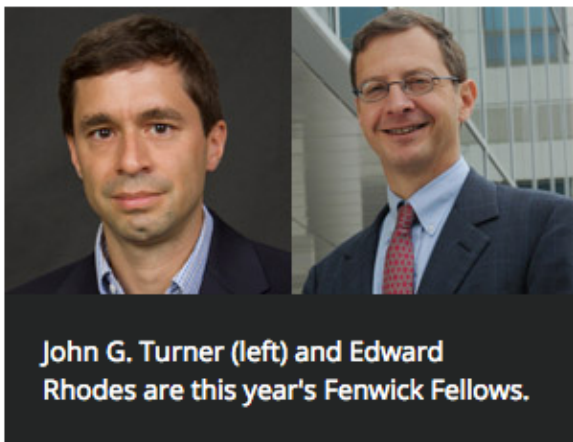


News at Mason

New Fenwick Fellows to shed light on infrequently studied topics

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In a rare move, George Mason University has named not one but two tenured faculty members as recipients of the highly regarded Fenwick Fellowship.

John G. Turner, a professor of religious studies in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and Edward Rhodes, a professor of government and international affairs in the Schar School of Policy and Government, are the 2016-17 Fenwick Fellows.

Typically, only one faculty member is selected, but the applicant pool's research proposals were of such high caliber that two were chosen, said John Zenelis, the dean of Libraries and the university librarian at George Mason.

Turner and Rhodes will receive \$5,000 each to support their research during the fellowship, which began Aug. 29 and ends Aug. 11, 2017.

Turner's research proposal, "They Knew They Were Pilgrims: Plymouth Colony and the Marking of American Liberty," will explore religious and political liberties, religious persecution and other related topics.

"Most of us have some vague recollection of pilgrims and Indians from elementary school, but historians generally haven't paid much attention to what happened in the Plymouth colony after the first Thanksgiving," Turner said.

In fact, no one has written a scholarly account of Plymouth Colony's 70-year history for more than 50 years, Turner said, which is why he plans to do it. His book will be published in 2020, in time for the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower voyage.

Rhodes is delving into the years between the end of World War I and the collapse of international order caused by the Great Depression, 1920 to 1932, to look at U.S. foreign policy.

"It's a period of history that has been largely ignored. After World War I, there was an assumption that we'd gotten it all wrong, so diplomatic historians, political scientists and policy makers have generally not bothered to look at it closely," Rhodes said.

Rhodes argues that far from being a period of unthinking or reactionary "isolationism," the years following World War I were ones of innovative, highly successful statesmanship, offering important lessons and insights for today.

"American initiatives such as those leading to the now-forgotten Washington Treaties of 1922 and the Dawes Plan," he said, "played a critical role in defusing dangerous tensions between the great powers and encouraging the organic development of liberal democracy around the world—progress sadly swept away by the global economic cataclysm of the Great Depression."

His project, "Digital Curatorship of Historical Documentation: The Rise and Fall of Liberal Republican Foreign Policy, 1920-1932," allows him to pursue his main goal: digitizing documents from this period, making them more accessible to students, teachers and policy makers.

"One of the reasons I was so very delighted about this fellowship is that it will give me the opportunity to work with people who have been at the cutting edge of e-archives," he said.

Both professors will present the results of their work at the University Libraries' Fenwick Fellow Lecture in spring 2018.