



2021-2022 Program Summary

Overview

The Center for the Humanities' mission is to foster and enhance the humanities at NYU through programs and activities that promote interdisciplinary dialogue, research, and teaching. In the 2021-2022 academic year we have continued—and, in some cases, broadened—this mission with great success, hosting and supporting a wide range of initiatives involving faculty and students from across the university. These activities are summarized below, with links to sites offering further details. Additionally, the Center provides administrative support for *Public Books*, and hosts the editor of *Social Text* and the Director of Digital Humanities at 20 Cooper Square.

Programs

Fellowship Program

Conversation, direct exchange, and robust debate are key elements of research in the humanities. The Center's Fellowship program provides a fertile setting for **Faculty Fellows and Doctoral Fellows** to engage in such discussions together, across disciplinary lines, while advancing a current project. In the 2021-2022 academic year we supported 14 Fellows: 7 Doctoral Student Fellows and 7 Faculty Fellows. The NYU departments represented include:

Arts and Science: Anthropology, Comparative Literature, English, French, Journalism, Italian Studies, Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, Music, Social and Cultural Analysis

Gallatin

Steinhardt: Media, Culture and Communication

Tisch: Art and Public Policy, Cinema Studies

Weekly seminars were conducted remotely throughout the fall semester, beginning with a series of small break-out rooms so that Fellows could become acquainted quickly. During the spring, we transitioned to in-person meetings and also visited two exhibitions: Khaty Xiong's *Grief Garden* at the Asian/Pacific/American Institute's exhibition space, and *Faith Ringgold: American People* at the New Museum.

Throughout the year, Fellows discussed each other's work-in-progress; we also devoted seminars to discussing topics of shared interest, including methodology, sources, and curriculum / the canon. The Center provided further support for Doctoral Student Fellows in the form of bi-weekly workshops on writing and professional development. Feedback from the Fellows about their experience was very positive. As one Doctoral Fellow noted: "This is by far the best thing that has happened to me in graduate school."

In the coming academic year the Center will again support 7 Doctoral Student Fellows and 8 Faculty Fellows.

Bennett-Polonsky Humanities Labs

The Center is proud to support the Bennett-Polonsky Humanities Labs, which are now in their fourth year of activity. Humanities Labs (H-Labs) consist of year-long intensive collaborations involving faculty and graduate students from diverse disciplines across the University. An H-Lab's subject is determined by a self-assembled team interested in a specific question they wish to explore together. Topics are broad ranging in nature, touching upon the complex experience of being human in a social world, and demanding multidisciplinary exploration. The first semester of Lab activity is devoted to research; during the second semester the team teaches an undergraduate course while investigations continue. H-Lab teams often continue meeting after the initial funding period of one year.

The program has to-date launched seven labs, with two more set to launch in the 2022-23 academic year. A tenth lab (selection pending) will run in the 2023 calendar year. The Center for the Humanities oversees the selection process, provides each lab with administrative support, promotes lab activity, and compiles and submits a bi-annual report to the donor. The Humanities Lab program has enabled a tremendous variety of activity, with each lab employing diverse methodologies to explore their chosen theme and producing equally varied outcomes. In the coming year we will seek to make these outcomes more visible to the NYU community.

Following is a very brief summary of the status of each lab. (The spring 2022 bi-annual reports is currently in development; however, past reports are available on the Center's website: <https://nyuhumanities.org/program/h-lab-summary-reports/>).

- **Digital Theory** (fall 2018 launch): Although no longer funded by the program, the team continues to be active and is developing grant proposals to support their work. The Center hosted an event for the lab in fall 2021, Surplus Data (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wiTcJLs_mgA).
- **Multi-Species** (fall 2019 launch): Completed spring 2020.
- **War** (fall 2019 launch): Plans for summer and fall 2022.
- **Radical Ecologies** (spring 2020 launch): Completed summer 2021.
- **Asylum** (fall 2020 launch): The lab is no longer funded under the program but is seeking ways to support their work. In spring 2022, the Center participated in "Esferas and H-Labs on the Patio," an event organized by the King Juan Carlos Center to highlight the recent issue of *Esferas*, which featured writing from the lab.
- **Knowledge Alphabets** (fall 2020 launch): Plans for summer and fall 2022.
- **Cross/Currents** (fall 2021 launch): The lab offered its undergraduate course spring 2022.
- **Consent** (fall 2022 launch): Recently selected for funding, the Consent Lab will launch in fall 2022.
- **Books to Blockchain** (spring 2023 launch): Originally intending to launch in spring 2022, the lab has deferred for one year to allow key faculty to focus on tenure milestones.

