


F A L L 2 0 2 3

**HRI**

H U M A N I T I E S  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE





At HRI, we respectfully acknowledge that we are on the lands of the Peoria, Kaskaskia, Piankashaw, Wea, Miami, Mascoutin, Odawa, Sauk, Mesquaki, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Ojibwe, and Chickasaw Nations. These Nations were forcefully removed from their traditional territories and these lands continue to carry the stories of these Nations and their struggles for survival and identity. As part of a land-grant institution, we have a particular obligation to recognize the peoples of these lands and the histories of dispossession upon which the university rests.

In keeping with the spirit of land acknowledgment statements, we also recognize that these histories are both shared with and distinct from those of African American, Latinx, Asian American, and Pacific Islander communities, among others.

As humanists, we recognize that the past is not past, and that no field or arena of inquiry is exempt from the responsibility of addressing the legacies of settler colonialism, enslavement, and their contemporary manifestations well beyond acknowledgments such as this.

Thus, this statement is a demonstration of our ongoing commitment to supporting the work of Indigenous scholars and communities. It is also a reminder of how accounting for Indigenous erasure and survivance makes visible the urgency of imagining change as collaboratively and collectively as possible. Let us, then, together envision what Muscogee (Creek) poet Joy Harjo calls “a map to the next world.”

*The cover design is an adaptation of the new large-scale interior mural at Levis Faculty Center created by Chicago-based artist Rafael Blanco in collaboration with Odyssey Project students, staff, and alumni. Read more on page 18.*

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Performance artist Lia Garcia, who appeared as part of the Un/Doing Event Series.

# Director's Q&A

## Reflections and Future-Thinking with HRI Director Antoinette Burton

**The Humanities Research Institute is now three years out from its official launch as an institute. What developments or shifts are happening in HRI, and how does it connect to the humanities writ large?**



Associate Vice Chancellor Jacki Rand with Mimi Thi Nguyen, Antoinette Burton, and Jenny Davis. Nguyen and Davis organized the Un/Doing Event Series.

Like so much else at present, the humanities are in flux. I tend to resist the “crisis” narrative because there is plenty of evidence of flourishing both against all odds and in energetic response to crises that require urgent attention by those well-versed in the histories, literatures, and visual imaginaries of challenging times past and present.

At HRI, we're well positioned to see the spaces in which students and faculty are taking up humanities mindsets and critical practices, whether in legacy disciplines like English and History or well beyond them. The Interseminars “**Improvise and Intervene**” graduate cohort that launched in summer 2023 is a case in point. There we find students from Social Work, Dance, and Geography/GIS invested in the humanities, arts, and related fields because they know that these communities of inquiry are key to the work they want to do and the methods they want to use.

Our *Inquiry* blog, which is bursting with accounts of how humanities scholars and practitioners are thinking about their lives and their careers, is a great place to get a sense of the wide range of people and projects HRI is supporting. And we always have our eye on the horizon, so that we can pivot when necessary to meet the needs of humanists where they are. Thanks to resources afforded us by our advancement to institute status, for example, we've shifted the ways that the Summer Fellowship funds can be used. Faculty can continue to travel for research, but they can also develop a new course, do a language acquisition course, or take digital humanities training—whatever works best to support their needs and ambitions as they move from one stage to another in their professional development. (See the latest cohort on page 8.)

**HRI has also continued to expand offerings for undergraduates. What were some of these new initiatives and how do they connect to the institute's mission?**

We've gained a lot of momentum around undergraduate

outreach this year. **The Odyssey Project** continues to thrive and to remind us of the many pathways for students determined to make the most of the educational opportunities that the humanities at Illinois have to offer. In keeping with HRI's commitment to thinking and doing beyond the university's walls, we launched our **Humanities in Action (HIA)** program in collaboration with We CU in fall 2022. Thanks in part to the support of **Dan Shin (LAS '91)**, an HRI donor who is very committed to creating opportunities for all students, the first cohort of HIA students was able to do amazing work in partnership with community organizations, modeling what truly reciprocal and redistributive public humanities practice can look like. (See the new HIA scholars on page 9.)

Our **Humanities Research Lab** initiative also really took off in spring 2023 with two courses, Professor **Yuridia Ramirez's** Immigrant America (History 312) and Professor **Ann Abbott's** Spanish in the Community (Spanish 232). Again, with help from We CU and in partnership with Dr. **Karen Rodriguez'G** in the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR), HRI supported undergraduates in an impressive range of majors and minors as they sought to contribute in modest but also meaningful ways to the work of local organizations like The Immigration Project, Courage Connection, and the Unit 4 Families and Students program. HRI and OUR sponsored a showcase of HRI students' community-based research during Undergraduate Research Week in April, and it was a blockbuster event.



Kadin Henningsen teaching a student how to use his mobile printing press.

We know how important informal spaces of learning are for undergraduates, and how impactful extracurricular opportunities are for the kind of holistic education a residential campus like Illinois provides. This spring, the HRI team organized our first **Undergraduate Coffee Hour**, which connected students curious about research with a PhD student, **Kadin Henningsen** (English), whose dissertation about the 19th-century book form dovetails nicely with his interest in the printing press. Students gathered around Kadin's own press and learned firsthand how ideas about print culture and the mechanics of printing itself can converge. Meanwhile, Odyssey students also got a fabulous hands-on experience through our Mellon-funded Artist-in-Residency program, which hosted

**Rafael Blanco** of Elmhurst College in the fall of 2022. Together they created a vibrant mural on the first floor of Levis— come and check it out the next time you are passing through!

**While HRI's research year is themeless for 2023–24, nonetheless one might draw connections among events and initiatives organically. What can we expect in the coming year?**

Our themeless years at HRI provide an opportunity not only to convene a wide-ranging and diverse group of student and faculty fellows, but to test our commitment to interdisciplinarity that is the hallmark of the biweekly seminar where everyone presents work in progress. That is, we get to explore what it means to talk across subjects and methods that don't appear to share much ground; we track connections and divergences and hone our appreciation for the disciplines as well as for scholarship which transgresses them. Being themeless also frees us up to sponsor programs over the course of the year that are not bound by a set rubric or framework. You will definitely want to check out the series of "cetacean" events we are curating in fall 2023. These include a book launch for **Jamie Jones'** *Rendered Obsolete: Energy Culture and the Afterlife of U.S. Whaling* (UNC Press, 2023), a campus visit by the Black Feminist scholar and practitioner **Alexis Pauline Gumbs**, and the current installment of Professor **Deke Weaver's** Unreliable Bestiary series, CETACEAN (The Whale), which HRI is proud to support. And for something completely different, be sure to mark your calendars for the "Sporting Cultures" conference organized by Professor **Adrian Burgos** (History) in spring 2024. March madness indeed!

The conveners and students of the first Interseminars project, "Imagining Otherwise: Speculation in the Americas," are concluding their 18-month experiment in interdisciplinary graduate education in what is sure to be a sensational set of events in Levis in September. Meanwhile, the second Interseminars project, "Improvise and Intervene," is well underway, bringing **Damon Locks**, who leads the Black Monument Ensemble, and **Tara Willis**, a curator in the Performance & Public Practice department at the Museum

of Contemporary Art, to campus for events in fall 2023. This is just a teaser of what convenors **R. Elizabeth Velásquez Estrada** (Latina/Latino Studies), **Maryam Kashani** (Gender and Women's Studies and Asian American Studies), and **Junaid Rana** (Asian American Studies) have in store for the coming year.

And a heads up (way in advance, but you'll be thrilled to know): We look forward to the return to campus of our former colleague **Joy Harjo** (Muscogee [Creek]), the 23rd Poet Laureate of the United States, as our April 2024 poet. We've been handing out copies of her books this past year at HRI events, and we will continue that practice, now specifically to whet your appetite for a poetry reading by Joy and a public CultureTalk conversation with American Indian Studies Director **Jenny Davis** (Chickasaw). For a full calendar of events, see page 12.

**What's one memorable moment from the past year that will continue to inspire you into this year?**

There were so many events that levitated us at HRI this year, it's impossible to choose one. **Lia García** was transcendent. **Eve L. Ewing**, extraordinary. And **Nikky Finney**: a hotbed of revolutionary witness and living, breathing, loving poetic magic. Thanks to each of them, and all our guests, for offering their work as the tonic we know we need but struggle to find and keep at the center of our everyday.



Finney signing College of LAS Dean Venetria Patton's book at reading.

