

Yvan Prkachin, PhD
CURRICULUM VITAE

Institute of Biomedical Ethics and History of
Medicine (IBME), University of Zurich
Zurich, Switzerland, 8006

Tel: (+41) 782150085
Email: yvancraig.prkachin@uzh.ch

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- 2021-** **University of Zurich** Zurich, Switzerland
Postdoctoral Fellow
- 2019-2021** **Harvard University** Cambridge, Massachusetts
Lecturer in the History of Science, Faculty of Arts and Sciences

EDUCATION

- 2018** **Harvard University**, Cambridge, Massachusetts
Ph.D., History of Science (2012-2018)
Dissertation: *Wired Together: The Montreal Neurological Institute and the Origins of Modern Neuroscience, 1928-1965*.
Committee: Prof. Anne Harrington (Supervisor and Chair), Prof. Rebecca Lemov, Dr. David Jones
- 2008** **University of Guelph**, Guelph, Ontario
M.A. History (2006-2008)
Thesis: "The Chemophilic Society": Addiction Research After the Classic Period of Narcotic Control, 1957 – 1975.
Supervisor: Dr. Catherine Carstairs
- 2006** **University of Northern British Columbia**, Prince George, British Columbia
B.A. Honors History (2001-2006)
Thesis: "Chinks Pay Heavily for Hitting Pipe": The Perception and Enforcement of Canada's New Drug Laws in Rural and Northern British Columbia, 1908 – 1930.

PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

Wired Together: The Montreal Neurological Institute and the Origins of Neuroscience. University of Chicago Press, January 2026.

ARTICLES (Peer Reviewed)

"'Engineering Sense': Donald Hebb, Nathaniel Rochester, and the Origins of Deep Learning." *Journal of the History of Ideas*, forthcoming, 2026.

"'The Sleeping Beauty of the Brain': Memory, MIT, Montreal, and the Origins of Neuroscience." *Isis* 112, no. 1 (March 2021): 22–44.

“The Reign of the Ventilator: ARDS, Covid-19, and Technological Imperatives in Intensive Care.” *Annals of Internal Medicine* 174, no. 8 (2021): 1145–1150.

“Two Solitudes: Wilder Penfield, Ewen Cameron and the Search for a Better Lobotomy.” *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 38, no 2 (2021): 253–284.

“Chinks Pay Heavily for Hitting Pipe’: The Perception and Enforcement of Canada’s New Drug Laws in Rural and Northern British Columbia, 1908-30.” *BC Studies* 153 (Spring 2007): 73–105.

BOOK REVIEWS

“Tara H. Abraham, Rebel Genius: Warren S. McCulloch’s Transdisciplinary Life in Science.” *The British Journal for the History of Science* 51, no. 02 (June 2018): 313–14.

“Fernando Vidal and Francisco Ortega, Being Brains: Making the Cerebral Subject.” *Nuncius* 33.3 (2018): 657-660.

“Katja Guenther, Localization and Its Discontents: A Genealogy of Psychoanalysis & the Neuro-Disciplines.” *The British Journal for the History of Science* 50, no. 01 (March 2017): 162–64.

“William Feindel and Richard Leblanc, The Wounded Brain Healed: The Golden Age of the Montreal Neurological Institute, 1934–1984.” *Journal of the History of the Neurosciences* 26, no. 4 (2017): 431–33.

“Dan Malleck, When Good Drugs Go Bad: Opium, Medicine, and the Origins of Canada’s Drug Laws.” *Left History* Vol. 20, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2016): 126–28.

PUBLIC WRITING (Non-Peer Reviewed)

“Blood Cars: Polio, Cyborg Lungs, and the New Medical Device Industry.” *e-flux Architecture – Treatment*, 2025. <https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/treatment/647320/blood-cars-polio-cyborg-lungs-and-the-new-medical-device-industry>

(With Lisa de Bode) “Covid-19 and Medicine’s Misguided Romance with Machines.” *Undark MIT Press* 9 July 2020. <https://undark.org/2020/07/09/covid-19-medicine-and-machines/>

Republished: *Salon, Slate, Fast Company, Medscape*

“A Rearguard Action Against Lobotomy? : A Mary Louise Nickerson Fellowship in Neuro History Report.” *Osler Library Newsletter* 125 (Fall 2016): 2–4.

“The D. O. Hebb Collection: An Archival Reconnaissance.” *Osler Library Newsletter* 120 (Spring 2014): 8–9.

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, SCHOLARSHIPS and AWARDS

GRANTS

2024-2028 Swiss National Science Foundation, National Research Council Grant. “Life Support: Technologies, Institutions and Experiences in the History of Intensive Care Medicine, 1945-2020.”
I was the primary author of this grant application, which will involve colleagues at the University of Zurich and the University of Manchester, UK.
Value: CHF 1.1 million.

