

Pois, Robert August (04/24/1940--01/18/2004). Bob Pois had a stellar academic record as a history major at Grinnell College. He ranked first in the class of 1961 (Andrew W. Archibald Prize for Highest Scholarship), was elected to Phi Beta Kappa (Fall 1960) and was awarded his B.A. in history with Honors. He was a resident of North Younker Hall and was on the Student Council, 1959-60.



He continued his history studies as a Woodrow Wilson Fellow at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he earned M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in 1962 and 1965 respectively.

Bob then joined the history faculty of the University of Colorado at Boulder, where he taught for the next 38 years with the exception of one year at UCLA in 1977-78. His specialty was modern German and European history. He received nearly every teaching award offered by Colorado, including its two most prestigious: Presidential Teaching Scholar and Distinguished Professor of History. According to one of his colleagues, Pois was known for "his droll, witty classroom style, his mastery of the telling anecdote, and his deep concern with the moral dimension of historical events." One of his students said Pois' classes "were symphonies that would take you from a moment of elation and wonder, to tears, to uproarious laughter, all in the same lecture."

He published seven books and over 30 articles and essays on a wide variety of topics, including historiography, 20th-century Europe, World War I, Weimar Germany, German Expressionism, Nazi Germany and the Holocaust. A related interest was "psychohistory," the use of psychology to understand history. For example, he taught about the importance of disappointment as a human motivation. An example he used was Adolph Hitler's disappointments: failure at school and as an artist, the death of his beloved mother and the loss of World War I and the *lebensraum* Germany had gained in that war. Students came to realize that such a person could grab onto some ideology or system as a source of comfort or rationalization for the bitterness engendered by these losses. This, of course, did not justify the things that Hitler did. (Gross, *In Memoriam: Robert A. Pois*, Am. Historical Ass'n Perspectives (Dec. 2004), <http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2004/0412/0412mem2.cfm>; Obituary, *Robert August Pois*, Silver & Gold (Jan. 29, 2004), <https://www.cu.edu/sg/messages/3287.html>; Paul Elovitz, *Obituary: Robert Pois (1940-2004)*, Clio's Psyche http://www.cliospsyche.org/obituaries_rp.html; Robert Pois, *Using Disappointments in Teaching the Holocaust*, Clio's Psyche http://www.cliospsyche.org/articles_tih.html.)

Pois was born on April 24, 1940, in Washington, D.C. and grew up in Chicago. He died on January 18, 2004, of pneumonia. He was survived by his wife, Anne Marie Pois, three daughters and a brother.