**I N M E M O R I A M**



**Bruce Rosenstock**

In early 2023 we joined colleagues across campus and the world in sorrow in the wake of the passing of our colleague Bruce Rosenstock, professor and director of graduate studies in the Department of Religion. An expert in biblical theology, political theology, and modern Jewish philosophy, Bruce worked with various units across campus, including the Department of Classics, the Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, the Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory, and the Program in Jewish Culture and Society. He was also very well known for his active participation in the faculty senate. Twice an HRI fellow, Bruce was the consummate scholar and citizen. Erudite, passionate, and deeply committed to informed debate about justice and pluralism, he will long be remembered for his rigorous mind and vigorous spirit.

## HRI Faculty Fellows



**Jessica R. Greenberg**  
Anthropology

“Making Violence Visible: Anticipatory Justice and the Democratization of Evidence in Human Rights”



**Hermann von Hesse**

Art History, Art & Design

“Love of Stone Houses’: Urban Merchants, Ancestral Spaces and Sacred Objects on Africa’s Gold Coast”



**Jon Hale**  
Education Policy, Organization and Leadership/ Curriculum & Instruction

“I Pledge Allegiance: A History of Racist Ideas, Textbooks, and Teaching in the United States School System”



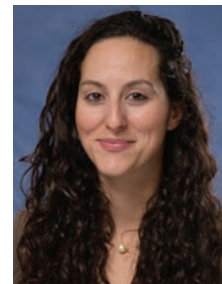
**Renata Ryan Burchfield**  
American Indian Studies

“Weaving Sovereign Webs: Process and Performative Sovereignities in Indigenous Creative Cultural Production”



**Justine S. Murison**  
English

“American Obscurity: Realism in the Age of Comstock”



**Anna Torres-Cacoullos**  
Spanish and Portuguese

“Modernist Cine-graphies: Writing with Motion Pictures, Reading with Moving Images in Spain (1918–1930)”



**Magdalena Novoa E.**  
Urban and Regional Planning

“Insurgent Heritage: Grassroots Movements and Citizenship in Chile”

## HRI Graduate Student Fellows



**Miguel A. Avalos**  
Sociology

"Limitrophic Dwelling: Home, Temporal Sequestration, and the U.S.-Mexico Border Regime"



**Adam LoBue**  
History

"Preventive, Pre-emptive and Educative": Political Literacy, Anti-Communism, and Cold War Knowledge Production in East Africa, 1948-1975"



**Soumya Dasgupta**  
Architecture

"[Design] Empire: Transformations of Architectural Productions in Urban India, 1991-2020"



**Ky Merkley**  
Classics

"Trans History From Antiquity For Today: Reading Gender in the Literature of the Roman Empire"



**Carrie Johnson**  
Creative Writing, English

"What Lingers: Labor Poetry and the Legacy of Industrialization in Modern Society"



**Alexandra Sundarsingh**  
History

"Unraveling Indenture: Racial Indenture and Unfree Labour in the Indian Ocean World, 1815-1965"



**Gisabel Leonardo**  
Spanish and Portuguese

"Melenas Malcriadas: The Black Aesthetics of Hair and Dominicanidad"

## 2024-25 Campus Fellowship Call: Think Again...

HRI is pleased to announce that its 2024-25 Campus Fellowship theme is "Think Again..." This theme is an invitation to revisit well-known texts, to upend dominant narratives, to historicize what appears self-evident in the present, and/or to ask what happens when we juxtapose  $x$  with  $y$  in ways never been done before. It asks us to consider who our audiences are; who we are as researchers; how the fields we work in are constituted; and what it means to develop our capacities to talk across disciplinary boundaries. "Think Again..." underscores, too, the opportunity to think across diverse interdisciplinary formations, and to identify when, how, and under what conditions new ones may be happening.

Capacious yet pointed, the provocation "think again" directs us not just to explore our subject matter but in doing so, to identify the stakes of our research for the variety of audiences it hails: to say why it matters, and to whom. We hope to gather a group of scholars whose work may be thematically wide-ranging but who are invested in honing their approaches to interdisciplinary thinking and practice in a seminar context where we will bring all our energies to bear on these questions.

HRI welcomes applications from all disciplines and departments with an interest in humanities and humanities-inflected research. We are especially interested in fostering interdisciplinary work, both within the humanistic disciplines and between the humanities and the arts. For eligibility, terms, and application guidelines, visit [go.illinois.edu/CampusFellows](https://go.illinois.edu/CampusFellows). **Applications are due December 1, 2023.**



# Interseminars Initiative 2023–24

Funded by a \$2 million grant from the Mellon Foundation, the Interseminars Initiative funds three projects over three successive years, each selected through a competitive application process. The first cohort—“Imagining Otherwise: Speculation in the Americas”—will present a culminating event in fall 2023 (see page 15).

Interseminars represents the latest thinking on how best to practice a genuinely collaborative and equitable commitment to graduate training in the public research university of the 21st century. Through the initiative, faculty and graduate students collaborate in the design of cross-departmental and cross-college courses, with funding for key aspects of that work: co-curricular programming, shared research experiences and fellowship support for students, particularly those historically underrepresented in higher education.

In addition to funding from Mellon, these fellowships were made possible by the generosity of the Graduate College at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. **Tenure-stream faculty are invited to propose a project for the final round of Interseminars funding, with applications due by September 1, 2023.**

## Second Cohort Launched

The newest project, titled “**Improvise and Intervene,**” is led by faculty members **Maryam Kashani** (Gender and Women’s Studies and Asian American Studies), **Junaid Rana** (Asian American Studies), and **R. Elizabeth Velásquez Estrada** (Latina/Latino Studies).

“Improvise and Intervene” challenges scholars to reimagine how scholarly theory and methods are taught and practiced, expanding the possibilities for innovation in interdisciplinary, collaborative research design. The faculty conveners write, “From anti-colonial intellectuals Aimé and Suzanne Césaire’s surrealist games to Ruthie Gilmore’s reminder that ‘abolition is life in rehearsal... not a repetition of rules,’ we learn that play and experiment are specific strategies towards imagining and practicing liberation.”

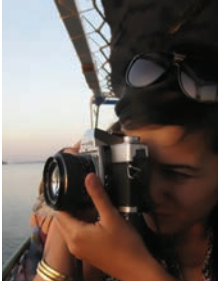
In this project, faculty and students will explore texts and creative works that grapple with pressing social issues and the multiple methods used in conducting and presenting research. They will also study different genealogies of improvisation and intervention through reading, listening, and watching, while engaging in weekly improvisatory exercises and responses drawn from surrealism, documentary and neorealism, speculative fiction, theater, music, and other sources.

Traditionally, scholars working in the same area or theme may enter into debates and arguments with one another with little or no experience of working together. Taking inspiration from text-based scholarship and artistic examples of collectivity and collaboration in critical ethnic studies, Indigenous critique, the Black radical tradition, liberation theology, Third World feminism, and queer of color critique, “Improvise and Intervene” explores improvisation as theory and method towards developing innovative approaches to interdisciplinary and collaborative research design.

The cohort began their work with a summer intensive in May. Watch for Interseminars-related speakers this academic year and keep up with the cohort’s activities at HRI’s research blog *Inquiry*: [go.illinois.edu/HRI-Inquiry](https://go.illinois.edu/HRI-Inquiry).