Public Humanities

The Public Humanities at NYU

So that we may better understand the diversity of public humanities initiatives at NYU and consider where and how the Center might directly support this work, we are conducting a survey on current public humanities programs, projects and activities. We expect to report on our findings in the fall semester.

Humanities New York

The Center continues to work with Humanities New York (HNY) and the cohort of universities located in New York state to support work in the public humanities. With the Mellon-funded Doctoral Student Public Humanities Fellowship program now completed, HNY is developing a revised program in consultation with the member universities and will submit a proposal to Mellon soon. To utilize residual funds from the completed program, HNY is offering **Public Humanities Grants** to graduate students from the member universities to work with community partners on a project of their own devising. The following NYU students were awarded grants in summer 2021:

- **Julia Butterfield (Master's Student, Archives and Public History Program):** For her project [Anne Northup at Morris-Jumel Mansion](#), Julia Butterfield developed interpretive programming for a small historic house museum located in Washington Heights. The project expanded the Morris-Jumel Mansion's programming to include the historic experiences of African Americans and women. A profile on Julia Butterfield and her project written by Journalism student Sughnen Yongo-Okochi is on the Center's website (<https://nyuhumanities.org/student-profile-julia-butterfield/>).
- **Daniel Joslyn (Doctoral Student, Department of History):** To develop an open-access digital archive for mutual aid organizing tools, [The Organizing Resource Library \(ORL\)](#) trained individuals as community librarians to document resources available in their communities that were developed in the face of the present COVID-19 pandemic. Daniel Joslyn was also the recipient of a 2021 Digital Humanities Graduate Student Summer Fellowship, and so received focused training related to the delivery of this project.

A call by HNY for Public Humanities Grants to be awarded summer 2022 is currently open and recipients will be notified in June.

Humanities Curricula in the Professional Schools

We continue our efforts to create a more robust and sustainable environment for the humanities across the university by finding ways to encourage and sustain common ground, collaborations, connectivity among faculty in the professional schools. Our efforts in the 2021-2022 academic year included:

- Continuing support of the **Steinhardt Humanities and Arts Initiative**. The initiative has sponsored reports and reflection on humanities research and teaching in the school; reviewed innovative approaches to incorporating the humanities into a number of Steinhardt courses; launched freshman seminars in applied humanities; and hosted a virtual conference showcasing humanities teaching and research in Steinhardt.

- **Hosted events** featuring humanities faculty from the professional schools, including book launches for Brett Gary and Susan Koff, and the Center's Humanities+ events on collaborative teaching and collaborative research. Links to the videos of these events are provided below under Events.
- **Launched a dedicated newsletter** for humanities faculty in the professional schools. Issued once each semester, regular content includes feature articles, information on events and opportunities, and other focused content. Blasts on specific events and programs are also sent out periodically.
- **Survey faculty** to determine what support they need and concerns they have. The survey has launched but we are looking for ways to extend its reach and hope to report on findings in fall 2022.

Grant Programs

Digital Humanities

The Center continues to work closely with Benjamin Schmidt, Director of Digital Humanities at NYU, to support the Digital Humanities Seed Grant program. The program annually awards \$100k for the development of new research projects that analyze digital sources, apply algorithmic methods to humanities data, or create digital publications, exhibits, or websites. Since 2021, the program has also awarded Graduate Student Summer Research Fellowships, providing graduate Fellows with a \$5,000 stipend and support to work on a project of their own. On October 7, 2021, the Center hosted the university's first Digital Humanities Showcase, during which all Seed Grant recipients and Graduate Fellows presented their work.

The Seed Grant awards and Graduate Fellowships selected in 2022 are listed below.

DH Seed Grants (2022-2023):

- **Historic Fractures: Towards a Digital Future in Museum Accessibility**, PIs: Rosanna Flouty, Clinical Associate Professor, Museum Studies, Graduate School of Arts and Science; Craig Kapp, Clinical Professor in Computer Science, Courant
- **Digitizing Chemical Humanities: Toward a Cross-Cultural History of Chemistry**, PI: Farzad Mahootian, Clinical Associate Professor, Liberal Studies, Faculty of Arts and Science
- **Sight/Site/Cite in the Digital Middle East**, PIs: Jared McCormick, Clinical Assistant Professor, Near Eastern Studies, Faculty of Arts and Science; Ada Petiwala, PhD Candidate, Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, Faculty of Arts and Science; Helga Tawil-Souri, Associate Professor, Media, Culture and Communication, Steinhardt
- **n Lines and Changing: Writing the Shanghai Metro System to the End**, PI: David Perry, Senior Lecturer, NYU Shanghai Writing Program
- **Arts of the Errant Americas**, PIs: Megan Kincaid, PhD Candidate, Institute of Fine Arts; Edward J. Sullivan, Professor, History of Art / Institute of Fine Arts; Summer Sloane-Britt, PhD Candidate, Institute of Fine Arts, Faculty of Arts and Science

