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Walton Awarded Gaddis Smith International Book Prize by The MacMillan Center

April 6, 2010. New Haven, CT – Charles Walton, Assistant Professor of History, has been awarded the 2010 Gaddis Smith International Book Prize by the MacMillan Center for his book, *Policing Public Opinion in the French Revolution: The Culture of Calumny & the Problem of Free Speech* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

Established in spring 2005, the MacMillan Center awards the Gaddis Smith International Book Prize each year for the best first book by a member of the Yale ladder faculty. Gaddis Smith, Larned Professor Emeritus of History, is a former Director of the MacMillan Center. Award recipients receive a research appointment at the MacMillan Center, and a \$10,000 research award over two years.

In the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, French revolutionaries proclaimed the freedom of speech, religion, and opinion. A mere four years later, the country descended into a period of political terror, as thousands were arrested, tried, and executed for crimes of expression and opinion. In *Policing Public Opinion in the French Revolution*, Professor Walton traces the origins of this reversal back to the Old Regime. He shows that while early advocates of press freedom sought to abolish pre-publication censorship, the majority still firmly believed injurious speech--or calumny--constituted a crime. With its emphasis on how revolutionaries drew upon cultural and political legacies of the Old Regime, this study sheds new light on the origins of the Terror and the French Revolution, as well as the history of free expression.

According to the judging panel, *Policing Public Opinion in the French Revolution* was chosen because it gives “a highly original and compelling account of the radicalization of the French Revolution linking the democratization of honor with the effects of free speech. Walton uses a wide range of sources to propose an innovative argument on an enduring question of big historical and political import.”

Previous Gaddis Smith International Book Prize winners include (2009) Thad Dunning for *Crude Democracy: Natural Resource Wealth and Political Regimes*; (2007) Maurice Samuels for *The Spectacular Past: Popular History and the Novel in the Nineteenth-Century France*; (2006) Julia Adams for *The Familial State: Ruling Families and Merchant Capitalism in Early Modern Europe*; and (2005) Mridu Rai for *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects: Islam, Rights, and the History of Kashmir*.