Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Faculty Research Awards Committee, I write to announce the selection of the 2016-2017 Copeland Colloquium theme. The topic proposed, “The Social Life of Guns,” was submitted by a group of faculty as an outcome of cross-disciplinary discussions that have focused on questions of violence, inequality, and injustice—including topics such as “the cultural rhetorics of violence, artistic depictions of mass violence, and the methodological stakes involved in violent representations and in representing violence.” I attach our colleagues’ proposal for your information.

I understand that the goal of the colloquium is to engage the entire Amherst community, as well as our Five-College colleagues and members of the larger community, in a yearlong discussion of the topics described above. Plans call for an exploration of the object of “the gun” as a “contemporary, social, cultural, and political phenomenon.” Our colleagues note, “The urgency of recent mass killings and social upheavals, and the centrality of the ‘gun’ within these recent events, pose fundamental questions to us as a community. As emblematic symbols and tools of violence, the ‘gun’ stands as a unique contemporary artifact, around which we hope to orient our multidisciplinary approach.”

Please join me in applauding our colleagues’ initiative, and contact the colloquium organizers (Professors Amrita Basu, Nusrat Chowdhury, Rafeeq Hasan, Andrew Poe, Jonathan Obert, and Leah Schmalzbauer) with suggestions and questions. While these faculty members will serve as the lead sponsors and organizers of the colloquium next year, it is hoped that other members of the faculty will wish to participate. The organizers welcome you to join in their efforts.

For more information about the Copeland Colloquium, please click here.

All my best,

Catherine

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty
Professor of History