



# NEWSROOM (//WWW.UNH.EDU/UNHTODAY/NEWS)



## Media Availability: UNH British Historian to Comment on Appeal and Historical Portrayal of Downton Abbey at Exhibit Opening

Tuesday, June 11, 2019

(HTTPS://WWW.UNH.EDU/UNHTODAY/NEWS/2019/06/11/MEDIA-AVAILABILITY-UNH-BRITISH-HISTORIAN-TO-COMMENT-ON-APPEAL-AND-HISTORICAL-ACCURACY-OF-THE-MUCH-BELOVED-TELEVISION-DRAMA-DOWNTON-ABBEY-AT-EXHIBIT-OPENING-AT-CASTLE-PARK-PLAZA-BOSTON-ON-FRIDAY-JUNE-14-2019-FROM-2-4-P.M.-THIS-EVENT-IS-NOT-OPEN-TO-THE-PUBLIC)

DURHAM, N.H. — Nicoletta Gullace, associate professor of history at the University of New Hampshire who studies 20th century and modern British history, is available to discuss the wide appeal and historical accuracy of the much beloved television drama “Downton Abbey.”

**Gullace will be available at the media tour for “Downton Abbey, The Exhibition” at The Castle at Park Plaza, Boston, on Friday, June 14, 2019, from 2-4 p.m. This event is not open to the public.**

As devoted fans of the TV series count down the days until the Crawley family and their servants hit the big screen, Gullace can offer insight into the enduring charm that fuels this much anticipated event.



**NICOLETTA GULLACE, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE WHO STUDIES 20TH CENTURY AND MODERN BRITISH HISTORY, IS AVAILABLE TO DISCUSS THE WIDE APPEAL AND HISTORICAL ACCURACY OF THE MUCH BELOVED TELEVISION DRAMA “DOWNTON ABBEY.”**

“We view a series like ‘Downton Abbey’ with tremendous nostalgia wishing to recapture some of the traditions, the sumptuous way of life, the beautiful clothes and glittering parties. What we modern viewers forget, though, is that the vast majority of us would have been a Daisy, the kitchen maid, not the wealthy Mary Crawley,” said Gullace.

Gullace says that the magic of “Downton Abbey” was the way it created a fictional past that seemed so ‘real’ that viewers could imagine themselves living there. She points to the relatable feminist nature of many of the female characters. However, in reality, today's independent women would be hard pressed to live with the constraints experienced by early 20th century women of the Edwardian era.

A huge fan herself, she says there is no harm in watching a series like “Downton Abbey” and living that lifestyle vicariously. She feels the show did a remarkable job of getting people excited about history in a way history usually can't.

“While historical objects, styles and period antiques were meticulously curated to ensure the authenticity of the show, the behavior and values portrayed by the characters had a more modern slant,” said Gullace. “Life was hard and gritty in the early 1900’s. So, the show’s producers created a safe and more palatable experience to satisfy today’s viewer by airbrushing over some of the ugliness including severe poverty, human rights abuses, bankruptcy, rampant sexism and just how dirty it was to live during that period.”

Gullace has a genuine fondness for this era. Her godfather was the same age as Matthew Crawley, fought in World War I, practiced medicine on Harley Street in London, and dressed for dinner every night. And while it was not Downton Abbey, Gullace's godfather's house was beautiful and richly appointed with silver, impressionist paintings, a lavish wine cellar, and numerous gardens, attended by a gardener.

“Our table manners were always a cause for anxiety to my parents when we were there. Yet, when he died, so did the tradition of dressing for dinner. Eventually the silver, paintings and wine were divided up among the children and rarely used,” she said.

Gullace can be reached at [nicoletta.gullace@unh.edu](mailto:nicoletta.gullace@unh.edu) (mailto:nicoletta.gullace@unh.edu). She is also available for on camera and radio interviews in UNH’s ReadyCam studio (<https://www.videolinktv.com/products-services/readycam/>).

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## Media Contact

Robbin Ray '82 (</unhtoday/contributor/robbin-ray-82>) | Communications and Public Affairs | [robbin.ray@unh.edu](mailto:robbin.ray@unh.edu) (mailto:robbin.ray@unh.edu) | 603-862-4864

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