## Faculty Conveners



**Maryam Kashani**  
Gender and Women's Studies and Asian American Studies



**Junaid Rana**  
Asian American Studies

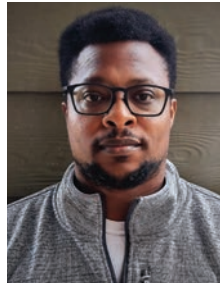


**R. Elizabeth Velásquez Estrada**  
Latina/Latino Studies

## Graduate Student Fellows



**Jackie Marie Abing**  
Sociocultural & Linguistic Anthropology



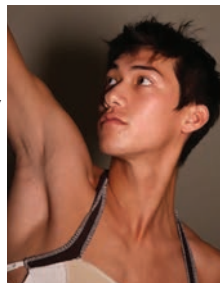
**Etienne L. Fields**  
Recreation, Sport and Tourism



**Joseph Obanubi**  
Studio Arts, New Media



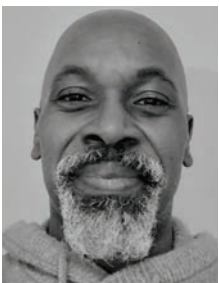
**Marina Moscoso Arabía**  
Human Geography and GRID Interdisciplinary Minor



**Gabriel Bruno Eng Gonzalez**  
Dance



**Sayak Roy**  
Geography and Geographic Information Science



**Joe Bowie**  
Dance



**Nathalie Sofia Martinez**  
Anthropology



**Dora Nicole Watkins**  
Social Work

# Fellows and Research Clusters

## Mellon Pre-Doctoral Fellow in Public Humanities 2023–24



**Ashli Anda**

Philosophy

“Minding the Gap: Public Philosophy for Incarcerated Youth”

## Mellon Post-Doctoral Fellow in Humanities as Social Practice 2023–24



**Divya Nair**

Ph.D., English, University of Pennsylvania, 2021

“Classical Reception and the Problem of the Color Line in Early Modern English Literature: A Du Boisian Historiography”

## Summer Faculty Fellows 2023



**Salvatore Callesano**

Spanish and Portuguese

“The Comment Section: Multimodal sentiment analyses and ‘no sabo kids’ on TikTok”



**Pilar Martínez-Quiroga**

Spanish and Portuguese

“The Utopia of a Feminist Nation: The Case of Catalonia”



**Anna Mendoza**

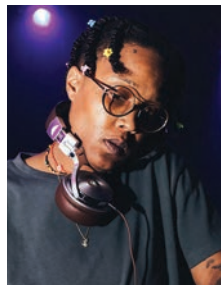
Linguistics

“Language Use and Investment in a French-English Dual Immersion School”



**Lindsay Rose Russell**  
English

“Sex & Lex”



**Blair Ebony Smith**

Art Education and Gender and Women’s Studies

“Love a(n)d Loops: Memory, Sound, Freedom, and Black Girlhood”



**Lou Turner**

Urban and Regional Planning

“The Harold (Hal) M. Baron Digital Archival, Research, and Publication Project”



**Mirelsie Velázquez**

Latina/Latino Studies

“Space, Place, and Homemaking: Black and Indigenous Oklahoma, 1865–1925”

## Research Clusters 2023–24

### Black People and the Invention of the Universe

Co-Directors:  
**Courtney Becks**, University Library  
**Nekita Thomas**, Graphic Design, Art and Design  
**Alexandra Barbier**, Dance  
**Reiko Huffman**, Scenic Design, Theatre

### Critical Cybernetics

Co-Directors:  
**Brian Jefferson**, Geography  
**Bethany Anderson**, University Archives  
**Kevin Hamilton**, School of Art and Design, College of Fine and Applied Arts  
**Charles Roseman**, Evolution, Ecology, and Behavior/Anthropology  
**Lou Turner**, Urban and Regional Planning

### Environmental Humanities

Co-Directors:  
**John Levi Barnard**, Comparative and World Literature/English  
**Pollyanna Rhee**, Landscape Architecture

### Latin American and Caribbean Cities Collective

Co-Directors:  
**Nikolai A. Alvarado**, Geography and Geographic Information Systems  
**Magdalena Novoa E.**, Urban and Regional Planning

### Native American History Research Cluster

Co-Directors:  
**Jacki Thompson Rand**, American Indian Studies  
**David R.M. Beck**, History

## Humanities Research Lab Courses 2024

The Humanities Research Lab (HRL) initiative is an opportunity for faculty in the humanities or related fields to refashion an existing undergraduate course into a local, community-based research experience. A partnership between HRI and the Office of Undergraduate Research, the selected HRL courses are offered each spring semester to undergraduates of any major.

### HIST 202: American Environmental History

**Robert Morrissey**  
History

### SPAN 232: Spanish in the Community

**Ann Abbott**  
Spanish and Portuguese

## Humanities in Action Participants 2023

The Humanities in Action program is an initiative in collaboration with We CU. The program provides support to undergraduate humanities students who are interested in pursuing community engagement opportunities within the Champaign-Urbana community during the fall semester.



### Sophie Campa

Speech and Hearing Sciences,  
Class of 2025



### Araceli Urbina

Human Development and Family Studies,  
Class of 2025



### Yousra Mahmoud

Sociology and English,  
Class of 2026



### Jessica Vargas

Political Science,  
Class of 2024



### Sydney Turner

Social Psychology and Communication,  
Class of 2025

# Humanities Without Walls

## Institutions Represented at 2023 Career Diversity Workshop

Brown University

Bryn Mawr College

University of California, Los Angeles

University of California, Santa Cruz

Columbia University

University of Delaware

Howard University

University of Kansas

University of Memphis

University of Minnesota

University of New Mexico

Northwestern University

The Ohio State University

The Pennsylvania State University

Rutgers University-New Brunswick

Rutgers University-Newark

Southern Methodist University

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

University of Texas at Dallas

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

## Final Round of Grand Research Challenge Projects Awarded

Seven new projects were funded by the final round of the Grand Research Challenge (GRC). Each of the interdisciplinary research teams will receive an award of \$150,000 over a three-year period, provided by a grant from the Mellon Foundation.

### “Listening for the Long Haul: A Living History of Long COVID”

PI: Jennifer Brier, University of Illinois Chicago

### “Maya in the Global Midwest”

PI: Laura Horton, University of Wisconsin-Madison

### “Studying Oak Woods”

PI: Na’ama Rokem, University of Chicago

### “The Flint Water Disaster Public Archive”

PI: Louise Seamster, University of Iowa

### “Archival Repatriation and Boarding School Healing: The Morris Indian Industrial School and White Earth Nation”

PI: Kevin Whalen, University of Minnesota, Morris

### “Black Study and Creative Praxis in the Greater Midwest”

PI: Terrion Williamson, University of Illinois Chicago

### “Communiversities as education without walls: Building coalitions for liberatory education through the humanities”

PI: Asif Wilson, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

## 2023 Career Diversity Workshop

Congratulations to the fellows who were selected for the Career Diversity workshop! The final workshop, hosted by the University of Minnesota College of Liberal Arts and the Institute for Advanced Study, ran from July 17 to July 28, 2023. The fellows spent two weeks exploring tools, participating in values exercises, and taking time to imagine diverse futures for their professional careers. See the sidebar at left for a full listing of the institutions represented.



## New HWW Alumni Board Named

As members of HWW's alumni board, these former Career Diversity workshop fellows consult with the HWW PI and staff on programming.

**Meghan Forbes**, freelance writer, translator, editor, and curator

**Blanca Garcia-Barron**, Mt. San Jacinto Community College

**Nushelle de Silva**, Fordham University

**Sara B.T. Thiel**, Built In's Expert Contributor Network

**Sebastian Williams**, Davis & Elkins College

## Illinois-Led GRC Project



University of Illinois faculty member **Asif Wilson** is part of the project team “Communiversities as education without walls: Building coalitions for liberatory education through the humanities,” which is funded in the final round of HWW’s Grand Research Challenge. An Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of

Education, Wilson’s research and scholarship focuses on the contemporary and historical forces that shape justice-centered pedagogies—and the impacts on educators and students.

## Graduate College Career Exploration Fellow

HWW, in partnership with the Graduate College at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, welcomed **Heather Ennis** to the consortium team as part of the Career Exploration Fellowship Program. During her fellowship, Heather worked on multiple projects while participating in all aspects of the consortium, including initiatives connected to both the Humanities Research Institute and HWW.

## HWW Consortium Partner Meeting

On September 23, 2022, we gathered at The Newberry Library in Chicago for the first in-person HWW consortium partner meeting since the pandemic. It was wonderful to reconnect “in real life,” to think aloud together about what the grant has accomplished so far, and to entertain possibilities for what the final years of this grand experiment hold in store.

We had rich and thoughtful presentations from our evaluation partners, **Emily Ardell** and **Kelly Spence** of Four Corners Global, and we heard lively reports about the state of career diversity from **Maggie Nettesheim-Hoffmann** (Marquette), **Danielle Fosler-Lussier** (Ohio State), and **Teresa Mangum** (Iowa).

## Summer Bridge Experience 2023

Returning for its third year, the Summer Bridge experience is a continued collaborative partnership between HWW, We CU, and the Humanities Research Institute. Five humanities graduate students participated this year, collaborating with community partners, exploring various career paths, and building skills.



