

## Reacting to the Past

"Reacting" Games:

"Reacting" seeks to replicate the historical context of a particular past, with all its causal forces: economic, sociological, political, and otherwise. But it also provides students with the opportunity to explore counterfactual issues of individual agency: Would a different constellation of leaders in ancient Athens have effectively resisted the rise of Athenian democracy? Would a different set of arguments have prevented Galileo from being convicted by the Inquisition? To assert that human agency matters is to say that what actually happened need not have happened. Historical forces do not foreordain human affairs. History is not predetermined. It is contingent on multiple factors, including the vagaries of human individuality.

To illuminate the element of agency in human affairs, "Reacting" games differ from most games in that participants do not know all the rules at the outset. Things will happen that they may not anticipate and over which they have little or no control. The game will unfold in ways that are not predetermined: what participants do affects what will happen.

Each "Reacting" game is based on the game designers' sense of the period. What happened in the past will not necessarily repeat itself in this game, but the "real" history may provide some sense of the likely issues that will emerge and of the designers' understanding of historical causation. If game players study the historical context carefully, they will have a better chance of understanding what will likely happen in the future. That, too, is true in life as well.

Participants can improve their prospects for success in several ways: by forming effective and cooperative teams; by studying the world they inhabit; by making plans for the unexpected; and by working hard to win others over to their views. If you have preregistered, you will receive game materials, accompanying texts, and role assignments about two weeks in advance of the game. You will play a somewhat abbreviated version of the game over four days--and you may play one or both games if you choose--one during the morning and one in the afternoon. Game materials are included in your registration fee if you choose to play.

Follow this link for further information about gaming and particular games:

<http://www.barnard.columbia.edu/reacting/curriculum/index.html>

Mark Carnes, the creator and editor of the Reacting to the Past Series of academic role-playing games, will speak at game sessions and introduce participants to the larger contexts of Reacting Games. Mark C. Carnes is Professor of History at Barnard College (New York City). He specializes in modern American social and gender history. He received his B.A. from Harvard (1974) and his Ph.D. from Columbia (1982). His books include: *Mapping America's Past* (1996); *Past Imperfect: History According to the Movies* (ed., 1995); *History of American Life* (ed., 1996); *Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America* (ed., 1990); *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (1989); and *The Compensations of War* (1985). He was general editor, with John Garraty, of the 24-volume *American National Biography* (1999). He is currently working on a book on the history of gender and visual perception in Victorian America.

**REACTING SCHEDULE  
THE SOCIETY FOR VALUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION  
SUMMER CONFERENCE**

**Morning Group**

**9:00 am – Noon**

**Thursday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> – Sunday, July 26<sup>th</sup>**

Charles Darwin, the Copley Medal, and the Rise of Naturalism, 1862-1864

Charles Darwin, the Copley Medal, and the Rise of Naturalism, 1862-64, thrusts students into the intellectual ferment of Victorian England just after publication of *The Origin of Species*. Since its appearance in 1859, Darwin's long awaited treatise in "genetic biology" had received reviews both favorable and damning.

Thomas Huxley and Samuel Wilberforce presented arguments for and against the theory in a dramatic and widely publicized face-off at the 1860 meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in Oxford.

Their encounter sparked a vigorous, complex debate that touched on a host of issues and set the stage for the Royal Society's consideration of whether or not they ought to award Darwin the Copley Medal, their most prestigious prize. While the action takes place in meetings of the Royal Society, Great Britain's most important scientific body, a parallel and influential public argument smoldered over the nature of science and its relationship to modern life in an industrial society.

A significant component of the Darwin game is the tension between natural and teleological views of the world, manifested especially in reconsideration of the design argument, commonly known through William Paley's *Natural Theology or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity* (1802), and updated by Wilberforce. But the scientific debate also percolated through a host of related issues: the meaning and purposes of inductive and hypothetical-speculation in science; the professionalization of science; the implications of Darwinism for social reform, racial theories, and women's rights; and the evolving concept of causation in sciences and its implications for public policy. Because of the revolutionary potential of Darwin's ideas, the connections between science and nearly every other aspect of culture became increasingly evident. Scientific papers and laboratory demonstrations presented in Royal Society meetings during the game provide the backdrop for momentous conflict that continues to shape our perceptions of modern science.

These two authors plan to attend:

**Dann P. Siems** is Assistant Professor of Biology at Bemidji State University. His research interests include the natural history of fishes, phenotypic plasticity in life history theory, relationship of ontogeny to phylogeny, history, and philosophy of biology, role of behavior and cognition in evolution, and evolutionary psychology. B.

**Kamran Swanson** is an Instructor of Philosophy at Oakton Community College and Harold Washington College in the Chicago area. His studies have focused on the philosophy of Benedict Spinoza and early modern philosophies of science.

## **Afternoon Group**

**1:30 – 4:30**

**Thursday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> – Saturday, July 25<sup>th</sup>**

The Trial of Anne Hutchinson: Liberty, Law, and Intolerance in Puritan New England

The Trial of Anne Hutchinson recreates one of the most tumultuous and significant episodes in early American history: the struggle between the followers and allies of John Winthrop, Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and those of Anne Hutchinson, a strong-willed and brilliant religious dissenter. The controversy pushed Massachusetts to the brink of collapse and spurred a significant exodus. The puritans who founded Massachusetts were poised between the Middle Ages and the modern world, and in many ways, they helped to bring the modern world into being. The Trial of Anne Hutchinson plunges participants into a religious world that will be unfamiliar to many of them. Yet the puritans' passionate struggles over how far they could tolerate a diversity of religious opinions in a colony committed to religious unity were part of a larger historical process that led to religious freedom and the modern concept of separation of church and state. Their vehement commitment to their liberties and fears about the many threats these faced were passed down to the American Revolution and beyond.