**Editorial**

MATT BAILEY & HSU-MING TEO

*History Initiates* publishes outstanding undergraduate and Masters essays produced in the Department of Modern History at Macquarie University.

As students progress through their studies we encourage them to develop their own research questions and to consider the ways in which these questions might be answered. This is a natural extension of their earlier work responding to set questions, and develops organisational capabilities as well as critical thinking and problem solving skills that have broad benefits for future careers in academia and beyond.

In this edition of *History Initiates*, Andrew Giles explores the motivations behind international volunteering for the Spanish Civil War; Enrique Bianca draws on Bartolome de Las Casas’ text, *The Devastation of the Indies*, to explore the impact of Spanish colonisation on Indigenous populations; Elizabete Goncalves considers women’s engagement in the public sphere during the Renaissance; Hayden Smith asks whether Christianity helped improve or further subjugate black slaves in North America during the nineteenth century; Indi Angel-Auld uses *Dr Strangelove* to tease out nuances in cultural attitudes towards the Cold War in both Britain and America; Jordan Candido provides new insights into humanist discourse in renaissance Italy; and Julia Lethbridge provocatively asks whether neoliberalism has defined post-modernity.

The broad range of essays in this edition of *History Initiates* again reflects the diversity and depth of scholarship being produced by students within the Modern History department. We are very proud of their achievements.

One of our MRES students, Greer Gamble, acted as our special guest editor for this volume. We are very grateful to Greer for all her help in preparing this edition of *History Initiates*. 