FELLOWSHIPS

2017 Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Dissertation Completion Fellowship, \$27,500
2016 Mary Louise Nickerson Fellowship in Neuro History (Osler Library), \$3,000
2015 Harvard Weatherhead Center for International Relations Canada Studies Fellowship, \$10,000
2013 Mary Louise Nickerson Fellowship in Neuro History (Osler Library), \$3,000

SCHOLARSHIPS

2012 Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Doctoral Fellowship, 2012-2016
\$20,000/year
2007 Ontario Graduate Scholarship, \$15,000
2006 Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Graduate Scholarship, \$17,500

AWARDS

2020 Harvard University Bok Center Certificate of Distinction in Teaching (Lecturer), Fall
2019 Harvard University Bok Center Certificate of Distinction in Teaching (Lecturer), Spring
2018 Harvard University Bok Center Certificate of Distinction in Teaching, Fall
2017 Harvard University Bok Center Distinction in Teaching Award, Spring
2016 Harvard University Bok Center Distinction in Teaching Award, Fall
2016 Harvard University Bok Center Distinction in Teaching Award, Spring
2015 Harvard University Bok Center Certificate of Distinction in Teaching, Spring

PRESENTATIONS

Conference Presentations

“Mother is the First Teacher’: Wilder Penfield, Arthur Lenneberg, and the Origins of the Critical Periods Hypothesis.” Three Societies Meeting: ESHHS, CHEIRON and SHP Meeting, Paris, July 1-5, 2025.

“Drowning In Their Own Secretions’: Copenhagen’s 1952 Polio Epidemic and the Technological Origins Of Modern Intensive Care.” European Association for the History of Medicine and Health, Oslo, Norway, August 30-Sept 2, 2023

“A Learning Computer: D.O. Hebb, Nathaniel Rochester, and the Origins of Deep Learning.” European Society for the History of the Human Sciences Annual Meeting, Budapest, Hungary, July 4-7, 2023.

“Two solitudes: Psychosurgery and the troubled relationship between Ewen Cameron and Wilder Penfield.” European Society for the History of the Human Sciences Annual Meeting, Budapest, Hungary, July 7-8, 2019.

“‘If your idea really did work’: Donald Hebb, Nathaniel Rochester, and the Other Origin of Neural Networks, 1945-1960.” Towards a History of Artificial Intelligence, Workshop at Columbia University, 23-24 May 2019.

“A Tale of Two Neurosciences: Francis Schmitt, Herbert Jasper, and the Twin Births of Organized Neuroscience.” History of Science Society Annual Meeting, Seattle, 10 October 2018.

“Two Solitudes – Penfield and Psychiatry.” Presented as part of a panel “Beyond Scalpel and Trephine: Wilder Penfield and His Diverse Collaborators,” Canadian Society for the History of Medicine Annual Meeting, Regina, Saskatchewan, 26 May 2018.

“‘How Community Projects Relate to International Politics and Peace’: Race, the Student Union For Peace Action’s Summer Projects and New Left Ideology in Canada.” Tri-University History Conference, Waterloo 2007.

“The Enforcement of Drug Laws in Northern British Columbia.” Global Approaches: Drug and Alcohol History Conference, University of Guelph, 2007.

Invited Presentations

“Experiments in Care: Technology, Innovation, and the Promise and Peril of Intensive Care Medicine.” Invited talk, Danish Institute for Advanced Study (DIAS), University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark, 2024.s

“An Expression of Curiosity: Place and the History of Science in Canada.” Invited keynote address, Northern Historical Conference, University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George, British Columbia, 2017.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Zurich

Institut für Biomedizinische Ethik und Medizingeschichte (IBME)

Zurich, Switzerland

Role: Lecturer in the Faculty of History

2024 Proseminar: The History of Health and Medicine (taught in UZH’s Historische Seminar)

2023 Factories of Health: The Hospital from the French Revolution to Covid-19 (seminar course co-taught with Dr. Prof. Flurin Condrau)

Role: Lecturer in the Faculty of Medicine

- 2022/2023 Einführung in die Medizingeschichte (Introduction to the History of Medicine)
(lecture course for medical students)
Medizin & Film: Von der Klinik zur Contagion (Medicine and Film: From the Clinic
to Contagion) (seminar course for medical students)

Harvard University

Department of the History of Science Cambridge, Massachusetts

Role: Lecturer in the History of Science, Faculty of Arts and Sciences

- 2019-20 History of Science 177v – The Sciences of Memory, Lies and Pain - (original seminar
course for undergraduates and graduate students)
2019 History of Science 152v – Technology and Modern Medicine: From the Stethoscope
to Nanotechnology (original lecture course for undergraduates)
2019 History of Science 176v – Mind and Brain: Themes in the History of Neuroscience -
(original lecture course for undergraduates)