**Alana Ackerman**  
(Anthropology),  
Immigrant Services of Champaign-Urbana



**Victor A. Ruiz-Divas**  
(Education Policy, Organization, &  
Leadership),  
Krannert Art Museum



**Samuel Froiland**  
(History),  
The Land Connection



**Priyanka Zylstra**  
(History),  
Education Justice Project



**Omar Agustin Hernandez**  
(Anthropology),  
Strides Center: City of Champaign Township

# 2023–24 Calendar of Events

## 2023

### SEPTEMBER

**14** | HRI OPENING RECEPTION

**Reception and Celebration**

**15–16** | INTERSEMINARS

**Imagining Otherwise: Speculation in the Americas | Culminating Symposium**

*Supported by the Mellon Foundation.*



**21** | EJP-HRI LECTURE SERIES

**Arthur Longworth**

Author, Six-Time PEN America Prison Writing Award Winner

*Supported by the Mellon Foundation.*

**22** | PUBLIC HUMANITIES RETREAT

**NHA Public Humanities Education Report Discussion**

**28** | HRI AT ISR

**Faculty Lunch Talk: Erik McDuffie**

African American Studies, History

*Cosponsored by the Honors Living-Learning Community.*

**28–** | PERFORMANCE  
**Oct. 2**

**CETACEAN (The Whale)**

Part of The Unreliable Bestiary by Deke Weaver (Art and Design)

*Cosponsored by the Humanities Research Institute.*

### OCTOBER

**5** | COMMUNITY SPEAKER SERIES

**Responding to and Addressing Community Needs: An Evening with Champaign-Urbana Practitioners**

Panelists **Teddie Hill** (Champaign County Christian Health Center), **Mel Grantham** (WIN Recovery), and **Janice Walker** (First Followers).

**12** | READING AND CONVERSATION

**Ada Limón: Working in the Service of Poetry**

U.S. Poet Laureate Ada Limón will read from her poetry collections and engage in conversation with Ángel García (Creative Writing, English).

*Hosted by the University Library and the Center for Advanced Studies MillerComm Series, cosponsored by the OVCRI, English, and HRI.*

**13** | PANEL AND BOOK DISCUSSION

**Rendered Obsolete: Energy Culture and the Afterlife of U.S. Whaling**

With **Jamie L. Jones** (English), **Ryan Griffis** (Art and Design), **Rebecca Oh** (English), **Deena Rhymes** (American Indian Studies), and moderated by **Gillen D. Wood** (English, Geology)

**13** | GRADUATE STUDENT SOCIAL

**Happy Hour Event for Graduate Students**



**18** | INTERSEMINARS

**Step step step: improvisation, sound, and movement**

**Damon Locks** (artist, educator, musician) and **Tara Willis** (Curator in Performance & Public Practice, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago)

*Supported by the Mellon Foundation.*

**18** | INFO SESSION

**Campus Graduate Fellowship Application Information**

**20** | GRADUATE CO-WORKING SESSION

**Designated Co-Working Space in Levis for Graduate Students**

**26** | UNDERGRADUATE COFFEE HOUR

**Judith Pintar**

Information Sciences

### NOVEMBER



**1** | LECTURE AND INSIDE SCOOP

**Alexis Pauline Gumbs**

Award-winning writer, independent scholar, and activist

*Inside Scoop cohosted by Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center.*

**8** | INFO SESSION

**Humanities Research Lab**

Information Session for Prospective HRL Faculty

**8** | INTERSEMINARS

**Courtney Morris**

Gender and Women's Studies, University of California, Berkeley "Marxists and Priestesses"

*Supported by the Mellon Foundation.*

**8** | PUBLIC READING

**Kaplan Family Writer in Residence: Laila Lalami**

Creative Writing, University of California, Riverside

*Presented by Creative Writing/English and cosponsored by HRI.*

10 | GRADUATE  
CO-WORKING  
SESSION

**Designated Co-Working  
Space in Levis for Graduate  
Students**

## DECEMBER

6 | INTERSEMINARS

**Dylan Rodríguez**

Black Study and Media and  
Cultural Studies, University of  
California, Riverside

“Against the  
Counterinsurgency Machine”

*Supported by the Mellon  
Foundation.*

# 2024

## JANUARY

24 | INTERSEMINARS

**Joanne Barker**

American Indian Studies, San  
Francisco State University;  
Lenape (enrolled member of  
the Delaware Tribe of Indians)

*Supported by the Mellon  
Foundation.*

31 | INFO SESSION

**HWW Summer Bridge  
Graduate Experience**

*Supported by the Mellon  
Foundation.*

## FEBRUARY

16 | GRADUATE  
OPEN HOUSE &  
RESOURCE FAIR

22 | HRI AT ISR

**Faculty Lunch Talk:  
Natalie Lira**

Latina/Latino Studies

*Cosponsored by the Honors  
Living-Learning Community.*

29 | COMMUNITY  
SPEAKER SERIES

**Responding to and  
Addressing Community  
Needs: An Evening with  
Champaign-Urbana  
Practitioners**

Panelists **Claudia Lennhoff**  
(Champaign County Health  
Care Consumers) and **Wanda  
Ward** (Executive Associate  
Chancellor for Public  
Engagement).

## MARCH

4 | INTERSEMINARS

**Kameelah Janan Rasheed**

Artist, educator, and writer,  
Cooper Union

*Supported by the Mellon  
Foundation.*

5 | INTERNATIONAL  
WOMEN'S DAY

**Presentations and  
Celebration**

*Cohosted by the Women and  
Gender in Global Perspectives  
Program.*

28– | SYMPOSIUM  
29

**Sporting Publics: History,  
Sports, and American  
Culture**

Invited speakers include  
**David Maraniss** (*New York  
Times* bestselling author  
and associate editor at *The  
Washington Post*) **Howard  
Bryant** (sports journalist  
and author, ESPN), **Theresa  
Runstedtler** (American  
Studies, American University),  
and **Frank Gurdy** (History,  
Columbia University).  
Maraniss will also speak at  
an **Inside Scoop** event on  
the 28th.

## APRIL

3 | PANEL

**Sights and Sounds of  
Black Britain**

With **Rochelle Sennet**  
(Music and Associate Dean  
for Diversity, Equity, and  
Inclusion, College of Fine  
and Applied Arts), **Caroline  
Bressey** (Geography,  
University College London),  
and **Kennetta Hammond  
Perry** (Black Studies,  
Northwestern University).

10 | INTERSEMINARS

**Silvia Federici**

Activist, teacher, and writer  
“Feminist insurgencies and  
the reconstruction of the  
commons”

*Supported by the Mellon  
Foundation.*

23 | CULTURETALK

Featuring **Joy Harjo** (23rd  
United States Poet Laureate;  
member of the Muscogee  
[Creek] Nation) and **Jenny  
L. Davis** (American Indian  
Studies and Anthropology;  
member of the Chickasaw  
Nation).

*Cosponsored by the Center  
for Advanced Study, the  
College of Fine and Applied  
Arts, and Krannert Center for  
the Performing Arts.*



24 | INSIDE SCOOP

**Joy Harjo**

24 | PUBLIC READING

**Joy Harjo**

*Joy Harjo's visit cosponsored  
by American Indian Studies.*

26 | HUMANITIES  
RESEARCH LAB  
SHOWCASE

Part of Undergraduate  
Research Week.

## MAY

2 | PRIZES FOR  
RESEARCH

**Ceremony and Reception**

# Events and Deadlines, 2023–24



## HRI Opening Reception

**SEPTEMBER 14, 2023, 4:00–6:00 P.M.**

We welcome you to attend an opening reception at Levis Faculty Center on the afternoon of September 14. Join us on the back patio to gather together in community as we enjoy refreshments and good company.



## CETACEAN (The Whale)

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28–MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2023, 7:30 P.M.**

University of Illinois Stock Pavilion; Free event, doors open at 7:10 p.m.

Inspired by the literary concept of the unreliable narrator and the medieval bestiary, **The Unreliable Bestiary** is an ark of stories about animals, humans, and planet Earth. With a team of award-winning collaborators, Art and Design Professor **Deke Weaver's** life-long project is presenting a performance for every letter of the alphabet, each letter representing an endangered animal or habitat. Funny, dark, and haunting, **CETACEAN (The Whale)**—The Unreliable Bestiary's sixth performance—will feature a cast of 20 performers, large-scale video projection, dance, live sound design, while interweaving tales of the sea and failing ecosystems. Over the past two years, hundreds of local students have listed their hopes and fears in CETACEAN workshops. Students burned the lists of fear, made origami stars from the lists of hope, and filled discarded plastic bottles with the ash of fear and the stars of hope. We'll suspend thousands of these messages-in-a-bottle in the cavernous University of Illinois Stock Pavilion and tell our stories under a sea of hope and fear. [unreliablebestiary.org/cetacean](https://unreliablebestiary.org/cetacean)

## Research Cluster Event

### ENVIRONMENTAL HUMANITIES

**SEPTEMBER 28–29, 2023**

**Capitalism, Climate, and Cultural Study**

Featuring keynote speaker **Anna Kornbluh** (English, University of Illinois Chicago), as well as **Elizabeth Chatterjee** (Environmental History, University of Chicago), **Stacey Balkan** (Environmental Literature and Humanities, Florida Atlantic University), **Jennifer James** (English, Director of Africana Studies Program; George Washington University), and **Paul Downes** (English and American Literature, University of Toronto).



