

URGO Alumnus Spotlight

Nick Stewart-Bloch '17



Nick Stewart-Bloch '17 has always liked history. When he started at Augsburg, he wasn't sure what to study, but knew history was what most "felt like home" to him.

He connected with Professor Jacqui deVries, who specializes in modern European and British social and cultural history, as a research assistant. He quickly learned more about what historical research looks like and how intense the process is.

"It's much more structured than a research paper!" says Nick. "And once I started studying it, I loved it."

Professor deVries was able to publish her research essays in the *Edinburgh Companion to Women's Print Media in Interwar Britain*, crediting Nick's substantial contribution. He read more than ten years of London's *Jewish Chronicle* during this summer research.

After working with Professor deVries, Nick wanted to explore historical and economic questions further. He began working with Professor Michael Lansing, History Department Chair, on an URGO research project through the Minnesota Historical Society Archives. This project led to a sole-authored paper in *Minnesota History*, the Minnesota Historical Society Publication in the spring of 2018. The paper was "[From Cooperative Commonwealth to Yardstick Capitalism: Midland's Evolving Vision of Cooperation in Mid-Century Minnesota](#)," about Midwest farmers forming purchasing co-ops in the 1920s amid high petroleum prices.

At Augsburg, Nick was an Interfaith Scholar, led the student Environmental Action Committee, and earned the Student Leader

of the Year Award in 2016. He graduated in 2017 with majors in History and International Relations.

At the advice of his advisor, Professor deVries, Nick became a teaching assistant through Augsburg's sister school, United International College, in Zhuhai, China. For one year he taught social sciences and humanities classes, including history, through the General Education Office.

"It was a decision very out of left field for me," says Nick. "I really enjoyed the whole experience."

Back in the United States, Nick worked for St. Stephen's Human Services in Minneapolis for a few years before going back to school at UCLA in their Master of Public Policy program.

"UCLA seems culturally a good fit and in-line with my interests. It's hard to get a job in History right now; I'm hoping to learn more hard skills to use and explore some issues I saw from a policy perspective while at St. Stephen's."

Along with UCLA, Nick was also accepted to Columbia's Master in Public Administration and the University of Minnesota's Master in Public Policy programs.

"My Augsburg experience has shaped me by allowing me to meet people from so many walks of life, and exposed me to the various experiences people here have had, expanding my sense of how diverse a community and society we are a part of. Augsburg also helped me delve into subjects I am curious in and gain academic confidence."

