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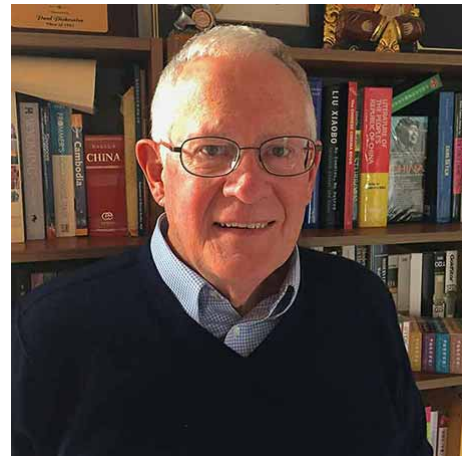
UC San Diego Historian Honored by German Government

The Department of History at the University of California, San Diego is garnering global recognition with help from Distinguished Professor Paul G. Pickowicz, who has received a 2016 Humboldt Research Award from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in Bonn, Germany.

The Humboldt Research Award is granted to academics whose fundamental discoveries, new theories or insights have significantly impacted their own discipline and whose work is expected to continue producing cutting-edge achievements. Since the award encourages international, collaborative research projects, Pickowicz, a specialist in the social and cultural history of 20th-century China and inaugural holder of the UC San Diego Endowed Chair in Modern Chinese History, will work with prominent scholars based at the Institute of Sinology at the University of Heidelberg.

“I feel a little overwhelmed,” admitted Pickowicz, who said that initially he did not grasp the scope of the recognition, which comes only upon recommendation of a group of leading international scholars, including 50 Nobel Laureates. “There are many excellent modern China research centers in Europe, including those in the U.K. and France. The Humboldt award gives me a great chance to develop strong and long-term research collaborations with colleagues in Germany.”

Pickowicz noted that he is particularly enthused about working in Heidelberg because of its leading scholars, including Professor Barbara Mittler, who shares his interest in the key political and social role of visual culture in modern China.



Paul Pickowicz pictured in his office, 2016.

“I’m excited about working with her team on the early origins of the Chinese motion picture industry, an important subject that has not been well researched,” said Pickowicz. “The Humboldt award will provide me with a unique opportunity to continue my exploratory work on the wonders of the early Chinese film industry.”

According to the award-winning historian, there is much to learn about the social, political, economic and cultural impact of the Chinese silent-era movies produced in Shanghai during the 1920s and 1930s.



Professor Pickowicz with students and faculty in Shanghai, China, 2015

“My favorite undergraduate course,” Pickowicz acknowledged, “is in fact the one that probes the fascinating social and cultural history of Shanghai in the 1920s and 1930s by having students view many of the wonderful feature films produced in Shanghai at that time. The course is quite well known on our campus, mainly because it requires student teams to produce 20-minute films of their own—movies that are made in the style of Shanghai films of that era.”

Pickowicz explained that the students do all of their own acting, directing and filming.

“We end that course with a fabulous mock Oscar event called the ‘Golden Chopsticks Award Gala’ that involves the screening of three or four student films,” Pickowicz said, adding that faculty judges select *Best Actress and Actor in a Lead Role*, *Best Director*, *Best Picture*, etc. “It’s great fun and an exciting way to engage with history.”

Pickowicz has been teaching undergraduate and graduate history courses at UC San Diego since 1973. He also has taught his film course in China, as well as at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. His overall teaching methodology has earned him three UC San Diego awards: the *Alumni Association Distinguished Teaching Award* (1998), the *Chancellor’s Associates Faculty Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching* (2003), and the *Academic Senate Distinguished Teaching Award* (2009), signifying him as a faculty leader.

UC San Diego Division of Arts and Humanities Dean Cristina Della Coletta said, “This award is a significant achievement for Professor Pickowicz. His research, which intersects history and visual arts, exemplifies the interdisciplinary strength of our division. I couldn’t be more thrilled or proud.”

A reception honoring Pickowicz and other 2016 worldwide recipients of the Humboldt Research Award will be hosted by Joachim Gauck, President of the Federal Republic of Germany, July 6 – 8 in Berlin.

For more information about Professor Pickowicz, please visit the Department of History [website](#).

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