## Imagining Otherwise: Speculation in the Americas | An Interseminars Culminating Symposium

**SEPTEMBER 15-16, 2023, LEVIS FACULTY CENTER**

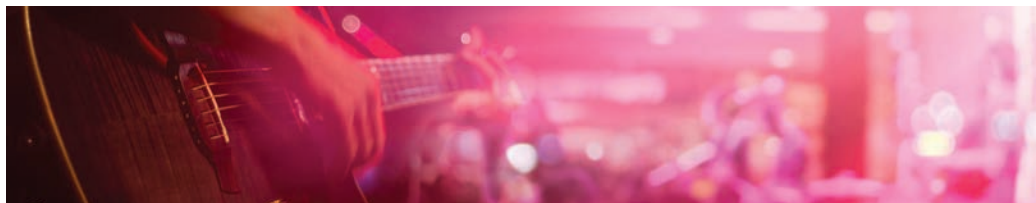
Join us for the culminating event of the inaugural Interseminars cohort. Nine graduate student fellows from Art and Design, Communications, Urban and Regional Planning, Dance, Spanish and Portuguese, English, Educational Psychology, and Theatre will present eighteen months' worth of interdisciplinary experiments, findings, speculations, and pedagogical suggestions in a culminating symposium, a day-and-a-half brimming with scholarly panels, installations, exhibitions, conviviality, and performances. The event will conclude with a reception and book release celebration containing contributions from the 2022-23 Interseminars Fellows and their three faculty conveners. Special opening and closing keynote lectures will be given by invited guests **Carolyn Fornoff** (Cornell University) and **Natalie Loveless** (University of Alberta), and Chicago dancer **Zachery Nicol** will join us for a very special performance on the first night of the two-day event.



## Sporting Publics: History, Sports, and American Culture

**MARCH 28-29, 2024**

This symposium aims to illuminate the ways sports facilitate public conversations on past and present societal conditions and how sports reveal broader issues about culture, identity, or history. The speakers will focus on several questions: How do sports provide a space for publicly engaging in “difficult” conversations about issues affecting U.S. society? In what ways have athletes sought to create such space to engage societal concerns as they impact lives on or away from fields of play? How has the work of historians engaged the public about the ways sports reveal/unveil such broader concerns? The conference features an opening keynote by **David Maraniss** (*New York Times* bestselling author and associate editor at *The Washington Post*), a lunchtime keynote on Friday by **Howard Bryant** (sports journalist and author, ESPN), and panels with specialists in the history and culture of sport **Theresa Runstedtler** (American Studies, American University) and **Frank Guridy** (History, Columbia University).



# PYGMALION 2023

HRI looks forward to continuing our partnership with PYGMALION as a sponsor in 2023. This annual cultural festival has transformed over the years, including not just musical acts but also authors, makers, comedians, podcasters, and more. Watch for updates to come, and in the meantime mark your calendars for **September 21-23**. [thisispygmalion.com](http://thisispygmalion.com)

## HRI Application Deadlines 2023-2024

- AUGUST 18**  
NEH Summer Stipends
- SEPTEMBER 1**  
Interseminars Application (Faculty)
- SEPTEMBER 15**  
Prindable Internship
- OCTOBER 13**  
Director's Fellows
- OCTOBER 15**  
Supplemental Event Fund, spring 2024 applications open
- NOVEMBER 15**  
Interseminars Graduate Fellowships
- DECEMBER 1**  
Campus Fellowships
- FEBRUARY 2**  
Summer Faculty Fellowships
- MARCH 1**  
HWW Summer Bridge Experience
- MARCH 1**  
Prizes for Research
- MARCH 8**  
We CU Humanities in Action
- MARCH 22**  
Humanities Gateway Internship
- MARCH 25**  
Humanities Research Lab
- APRIL 1**  
Odyssey Project Internship
- APRIL 5**  
Research Clusters
- APRIL 15**  
Supplemental Event Fund, fall 2024 applications open

# HRI Year in Review

How to describe a year centered around a research theme like “Un/Doing?” A reckoning. A release. A renewal. HRI’s opening reception kicked off the year with a vibrant celebration of the humanities community. We partnered with the Program in Jewish Culture and Society to bring Nancy Toff, VP and executive editor at Oxford University Press, who shared insights from her career in academic publishing. Mexico City-based performance artist and transfeminist activist Lia García invited us to dream expansively and envision a more loving world. On Indigenous Peoples’ Day, Associate Vice Chancellor for Native Affairs Jacki Rand (citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma) joined Mimi Thi Nguyen in a conversation moderated by Jenny Davis (citizen of the Chickasaw Nation) about personal histories and contemporary Indigenous issues. Hilary N. Green lectured on the Hallowed Grounds Project, the first of two talks on Reconstruction HRI co-organized with History. Kirsten Ostherr came for her COVID-deferred Medical Humanities residency, speaking on translational humanities and the importance of cross-disciplinarity in supporting community health. With its inaugural Graduate Advisory Committee, HRI launched Graduate Social Hours and convened a town hall to help grads connect and share their feedback. Thea Quiray Tagle illustrated how art history and curation can be un/done through ethical collaborations that disrupt the status quo. David Wright Faladé read from his critically heralded novel *Black Cloud Rising* and excerpts from a forthcoming memoir. For the sixth year in a row, HRI celebrated International Women’s Day in partnership with the Women and Gender in Global Perspectives Program. Alaina E. Roberts explored the actions and rhetoric of Black and Native people in Indian Territory (modern-day Oklahoma) during Reconstruction. Co-hosted by American Indian Studies, Tarren Andrews invited us to consider whether translation can be an anti-colonial practice. Dave Eggers (BS ’02, Journalism) returned to campus for a lively conversation with novelist Daniel Gumbiner and a how-to talk on nonprofits, both co-hosted by the Creative Writing Program. Françoise Baylis spoke on “designer babies” in her Distinguished Lecture for the Carl R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology, cosponsored by HRI. The final Un/Doing events of the year were showstoppers: A CultureTalk with poet Nikky Finney and Ruth Nicole Brown, moderated by Janice Harrington, and a gripping reading by Finney to a rapt audience. We ended the year celebrating HRI’s Prizes for Research in the Humanities recipients.



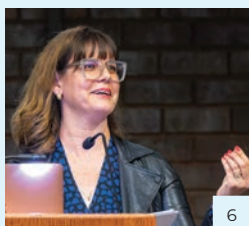
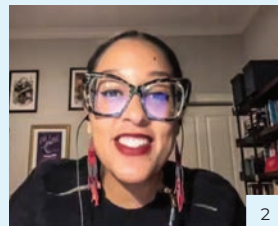
**1.** HRI Opening Reception at Levis Faculty Center **2.** Nancy Toff (VP & Executive Editor in the Academic/Trade Division, Oxford University Press) **3.** Lia García (performance artist, activist, and educator) **4.** Jacki Thompson Rand (Associate Vice Chancellor for Native Affairs; American Indian Studies) in conversation with Mimi Thi Nguyen (Gender & Women’s Studies), in commemoration of Indigenous Peoples’ Day **5.** Hilary N. Green (Davidson College) **6.** Kirsten Ostherr (Rice University) **7.** HRI graduate student fall social **8.** HRI graduate student town hall **9.** Thea Quiray Tagle (David Winton Bell Gallery, Brown Arts Institute) **10.** David Wright Faladé (English) **11.** International Women’s Day speakers (not all pictured) **12.** Alaina E. Roberts (University of Pittsburgh) and HRI Director Antoinette Burton **13.** Françoise Baylis (Dalhousie University) *Next page:* **14.** Dave Eggers (BS ’02, Journalism) and Daniel Gumbiner **15.** Eggers speaks to audience members at nonprofits workshop event **16.** Tarren Andrews (Yale University) **17.** Ruth Nicole Brown (Michigan State University, Saving Our Lives, Hearing Our Truths – SOLHOT) and Nikky Finney (University of South Carolina) at CultureTalk **18.** Janice Harrington (Creative Writing, English), CultureTalk **19.** Nikky Finney **20.** HRI Director Antoinette Burton with Prizes for Research in the Humanities undergraduate winner Laura Garcia (LAS ’23), member of the inaugural Humanities in Action cohort **21.** Julie Gaillard (French and Italian), honorable mention for Prizes for Research in the Humanities, in conversation with colleagues François Proulx (French and Italian; outgoing HRI Advisory Committee member and 2019-20 Prizes for Research faculty winner) and Daniel Nabil Maroun (French and Italian) **22.** Faculty research prize winner John Levi Barnard (Comparative and World Literature and English) with Justin Murison (English) and Ted Underwood (Information Sciences and English)



## Interseminars Events

The Mellon-funded Interseminars Initiative's inaugural cohort, "Imagining Otherwise: Speculation in the Americas," hosted a series of public events both online and in-person during academic year 2022–2023.