Role: Teaching Fellow in the History of Science, Faculty of Arts and Sciences

- 2020 General Education 1170 – Confronting Covid-19: History, Science, Policy (Remote
Teaching Specialist)
2020 History of Science 98: Junior Tutorial
History of Science 170: Broken Brains
2014, 16 & 18 General Education - Culture and Belief 34: Madness and Medicine – Themes in the
History of Psychiatry (Head Teaching Fellow)
2017, 20 History of Science 97: Sophomore Tutorial (Head Teaching Fellow)
2017, 21 History of Science 189: The World We Made: Technology and Society
2016 History of Science 176: Brainwashing and Modern Techniques of Mind Control
2016 History of Science 122v: Science in the Cold War

Harvard University

Extension School Cambridge, Massachusetts

Lecturer in History of Science

- 2020 History of Science 152E – Technology and Modern Medicine: From the Stethoscope
to Nanotechnology
2019, 20 History of Science 176S – Mind and Brain: Themes in the History of Neuroscience –

Lecturer in Philosophy

- 2017 Philosophy S-157 – The Art and Science of Memory (co-developed and taught with
Dr. Julia Reed, Religion, Harvard University)

Lecturer in Philosophy (Pre-College Program)

- 2017 Philosophy S-157 – The Art and Science of Memory (co-developed and taught with
Dr. Julia Reed, Religion, Harvard University)

ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Harvard University, History of Science Department Cambridge, Massachusetts

Research Assistant, Professor Anne Harrington – 2021

Research Assistant, Professor Allan Brandt - 2021

Undergraduate Advisor – 2018-2019

Research Assistant, Professor Anne Harrington - 2018

Research Assistant, Professor Matthew Hersch - 2017

Canadian Development Consultants International Vancouver, BC

Database Administrator - 2011-2012

Research Assistant - 2010-2011

University of Waterloo, Kinesiology Department Waterloo, Ontario

Research Assistant, Professors Nancy Theberge and Parisa Safai (York University) - 2008

University of Guelph, History Department Guelph, Ontario

Research Assistant, Professor Catherin Carstairs – 2007

University of Northern British Columbia, History Department Prince George, BC

Research Assistant, Professor Jacqueline Holler – 2006

Research Assistant, Professor Ted Binnema – 2006

Research Assistant, Professor Mary-Ellen Kelm – 2005

ADVISING

University of Zurich

Medical Thesis Students

Astrid Schimid, “I will continue to practice anyway, even if I should be beheaded:” Simon Muller and 1939 Referendum on Chiropractic Medicine in Zurich, 2023

Selina Wimp, Åke Senning and the Origins of Swiss Cardiac Surgery, 2023

Harvard University

Senior Thesis Students

Amma Ababio, *Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself: Christianity and the Development of Psychiatry in America*, 2019

Kayla McGarrell, *Rutland Corner House: A Microhistory*, 2018

Deniz Cataltepe, *A Successful Failure: Victor Horsley’s Epilepsy Surgeries At The National Hospital For The Paralyzed And Epileptic, 1886-1906*, 2016

Stefanie Chorionopolus, *Unmasking the Psychopath: Psychopathy Research from 1941 to 1999*, 2014

SERVICE

DEPARTMENTAL

Rothschild Prize Committee, Reader, 2017, 2018, 2020

Modern Sciences Working Group, Harvard University, Co-Organizer, 2013-14

PROFESSIONAL

Peer Referee, National Institutes of Health, Grant Review,

Peer Referee, *Canadian Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 2020.

Peer Referee, *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing*, 2020.

Peer Referee, *History of Psychology*, 2016.

Member, History of Science Society.

Member, American Historical Association.

Member, Canadian Society for the History of Medicine.

Member, Canadian Society for the History and Philosophy of Science.

REFERENCES

Prof. Dr. phil. Flurin Condrau

Institute of Biomedical Ethics and History of Medicine (IBME)

University of Zurich

Email: flurin.condrau@uzh.ch

Phone: +41 44 634 20 70

Professor Anne Harrington

Franklin L. Ford Professor of the History of Science

History of Science Department, Harvard University

Email: aharring@fas.harvard.edu

Phone: (617) 496-5234

Dr. David S. Jones

A. Bernard Ackerman Professor of the Culture of Medicine

History of Science Department and Harvard Medical School, Harvard University

Email: dsjones@harvard.edu

Phone: (617) 495-3562

Professor Rebecca Lemov

Professor of the History of Science

History of Science Department, Harvard University

Email: rlemov@fas.harvard.edu

Phone: (617) 496-5229

Professor Allan M. Brandt

Amalie Moses Kass Professor of the History of Medicine

History of Science Department, Harvard University

Email: brandt@fas.harvard.edu

Phone: (617) 495-3532