DH Fellowships (Summer 2022):

- **Hadas Binyamini**, Hebrew and Judaic Studies; project: Structured Data, Mapping, and Textual Analysis of the American Jewish Year Book
- **Nuala Caomhanach**, History; project: The Land of the Giants: Digitally UnMapping Madagascar's Plant Diversity
- **Lynn Chenel**, Near Eastern Studies; project: The Directory of Place Names Unforgotten
- **Ayami Hatanaka**, Social and Cultural Analysis; project: "Why Are There No ACS Offices in SOHO?": An Interactive, Digital Map of Family Surveillance in New York City
- **Antonio Musto**, Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies; project: Demystifying the Digitization of Texts: New Textual Analysis for the Medieval History of Islamic Mysticism
- **Allegra Rosenberg**, Experimental Humanities; project: Mapping the Victorian Polar Network
- **Helen Frances Stec**, Experimental Humanities; project: The Brownies' Book Archive
- **Oscar Stuhler**, Sociology; project: Who Kisses Whom?: Gendered Interaction in American Novels (1880-2000)

Working Research Groups

Each year the Center selects two Working Groups to receive funding for one or two years. The program seeks to build community and foster interdisciplinary exchange on topics with a humanistic focus. The Working Groups launched in the 2021-2022 academic year were:

- **Crip Authorship**
Co-Directors: **Mara Mills** (MCC, Steinhardt) and **Faye Ginsburg** (Anthropology, FAS)
The term *crip*—a once derogatory term, much like *queer*—has been embraced by disability scholars/ activists to reveal ableist assumptions and exclusionary effects in mainstream representations and practices. The Crip Authorship Working Group is co-editing a handbook for NYU Press on theories and methods of research, writing, and multimodal/accessible publishing in disability studies and activism.
- **el taller**
Co-Directors: **Abigail Balbale** (MEIS, FAS), **Robert Lubar** (IFA, FAS) and **S.J. Pearce** (Spanish & Portuguese, FAS)
el taller is an inclusive intellectual community designed to foster humanistic inquiry and collaboration relating to the arts, literatures, cultures, and histories of the Iberian Peninsula at home and abroad, with an open view of periodization and linguistic identity.

The continuing Working Groups were:

- **Cold War Media**
Co-Directors: **Rossen Djagalov** (Russian and Slavic Studies, FAS) and **Arvind Rajagopal** (MCC, Steinhardt)
Cold War Media seeks to understand the significance of investments in specific mechanisms undergirding the post WWII liberal consensus, namely technologies of communication, whose advancement and unrestricted functioning became ideological agenda during the Cold War period.



- **Drama, Theater and Performance Studies (DTAPS)**

Co-Directors: **Alisa Zhulina** (Drama, Tisch; Russian and Slavic Studies, FAS) and **Brandon Woolf** (English, FAS)

The Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies Working Group (DTAPS) seeks to foster a much-needed space for promoting and sharing new scholarship on theatre, performance, and dramatic literature.

We are also pleased to note the publication of an article by the **Medical Humanities Working Group** (2019-2021) on their team-taught elective for undergraduates. The article is available online:

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10912-021-09716-z>.

Two new Working Groups were selected to launch in September 2022: **Critical Voices in Environmental Justice and Racial Justice**, and **Re-Interdisciplining Medieval and Renaissance Studies**.

Book Publication Subvention Grants

The Center awards grants to support the publication of faculty-authored books with a humanistic focus. In 2021-2022 we awarded 10 grants to faculty from the following departments and schools: Cinema Studies x3 (Tisch); Environmental Studies (FAS); French Literature (FAS); Gallatin x3; Italian Studies (FAS); and Media Culture and Communication (Steinhardt).

National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Stipends

The NEH's Summer Stipend program provides faculty in the humanities with a stipend to carry out research over a two-month period. The Center nominates two proposals from senior faculty each year; junior faculty may apply directly. We are delighted to note that one of NYU's nominees, **Jini Kim Watson (English, FAS)**, was successful in her application and will receive funding to work on her project "Anti-Red: Global Anti-Communism and Transpacific Mobilities."

Toward an Open Monograph Ecosystem (TOME)

The TOME program enables the NYU Office of the Provost, the Center for the Humanities, and the Division of Libraries to support the publication of open access digital monographs in the humanities and humanistic social sciences. The program completed in the 2020-2021 academic year and is currently under review.