**Lin Hixson and Matthew Goulish**, co-founders of the Chicago-based performance company **Every house has a door**, spoke about speculative practice and futuristic ways of imagining how we create. Public scholar **Eve L. Ewing** (University of Chicago) used multi-generational storytelling to inquire about—and interrogate—racialized histories and imagine emancipatory possibilities grounded in joy and liberation. **Amber Johnson** (Saint Louis University) discussed methods for conjuring the world and communities in which we want to live and thrive, empowering scholars from various disciplines to contemplate an imaginative approach to scholarship and publishing. **Macarena Gómez-Barris** (Brown University) spoke about her Atacama [Desert] Integrated Research Practice. She reflected on how writing, research, and creative practice come together as a palimpsest of approaches and how we might rethink the role of the human and nonhuman in the desert given the colonial anthropocene, and the context of ongoing environmental damage, ruin, and extractivism. Artist **David Shrobe** (Hunter College) spoke on "Imagination, Materiality, and Narrative as Liberatory Modes of Intervention," asking questions about identity, history, and memory through an exploration of his multi-layered portraits and assemblage paintings.



**1.** Interseminars initiative co-convenors Patrick Earl Hammie (Art and Design), J. David Cisneros (Communication), and Jorge Lucero (Art and Design) with Lin Hixson and Matthew Goulish (in front) and HRI Director Antoinette Burton **2.** Eve L. Ewing **3.** Amber Johnson **4.** "Imagining Otherwise" Fellows Beatriz Jiménez (Spanish and Portuguese), María B. Serrano-Arbreu (Educational Psychology), and Ray Martínez (Spanish and Portuguese) **5.** Kofi Bazzell-Smith (Art and Design), fellow from "Imagining Otherwise: Speculation in the Americas," in conversation with Joseph Obanubi (Studio Arts, New Media), fellow from "Improvise and Intervene" **6.** Macarena Gómez-Barris **7.** Gómez-Barris in conversation with Lucero and Cisneros and fellows **8.** David Shrobe



## The Odyssey Project

The 2022–2023 academic year was especially full of activities and achievements for the Odyssey Project and its students. During the fall semester, Odyssey students collaborated with the fall artist-in-residence, **Rafael Blanco**. Together, they painted a large-scale mural celebrating the Odyssey experience. Completed over the course of three days, the twenty feet wide by six-and-a-half feet tall work features a background of bright, multicolored stripes with a portrait of a woman and a quotation from writer Maya Angelou: “Making a living is not the same thing as making a life.” The mural is dedicated to past and future Odyssey students and serves as a testament to their passion and commitment to lifelong learning. It is installed on the first floor of the Levis Faculty Center.

Odyssey students continued their creative endeavors in the spring when student **Benji Davis** served as costume director for the local production of Eliana Pipes’ *Dream House* at the Station Theatre in Urbana. The entire class attended a performance in support of Benji’s work and it proved to be a true bonding opportunity for this year’s cohort. Students also contributed to Odyssey’s first poetry chapbook—a collection of student poetry written during the spring semester. As with the mural, the chapbook provides a lasting record of our students’ accomplishments and talent.

Student work was also featured on the new Odyssey blog, **Voyages**, which operates as a repository for student, faculty, and staff reflections on the program’s activities and outcomes. The first student contribution came from **Sherry Wilson** and was titled “Reflection of a Semester Well Spent.” In it, Sherry writes that “[b]eing new to the Urbana Champaign area, an anchor is what I needed. Something that would provide me with a sense

of stability and focus in my daily life.” Odyssey, she explains, is that anchor. Sherry gave the student address, and Champaign County Clerk Aaron Ammons delivered the keynote address, at Odyssey’s first in-person commencement since the program officially became a University of Illinois credit-awarding program in 2019.



Nichilah Akerele at public reading

Finally, the second iteration of Odyssey’s summer creative writing workshop, “Writing for Discovery: Self, Public, and Community,” took place in June. Taught once again by professor and poet **Ángel García**, the workshop drew 20 participants from around Champaign-Urbana. The class finished with a public reading at the Douglass Branch of the Champaign Public Library.

This coming year, Odyssey is pleased to welcome back Dr. **Valerie O’Brien** as literature instructor. Professors **Jorge Lucero** and **Augustus Wood** are also returning. Professor **Shelley Weinberg**, Odyssey’s longtime philosophy instructor, will be on sabbatical. In her stead, we are pleased to welcome Professor **Jon Hale** from the College of Education. Professor Hale’s research and advocacy work includes the Children’s Defense Fund’s Freedom Schools, including the Ujima Freedom School in Champaign.

We continue to be grateful to our students for choosing the Odyssey Project as the vehicle for their future success.



Lena Hoch and Michelle Awad

**On May 18, HRI hosted the first ever Odyssey Community Breakfast** in celebration of the program and its impact in our community. We are so grateful to Odyssey's partners and supporters, and were thrilled to honor **Lena Hoch**, program manager at the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission, with the inaugural Odyssey Partner of the Year Award.

## Education Justice Project

The 2023–24 academic year will see the launch of two important new educational initiatives by the Education Justice Project (EJP).

First, after fifteen years of offering educational programs at Danville Correctional Center, EJP plans to launch a pilot program at Menard Correctional Center in fall 2023. Incarcerated individuals at Menard, a maximum-security men's state prison, have had meager access to post-secondary education in recent decades. Offering opportunities at the facility has long been a priority of the Illinois Coalition for Higher Education in Prison and the Illinois Department of Corrections. EJP plans to start slowly, with college preparation courses and occasional workshops, and eventually to offer for-credit college courses, engaging Illinois instructors as well as partnering with institutions and individual faculty located closer to the facility, which is in Southern Illinois.

With funding from the General Assembly, EJP intends to launch a high school program at Danville Correctional Center. Working in collaboration with the Chicago Public School system, EJP will support incarcerated youth ages 18–22 in taking synchronous and asynchronous courses toward their high school diplomas. The program will be structured with two daily sessions: synchronous morning classes taught by teachers from the Consuela B. York High School in Chicago and evening study sessions in which EJP students serve as teaching assistants and mentors. To our knowledge, this will be the only instance in the country of a public high school maintaining a branch within a state prison, and certainly the only instance of incarcerated college students serving as designated tutors to incarcerated high school students.

Another exciting milestone is that EJP's policy team supported House Bill 3648. If enacted, it will require the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) and the Illinois Board of Higher Education to collect and report data on higher education in prison programs. It passed the Illinois General Assembly in May 2023 and as of June 2023 is headed to the governor's desk.

Finally, congratulations to EJP Director **Rebecca Ginsburg**, who received an Illinois Humanities Public Humanities Award in June 2023 in recognition of EJP's commitment to extending the reach of the humanities into prisons and its efforts to combat censorship in the Illinois prison system.

## Off the Shelf Season Three: Interviewing Icons



Augustus Wood



Joe William Trotter Jr.



Bill Fletcher Jr.

Host **Augustus Wood** kicked off season three of *Off the Shelf* podcast with storied guest **Joe William Trotter Jr.** (History and Social Justice, Carnegie Mellon University). They engaged in a deep discussion of Black working-class history, grounded in Trotter's pathbreaking research and published works, notably *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915–45* and *Workers on Arrival: Black Labor in the Making of America*.

Professor Wood also interviewed legendary writer, scholar, and trade unionist **Bill Fletcher Jr.** They covered Fletcher's storied life from his early years as a teen activist and then on to college, labor organizing, and leadership in the Black Radical Congress, among other experiences. You can find these and all back episodes at [go.illinois.edu/shelfpod](http://go.illinois.edu/shelfpod). Watch for new episodes coming in fall 2023!

