

Stanford



Paula Findlen

Ubaldo Pierotti Professor of History and Professor, by courtesy, of French and Italian

 Curriculum Vitae available Online

Bio

BIO

I have taught the early history of science and medicine for many years on the premise that one of the most important ways to understand how science, medicine and technology have become so central to contemporary society comes from examining the process by which scientific knowledge emerged. I also take enormous pleasure in examining a kind of scientific knowledge that did not have an autonomous existence from other kinds of creative endeavors, but emerged in the context of humanistic approaches to the world (in defiance of C.P. Snow's claim that the modern world is one of "two cultures" that share very little in common). More generally, I am profoundly attracted to individuals in the past who aspired to know everything. It still seems like a worthy goal.

My other principal interest lies in understanding the world of the Renaissance, with a particular focus on Italy. I continue to be fascinated by a society that made politics, economics and culture so important to its self-definition, and that obviously succeeded in all these endeavors for some time, as the legacy of such figures as Machiavelli and Leonardo suggests. Renaissance Italy, in short, is a historical laboratory for understanding the possibilities and the problems of an innovative society. As such, it provides an interesting point of comparison to Gilded Age America, where magnates such as J.P. Morgan often described themselves as the "new Medici," and to other historical moments when politics, art and society combined fruitfully.

Finally, I have a certain interest in the relations between gender, culture and knowledge. Virginia Woolf rightfully observed at the beginning of the twentieth century that one could go to a library and find a great deal about women but very little that celebrated or supported their accomplishments. This is no longer true a century later, in large part thanks to the efforts of many scholars, male and female, who have made the work of historical women available to modern readers and who have begun to look at relations between the sexes in more sophisticated ways. Our own debates and disagreements on such issues make this subject all the more important to understand.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Professor, History
- Professor (By courtesy), French and Italian

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS

- Ubaldo Pierotti Professor in Italian History, Stanford University, (2002- present)
- Professor of History (and Italian, by courtesy), Stanford University, (1999-2002)

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HONORS AND AWARDS

- Margaret W. Rossiter History of Women in Science Prize, History of Science Society (2004)

- Pfizer Prize, History of Science Society (1996)

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BOARDS, ADVISORY COMMITTEES, PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Reviewer, American Historical Review
- Reviewer, American Scholar
- Reviewer, Catholic Historical Review

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PROGRAM AFFILIATIONS

- Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
- Science, Technology and Society

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- B.A., Wellesley College , Medieval/Renaissance Studies (1984)
- M.A., University of California, Berkeley , History (1985)

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Teaching

COURSES

2018-19

- Education as Self-Fashioning: The Discovery of The Mind: ESF 13 (Aut)
- Leonardo's World: Science, Technology and Art: STS 200P (Aut)
- Leonardo's World: Science, Technology, and Art: ARTHIST 231, ARTHIST 431, HISTORY 231, HISTORY 331, ITALIAN 231, ITALIAN 331 (Aut)

2016-17

- Heretics, Prostitutes and Merchants: The Venetian Empire: HISTORY 332B, ITALIAN 332B (Spr)

2015-16

- Coffee, Sugar, and Chocolate: Commodities and Consumption in World History, 1200-1800: HISTORY 202B, HISTORY 302B (Win)

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STANFORD ADVISEES

Doctoral (Program)

Julia Roever

Publications

PUBLICATIONS

- **Early Modern Things: Objects and Their Histories**
Findlen, P.
London: Routledge.2013
- **Laura Bassi: A Passion for Physics** *Physics World*
Findlen, P.
2013

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