Events

Collaborating with faculty, departments and centers from across the university—as well as community partners and colleagues based at other universities—the Center hosted, co-hosted and/or co-sponsored a total of 29 events in the 2021-2022 academic year. We were also pleased to support two event series: **Covid-19 and its Afterlives**, and **Conciencia-Afro: Conversations about the Realities of Afro-Descendants in Spain**.

Fall 2021:

- Re:Opening?: Rethinking NYC's Performance Infrastructures (**Drama, Theater and Performance Studies Working Group** panel event):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCXyka5uTK0>

- **2021 Digital Humanities Showcase:** link to come
- The Distance Cure (book event; department involved: **Media, Culture and Communication, Steinhardt**): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WnFrupTq_l8
- Dirty Works (book event; department involved: **Media, Culture and Communication, Steinhardt**): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwJB2BWSLhA>
- Dancing a Holistic Life (book event co-sponsored by Center for Ballet and the Arts; department involved: **Dance Education, Steinhardt**): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UH3Q9ilzFKs>
- From This Broken Hill I Sing to You: God, Sex and Politics in the Work of Leonard Cohen (book event; departments involved: **Teaching and Learning, and Applied Psychology, Steinhardt**)
- The Trials of Orpheus (book event; department involved: **English**): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ef0_KA2Y5Jo
- Surplus Data (a Digital Theory Lab event): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wiTcJLs_mgA

Spring 2022:

- Grappling with Race and Caste in America: A Conversation with Isabel Wilkerson (organized by **Journalism** and co-sponsored with the **Office of Global Inclusion, NYU Abu Dhabi, Women's Leadership Forum, Silver School of Social Work, and Social and Cultural Analysis**)
- Food and the Hispanic World Across Time and Space (panel event organized by the **King Juan Carlos Center** and co-sponsored with **The Latinx Project, Nutrition and Food Studies, and CLACS**): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8MwNQoS_J4
- The Great Escape: Film Screening and Discussion (book event; department involved: **Cinema Studies, Tisch**): link to come
- Humanities+: Collaborative Teaching (panel event; departments involved: **Applied Statistics, Social Science and Humanities, and Food Studies and Nutrition, Steinhardt; English; College Core Curriculum, Journalism, and the Medical School**): <https://youtu.be/zg-8BHo0wME>
- Let the Record Show: William Olander, Curator, Critic, Activist (panel event organized with Visual AIDS and **NYU Libraries**): <https://visualaids.org/events/detail/olander-nyu>
- Humanities+: Collaborative Research (panel event; departments involved: **English, History, and German**): <https://youtu.be/aYnFcZtdCKs>
- Fridays on the Patio: Esferas and H-Labs on the Patio (event organized by the **King Juan Carlos Center** co-sponsored by **CLACS, Spanish and Portuguese, and the Center for European and Mediterranean Studies**).
- Arts & Health @ NYU Accra (event organized by **Arts & Health @ NYU** and **NYU Accra**, in partnership with the **Office of Global Programs, the Office of Alumni Relations, and the Steinhardt Humanities and Arts Initiative**)
- Jumpstart Your Summer Writing (panel event; department involved: **Journalism**): link to come
- Re:Structuring?: Policy and Performance Today (three panels organized by the **Drama, Theater and Performance Studies Working Group**)

Event Series:



Covid and its Afterlives, organized by **David Sugarman (Gallatin)**, and co-sponsored with the **Office of Global Inclusion, Skirball, and Special Collections**:

- The 1918 Pandemic and Its Afterlives
- Covid19 and its Afterlives, or: “Chinese Virus,” World Market Revisited: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VE45JUrhNo>
- The End of Policing: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_0kN6Be1hk
- The Future of Care: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1AuEDxwwsxY>
- The Future of Work: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NH86rMlra4>
- On Crisis with Nancy Fraser: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NoXQ_5Rxz3A&t=4s
- On Crisis with Elizabeth Hinton: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0c3Vx0mCFn8>

Conciencia-Afro: Conversations about the Realities of Afro-Descendants in Spain, organized by the **Fundación Rey Juan Carlos** and co-sponsored with the **King Juan Carlos Center, Spanish and Portuguese, CLACS, Hemispheric Institute, Center for the Study of Africa and the African Diaspora**, and **NYU Madrid**:

- How to be Anti-Racist: Moha Gerehou
- Creative Processes from my Blackness: Rubén H. Bermúdez
- Media Representation of African People and Afro-Descendants: Lucía Asué Mbomío Rubio
- Black and Diasporic Women’s Literature: Deborah Ekoka