SUMMER 2013 AMS RESEARCH WINNERS:

**Jessica Cooper, Department of Anthropology.** My research explores the translocation of health policy into the domain of American criminal justice. I probe this overlapping of domains by conducting ethnographic research on the San Francisco Behavioral Health Court (SFBHC), a unique, nonadversarial criminal courtroom designed to adjudicate offenders with psychiatric illness. The SFBHC works to remove these individuals from carceral settings and shift them to therapeutic housing sponsored by the Department of Public Health and local community service organizations. The court plays an active role in monitoring offenders’ progress towards mental health through weekly conferences with clinical and legal teams, in conjunction with face-to-face reviews with the offender and judge. My research investigates the multileveled ramifications of the importation of healthcare into the criminal justice system. First, I consider shifts in subjectivity as all actors, from lawyers to indigent clients, are forced to grapple with a novel method of adjudication with implicit assumptions for the notions of responsibility and health. On an institutional level, I examine the processes of the court itself. The court configures itself as a tight-knit working group with a unique perspective on governance and the therapeutic role of the state. Lastly, I turn to the epistemological impact of the combination of medicine and law by untangling the ways in which clinical and legal actors translate their respective languages of expertise to one another.

**Henry Cowles, Department of History.** What is science? What makes something (or someone) scientific? These are questions with real stakes, both in the present and at various moments in the past. My dissertation explores one such moment. In the wake of the Civil War, amidst unprecedented cultural and intellectual flux, many Americans reached to science in search of a new foundation. Over the next few decades, a group of influential Americans—scientists and philosophers, psychologists and social theorists—grappled with what it meant for something to be scientific in an uncertain age. In light of evolutionary theory and the emerging human sciences, key terms like “experiment” and “experience” were redefined and, in the process, what it meant to be human was recast in terms of what it meant to be scientific. As my dissertation shows, “the scientific method” as we know it today—an orderly procedure for testing hypotheses—had its origins in these messy debates over the scientific and the human in modern America.

**Jennifer Jones, Department of History.** My dissertation, titled ‘The Fruits of Mixing’: Homosexuality and the Politics of Racial Empowerment in the South, 1945-1975” chronicles the manner in which characterizations of gay men and lesbians were an important aspect of southern-based campaigns for and conflicts over black racial equality. Advocates and opponents of racial equality used these characterizations to delineate whom should have access to the full benefits of national citizenship and race-defined communal belonging. African American institutions and communities articulated and engaged with concepts of homosexuality during various campaigns for racial equality and civil rights. Undermining historical assumptions of black communal silence on such issues, African Americans alternately included and excluded gay men and lesbians from political visions of racial and national belonging. Segregationists, conversely, characterized African Americans and racial liberals as homosexuals in their attempts
to counter their challenges to white supremacy. This rhetoric, which emerged during the late 1950s, steadily increased during the 1960s and 1970s, reflecting segregationists’ anxieties over political marginalization, black political gains, and the increasing visibility of gay life. This thesis contributes to the fields of American political history, the history of sexuality and African American history. It argues that, in general, southern racial politics reinforced social, political and state efforts to exclude gay men and lesbians from full citizenship.

**Sara Marcus, Department of English.** My dissertation—which incorporates literary criticism, history, and sonic and popular cultures—is an interdisciplinary investigation of literary and cultural traces of political disappointment in the United States between 1929 and 1989. The history of American political movements in the last century is marked with temporal condensations of fervor and belief, moments when commitments and passions seem to coalesce, and dramatic transformation of lives and structures seems not only possible but inevitable. The afterlives of these moments occupy decades-long swaths of time, and such “after”s—which in many ways invent the moments that supposedly set them into motion—constitute a major subject for and formal influence on literature, sound, art, and mass culture. The fiction writer Tillie Olsen and the poet Adrienne Rich, who were both political activists as well as renowned writers, present two distinct case studies. The two writers were close friends for years, but while Rich continued to actively support and write about radical feminism after that movement’s initial momentum had begun to flag, Olsen’s fitful career and production hint at the difficulties of living out the disappointed afterlife of 1930s working-class and Communist organizing. By attending to Olsen, Rich, and other midcentury figures, as well as to the soundscape of the birth of Black Power, my project examines how political disappointment is written into aesthetic production and difficulties with production, as well as into political activity itself.