## Interseminars Initiative 2022–23

The first Interseminars cohort, “Imagining Otherwise: Speculation in the Americas,” has nearly completed its 18-month term of interdisciplinary exploration. Faculty conveners (Josue David Cisneros, Patrick Earl Hammie, and Jorge Lucero) and graduate fellows spent 2022–23 learning together, meeting with their special guests (see page 17), and pursuing their research projects with support from the initiative’s Mellon grant. From a trip to Japan to studying violence in film, the fellows have been sharing stories and insights from their Interseminars research and experiences throughout the year. Read their insights and reflections at [go.illinois.edu/InterseminarsStories](https://go.illinois.edu/InterseminarsStories).

The group recently held their second—and final—summer intensive and are busy preparing for an exciting culminating event, to be held in September 2023 (see more on page 15).

## Humanities in Action Fall 2022

Humanities in Action (HIA)—a new, joint program between We CU Community Engaged Scholars and the Humanities Research Institute—launched in fall 2022 with its first cohort of seven undergraduate students in the humanities. The Community Learning Lab in the School of Social Work matched each student with a local organization to address a vital area of need in Champaign-Urbana, including Sola Gratia Farm, the Independent Media Center, the University YMCA, and the Education Justice Project. In addition to the practical work experience they gained, these students forged valuable partnerships and lasting connections that have, in some cases, extended beyond their involvement in HIA. Read more about the 2023 HIA program at [go.illinois.edu/HIA23](https://go.illinois.edu/HIA23).

## Illinois Humanities

In January 2023, HRI Director **Antoinette Burton** was named to the Illinois Humanities Board of Directors. Illinois Humanities is a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, a nonprofit organization that activates the humanities through free public programs, grants, and educational opportunities that foster reflection, spark conversation, build community, and strengthen civic engagement. “I look forward to supporting the amazing public humanities work being done there and bringing ideas and energy from east central Illinois to the table,” Burton said.

## Humanities Research Lab Spring 2023



Madeline Meehan, Sylvia Techmanski, and Krupa Shah



Frank Cabrera

After two years of piloting the Humanities Research Lab (HRL) course model, in spring 2023 the Humanities Research Institute—in partnership with the Office of Undergraduate Research—officially launched the program with two courses: HIST 312: Immigrant America and SPAN 232: Spanish in the Community.

HRL courses are existing humanities courses refashioned to incorporate a significant community-based research component. HIST 312: Immigrant America, taught by Professor **Yuridia Ramírez**, secured placements for students with Champaign Unit 4 Schools, the Community Service Center, the New American Welcome Center, The Immigration Project, and Courage Connection. SPAN 232: Spanish in the Community, taught by Professor **Ann Abbott**, connected students with service opportunities at Carle Hospital NICU, Integrated Health Disparities Programs, and the Refugee Center, among others.

The courses also offered valuable professional development opportunities for the undergraduate teaching assistants: **Leslie Reyes** for HIST 312, and **Flor Quiroz** for SPAN 232. (You can read more about Reyes and Quiroz on page 22 and on HRI’s website under News Features.)

Students from both HRL courses presented their research at the inaugural Humanities Research Lab Showcase, which was part of the university’s Undergraduate Research Week. Topics included a study of the legal protections and proceedings for immigrant domestic violence victims, food banks and migrant communities, the challenges faced by unaccompanied minors, and access to healthcare within the Hispanic community.

HRI is proud to see the HRL experience continue next year, providing a valuable introduction to applied learning and what humanities research can be—and the power of collaboration that is truly reciprocal.

*Our thanks go to donor Elizabeth Nolan (LAS '81), whose generous support has helped to make the HRL program a success.*

## Mellon Pre-Doctoral Public Humanities Fellowship 2022–23

Thanks to the generosity of the Mellon Foundation, HRI has hosted four Pre-doctoral Fellows in the Public Humanities. The 2022–23 fellow, **Eva Kuras**, encountered a combination of challenge and exhilaration that accompanies many scholars and practitioners as they experience humanities work beyond the walls of the university. Eva, a PhD student in Comparative and World Literature, wanted to establish a book club in the Champaign County jail, and she came into the fall semester energized at the prospect. However, ongoing COVID protocols and other constraints prevented her from realizing her project on the original time table. She never flagged in her determination, keeping in touch with her contact at the facility and pivoted to leading a community-based reading group at the Urbana Free Library.

By early winter, her labors proved fruitful, and she then ran book groups at both the jail and the library. Focusing on stories rooted in the regions of Eva’s research interests—the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and South Asia—book club participants dove enthusiastically into discussions of migration, cultural encounter, and multiethnic communities. You can read more about Eva’s experience in her own words in her *Inquiry* blog post: [go.illinois.edu/kuras](https://go.illinois.edu/kuras).

## National Humanities Advocacy Day 2023



HRI was proud to send representatives from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign to the 2023 National Humanities Alliance (NHA) Annual Meeting and Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C., held March 19–21. Participants from across the country—including faculty, administrators, and representatives from scholarly societies, museums, archives, and other humanities organizations—attended workshop and panel sessions and prepared for a meeting with members of Congress.

This year’s goal was to advocate for increased FY 2024 funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Archives and Records Administration, and the Department of Education’s international education programs (Title VI and Fulbright-Hays).

In attendance for the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign were **Karen Flynn** (Gender and Women’s Studies), **Adam Newman** (Religion), and **Alaina Pincus** (HRI Assistant Director for Education and Outreach).

Of her time at the conference sessions, Flynn said, “I was interested to see what other institutions were doing in terms of public humanities. It’s really inspiring to see what other campuses are doing.”

“The humanities have a wider and more profound impact on our ability as a nation to function in a global society than many of us can articulate,” Pincus said, noting that the ability to express that impact is key to advocacy. Newman added, “There’s so much value to the Advocacy Day experience. I’ve learned so much about how the humanities are funded.”

As part of their trip, the delegation met with **Shallum Atkinson**, a senior policy advisor from Illinois Congresswoman Nikki Budzinski’s office (pictured above left with Flynn, Pincus, and Newman). In the fall, HRI will post a call to faculty who are interested in attending spring 2024 Advocacy Day. Watch for details to come!

## Graduate Advisory Committee Activities



Priyanka Zylstra at the Graduate Student Town Hall

The HRI Graduate Advisory Committee launched a survey and hosted a town hall in spring 2023 to hear from fellow graduate students about their ideas, reflections, and experiences related to humanities research and HRI’s role in supporting this rich ecosystem. Based upon this feedback, HRI is excited to implement some new and continuing programs for 2023–24.

In the fall, HRI will continue to host the popular Graduate Social Hour event and will offer dedicated co-working space in Levis Faculty Center.

In the spring, HRI will inaugurate a Graduate Open House and Research Fair. While the structure is yet to be determined, the goal is to create a program in which graduate students can discover opportunities available to them in an informal way, to meet and get to know the research of other graduate students, and to hold conversations about diverse career paths.

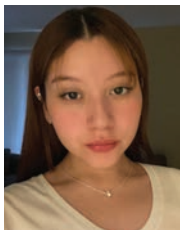
## STUDENTS

### Career Exploration Fellow



**Heather Ennis**, a PhD candidate in the English department, served as a Career Diversity Exploration Fellow during the fall 2022 semester and continued on with HRI in spring 2023. Ennis supported the daily operations of the Humanities Without Walls consortium (HWW), including working on projects related to the Grand Research Challenge, Career Diversity workshop, and stewarding research communications on grant-funded projects. She will continue working with HRI and HWW in fall 2023 as a research assistant.

### Communications and Outreach Intern



**Giovanna Gutierrez**, a rising junior in the English department, served as HRI's communications and outreach intern. Giovanna worked closely with HRI staff members to design social media campaigns to promote undergraduate events, including HRI's Inside Scoop series and inaugural undergraduate coffee hour, as well as Instagram stories promoting research

funding initiatives and prizes. She also arranged, interviewed, and transcribed interviews with HRI-affiliated student interns.

### David F. Prindable Intern



**Tavion Brooks**, who served as the David F. Prindable intern, graduated in May with degrees in History and Creative Writing. Tavion worked with HRI staff to determine prospective mailing routes for an every-door direct mail campaign with the Odyssey Project. He also contributed designs for social media campaigns, including the HRI Prizes for Research announcement. Additionally,

Tavion conducted several interviews with HRI-affiliated student workers to learn more about their experiences.

