 14, 2013.



“The JFK Assassination and Conspiracy Theories,” California State University, Fresno, March 13, 2013.

“Duce Envy: American Conservatism and Fascism in the 1930s,” Defining the Enemy Conference, Occidental College, Los Angeles, November 30, 2012.

“Blood and Sunshine: The Bleeding Edge of the New Right in California,” The Great Depression Revisited Conference, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, October 14, 2011.

“The Execution of Ethel Rosenberg,” Conference on the Rosenberg Case, George Washington University, Washington, D.C., June 22, 2011.

“9/11 Conspiracy Theories,” National 9/11 Memorial, New York City, May 25, 2011.

“The CIA and Conspiracy Theories,” Conference on the CIA in History, Fiction, and Memory, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom, April 30, 2011.

“The Imperial Presidency Revisited,” Einstein Institute, Potsdam, Germany, March 2010.

“Red Menace! The Sacramento Conspiracy Trial of 1935,” Center for Sacramento History, Sacramento, California, December 2009.

“Conspiracy Theories and American Democracy,” University of California Washington Center, Washington, D.C., June 2009.

“Packaging Fear: America and the Art of Persuasion,” *Los Angeles Times* Festival of Books, Los Angeles, April 2009.

“Real Enemies,” Berkeley-Davis History Colloquium, Berkeley, California, April 2009.

“Perceptions of the Past,” California State University, Fresno, April 2009.

“Conspiracy Theories,” Organization of American Historians Annual Conference, New York, New York, April 2008.

“‘This Is Our Kennedy Assassination’: Iraq War Lies and 9/11 Conspiracy Theories,” Iraq War Conference, University of California, Davis, May 2, 2007.

“Their America: Linus Pauling vs. the FBI,” Organization of American Historians Annual Conference, Washington, D.C., April 22, 2006.

“I Think She Is One Hundred Percent Our Woman’: Elizabeth Bentley and Female Agency,” Pacific Coast branch of the American Historical Association, Honolulu, Hawaii, August 1, 2003.

“Red Spy Queens: Gender and Espionage in the Early Cold War,” Western Association of Women Historians conference, Huntington Library, April 21, 2002.

“Women’s Studies and Intelligence History,” Southwest/Texas branch of the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association, Albuquerque, New Mexico, February 15, 2002.

## **BOOK REVIEWS and REVIEW ESSAYS**

“Masculine Insecurity State,” review essay, *Reviews in American History*, June 2022, 50(2): 201-07.

*The Greek Connection: The Life of Elias Demetracopoulos and the Untold Story of Watergate*, by James Barron, for *Ergon: Greek American Arts and Letters*, July 2021.

*Conspiracy Theories in Eastern Europe: Tropes and Trends*, Anastasiya Astapova, Onoriu Colacel, Corneliu Pintilescu, Tamas Scheibner, eds., for *Intelligence History Newsletter*, Winter 2021(5).

“Conservative Bias,” review essay, *Reviews in American History*, December 2020, 48(4): 605-10.

*State of Resistance: What California’s Dizzying Descent and Remarkable Resurgence Mean for America’s Future*, by Manuel Pastor, for *Southern California Quarterly*, vol. 101:2, Summer 2019.

*Company Confessions: Secrets, Memoirs, and the CIA*, by Christopher Moran, for the North American Society for *Intelligence History Newsletter*, vol. 1:2, Spring 2018.

*Patriotic Betrayal: The Inside Story of the CIA’s Secret Campaign to Enroll American Students in the Crusade against Communism*, by Karen Paget, for *Intelligence and National Security*, vol. 32:7, July 2017.

*Little ‘Red Scares’: Anti-Communism and Political Repression in the United States, 1921-1946*, ed. by Robert Justin Goldstein, for *American Communist History*, vol. 15:2, 2016.

*Planning Democracy: Agrarian Intellectuals and the Intended New Deal*, by Jess Gilbert, for the *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 121:5, March 2016.

*Reining in the State: Civil Society and Congress in the Vietnam and Watergate Eras*, by Katherine A. Scott, for *H-DIPLO Roundtable XVII:4*, October 19, 2015.

*Subversives: The FBI's War on Student Radicals, and Reagan's Rise to Power*, by Seth Rosenfeld, for the *Chicago Tribune*, August 19, 2012.

*Cold War Captives: Imprisonment, Escape, and Brainwashing*, by Susan Carruthers, for the *American Historical Review*, December 2011.

"The Truth about Spies," review essay in *Diplomatic History* 35:1 (January 2011), 137-142.

*Unsafe for Democracy: World War I and the U.S. Justice Department's Covert Campaign to Suppress Dissent*, by William H. Thomas, Jr., for *Peace & Change*, July 2011.

*J. Edgar Hoover and the Anti-Interventionists*, by Douglas M. Charles, for *The Historian*, 2009.

*Alger Hiss's Looking Glass Wars: The Covert Life of a Soviet Spy*, by G. Edward White, for the *American Historical Review*, February 2006.

*Washington Gone Crazy: Pat McCarran and the Great American Communist Hunt*, by Michael Ybarra, for the *Chicago Tribune*, January 2005.

*Female Intelligence: Women and Espionage in the First World War*, by Tammy Proctor, for *Intelligence and National Security*, Summer 2004.

*Lost Crusader: The Secret Wars of CIA Director William Colby*, by John Prados, for the *Journal of American History*, June 2004.

*The Power to Destroy: The Political Uses of the IRS from Kennedy to Nixon*, by John A. Andrew III, for the *American Historical Review*, June 2003.

*Tales of Wo-Chi-Ca: Blacks, Whites and Reds at Camp*, by June Levine and Gene Gordon, for *American Communist History*, June 2003.

*Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920*, by Clifford Putney, for *The Historian*, 2003.

*Soldiers, Spies, and the Rat Line: America's Undeclared War against the Soviets*, by James V. Milano and Patrick Brogan, on *H-DIPLO*, January 2002.

## **SELECTED UNIVERSITY AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

Chair, Ellis Hawley Book Prize Committee, Organization of American Historians, 2023

Co-chair, Recruitment Advisory Committee for a new University Librarian/Vice Provost of Digital Scholarship, 2023

Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, College of Letters and Science, 2022-2023 (vice chair 2021-22)

Member, University of California Press editorial committee, 2017-2022

Board member, North American Society for Intelligence History, 2016-2021

Chair, UCD Academic Senate Library Committee, 2017-2020

Member, UCD Academic Senate Distinguished Teaching Award Committee, 2015-2018

Member, Provost's Work Group on the 2020 Initiative and Fiscal Transparency, 2015

Chair, Academic Senate Committee on Research, 2011-2013

## **UNDERGRADUATE COURSES**

History 17B, United States since 1865

History 174B, United States, 1918-1945

History 174C, United States since 1945

History 174D, Conspiracy Theories in U.S. History

History 176B, Social and Cultural History of the Twentieth-Century United States

History 188, America in the 1960s

History 189, California History

History 102M, Secrecy and Democracy in the Twentieth-Century United States

## **GRADUATE COURSES**

The Cold War

Policy History in the Twentieth-Century United States

The New Deal and the New Right

Gender and Biography