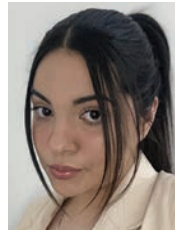
### Humanities Gateway Intern



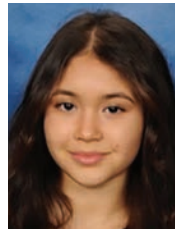
**James Perkovich**, a rising junior in the History department, served as the 2022–23 Humanities Gateway Intern in Public Media and Civic Engagement, an internship offered by HRI in partnership with Illinois Public Media. During his internship experience, James helped plan a movie screening for Champaign County and the Unit 4 school district, which included a panel discussion

with the filmmaker, actors, and local activists. He also worked with Illinois Public Media colleagues to plan community listening sessions in Peoria. James will continue the internship into fall 2024.

### Humanities Research Lab Teaching Assistants



**Leslie Reyes**, a rising senior, is a History major with a minor in Secondary Education. She served as a teaching assistant for the Humanities Research Lab (HRL) course History 312: Immigrant America, taught by Professor Yuridia Ramírez. Leslie enjoyed bringing her experience as a former HRL student to her TA position, and she expressed gratitude that HRLs provide students with service-learning opportunities in the Champaign-Urbana community. As a future educator, Leslie is passionate about creating diverse experiences for students to learn about different cultural backgrounds outside of the standard curriculum.



**Flor Quiroz**, a rising junior who is double majoring in Clinical Psychology and Spanish, served as a teaching assistant for the Humanities Research Lab course Spanish 312: Spanish in the Community, taught by Professor Ann Abbott. Flor appreciated the chance to work with people of different ages and backgrounds on shared projects benefiting community organizations. She

noted how important it is to learn how to communicate with folks across language barriers, further illustrating the importance of this HRL course.

### Odyssey Project Interns



This year, the Odyssey Project was supported by two student interns: in the fall semester, **Julia Rzasinska** (class of 2023, History with a Secondary Education minor), and in the spring semester, **Shyann Mack** (class of 2023, Anthropology). As Odyssey interns, they assisted students with a number of areas, such as helping to address technical questions related to computer programs and course management systems, providing feedback on student writing, and assisting with research projects. We are grateful for their work supporting access to adult education in Champaign-Urbana.





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## COMMITTEES

### HRI Advisory Committee

**Ikuko Asaka**, History

**Amanda Ciafone**, Media and Cinema  
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**Irvin Hunt**, African American Studies/  
English

**Natalie Lira**, Latina/Latino Studies

**John M. Murphy**, Communication

**Felisa Vergara Reynolds**, French and  
Italian

**Sara L. Schwebel**, Information Sciences

**Terri Weissman**, Art History, Art &  
Design

### HRI Graduate Student Advisory Committee

**Lingyan Liu**, History

**Beatriz Jiménez**, Spanish and  
Portuguese

**Emerson Parker Pehl**, English

# From the Fellows

Throughout the year, Campus Fellows contribute to HRI's research blog *Inquiry*. Here's a roundup of reflections on the Fellows Seminar, a cornerstone of HRI's Campus Fellowship program, from the "Un/Doing" research theme cohort.

"Although there is a lot of shared intellectual ground among the community of scholars in my cohort, I was struck very early on by the sometimes-discrepant practices and norms that guide our research. I began to appreciate how instructive it is to step outside one's discipline for an extended period; it makes one an observer to one's scholarship in the best of ways. The session with my cohort on the date that we discussed my paper was one of the richest two hours I've spent intellectually."

**-Deena Rymhs** (American Indian Studies), 2022–23 faculty fellow

"Sharing space in the Fellows Seminar over the last year has been deeply inspiring and has given me the courage to experiment with new modes of un/doing in my research projects. And, perhaps most importantly, the seminar enabled me to cultivate relationships that I know will extend beyond the fellowship period."

**-Emma Velez** (Gender and Women's Studies), 2022–23 faculty fellow

"While the HRI fellowship has provided much needed time for both research and writing, the biweekly seminars with fellows (both graduate and faculty) have been the most rewarding. The dissertation process can be a lonely and challenging endeavor. Conversations during seminars about each other's work have been both generous and generative, while also bringing conviviality and joy to the work we do as scholars. I leave each seminar practically vibrating with excitement about my colleagues' work."

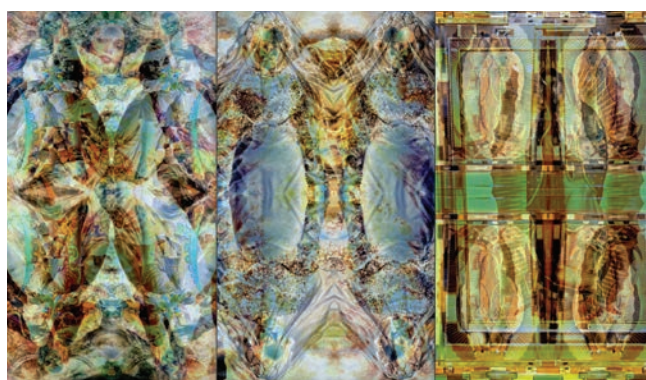
**-Kadin Henningsen** (English), 2022–23 graduate fellow

"The HRI seminar is a space of interdisciplinary dialogue and cross-pollination of ideas that has enriched my knowledge about the exciting work co-fellows are doing and helped me reflect on potential aspects of my work that I had not previously considered. Through the HRI seminar, I have witnessed how interdisciplinary work births a more robust scholarship. The HRI seminar has inspired me to center interdisciplinarity as a model for my future research."

**-R. Elizabeth (Eli) Velásquez Estrada** (Latina/Latino Studies), 2022–23 faculty fellow

"After reading works in progress, I now recognize that it is through the process of revision that a pearl takes shape. Furthermore, my HRI colleagues' audacity in destabilizing the status quo and challenging conventional norms inspires me tremendously. I have gained so much courage, as well as intellectual and emotional support, from this fearless and visionary community."

**-Lingyan Liu** (History), 2022–23 graduate fellow



Images from top to bottom: "We Want Peace," a street mural in El Salvador photographed by R. Elizabeth Velásquez Estrada. Kadin Henningsen presenting on printmaking at the Undergraduate Coffee Hour. "Las Tres Madres," digital image collage by Emma Velez.



Odyssey students and staff had the opportunity to meet featured guests Ruth Nicole Brown and Nikky Finney, along with moderator Janice Harrington, at the 2023 CultureTalk.

## Giving to HRI

We are grateful for the many ways our donors and friends have shaped and supported a vibrant humanities research community on the University of Illinois campus.

So much of what we report on in these pages is strengthened and amplified through giving:

- ◉ special lectures, like Kirsten Ostherr's during her Medical Humanities residency
- ◉ courses and service opportunities connecting students with meaningful community engagement, such as the Humanities Research Lab and Humanities in Action
- ◉ unique internship experiences, such as the David F. Prindable Communications and Outreach Internship and Humanities Gateway Internship with partner Illinois Public Media
- ◉ supporting better access to the humanities—and renewed sense of hope and joy in learning—for low-income, nontraditional students in the East Central Illinois community through the Odyssey Project

Foundational HRI programs, such as the Campus Fellowship program and Research Clusters, could also benefit in innumerable ways from private support—helping to sustain and expand the work of researchers who play a key role in imagining just, productive, and innovative futures for all.

You can make a difference today by visiting [hri.illinois.edu/giving](https://hri.illinois.edu/giving) or contacting Senior Director of Development Erin Kirby at [ekirby2@illinois.edu](mailto:ekirby2@illinois.edu).

### A Connected Community

We invite you to join the email list for *Amplify*, which shares stories of the rippling impact of the humanities at Illinois and beyond. And sign up for our E-News to learn about HRI's speakers, programs, and opportunities offered throughout the academic year. Visit [go.illinois.edu/EmailList](https://go.illinois.edu/EmailList).



# Humanities Research Institute

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

**The Humanities Research Institute (HRI) at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign** fosters interdisciplinary study in the humanities, arts, and social sciences. Established in 1997 as the Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities, HRI is a vibrant hub for humanities activity on campus. We coordinate and host lectures, symposia, and panel discussions on a wide variety of topics, and we award prizes recognizing excellence in faculty and student humanities research. We convene distinguished scholars from around the world, and we support Illinois faculty and graduate student research through fellowships and a bimonthly seminar. HRI cultivates collaborative faculty driven initiatives through its Research Clusters; hosts multi-million-dollar external foundation grants; and supports faculty and graduate student reading groups.

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