

# HRI–Mellon Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Humanities as Social Practice

## University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 2023–2024

**Application Deadline: November 28, 2022**

**The Humanities Research Institute, supported by a grant from the Mellon Foundation, seeks to hire a Post-Doctoral Fellow for a one-year appointment commencing Fall 2023.**

**The Humanities as Social Practice** draw on interdisciplinary arenas of inquiry that have direct impact on contemporary issues. When the humanities are conceived of as a social practice, they have the capacity to move between the academy that nurtures them as fields of study and the communities, local and global, they both seek to serve and must be accountable to, especially in a public research university. As a form of “public humanities,” this practice is collaborative and cross-disciplinary, drawing on a range of methodologies—from history, African American Studies, literature, queer theory, philosophy and Indigenous studies, to name a few—and seeks to recognize academic knowledge-making beyond the walls of the university. Through its social practices, the humanities have the capacity to challenge hierarchies of knowing and expertise, in part by engaging audiences and communities beyond campus, in part by embedding reciprocal partnerships in all aspects of research, pedagogy, and public engagement. Practices rooted in critical humanities training are attentive to social differences and disparities, aiming to re-center the human condition and collective community needs in an increasingly tech-driven world.

**The Mellon Post-Doctoral Fellow in Humanities as Social Practice** will spend the one-year term in residence at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), participating in the yearlong HRI Fellows Seminar and in the variety of publicly engaged humanities work ongoing at HRI and on campus. The Fellow will pursue a project rooted in participatory community-based research and designed to amplify what the humanities as a social practice can and should look like, both in their field(s) and in the larger ecosystem of campus and local communities. They will be required to make a public presentation of their work and run a workshop for graduate students interested in developing pathways to the humanities as a social practice in their own work in the spring semester of 2024.

**This search for a Mellon Fellow is open to scholars in all humanities disciplines**, including the humanities-inflected social sciences, whose research interests lie in the area of community-based social justice and human rights. Areas of interest include, but are not limited to, community-based research in racial, im/migrant, and/or gender justice; public health; environmental justice; Indigenous sovereignty; and disability studies.

### **Eligibility**

Applicants should have received their Ph.D. in a humanities discipline between January 1, 2021 and no later than July 31, 2023. Only untenured scholars who have not held the title of “assistant professor” are eligible (*visiting, non-tenure-line* assistant professors are eligible); lecturers with indefinite appointments that renew (rather than terminate after a fixed term) are ineligible. PhDs are the *only* terminal degree accepted. Current full- and part-time faculty members (tenureline or specialized) at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign are **not** eligible for these awards. This opportunity is open to scholars who

received their PhDs from UIUC. Scholars who cannot legitimately anticipate the conferral of their degrees by July 31, 2023 should not apply.

### **Terms**

The appointment will begin on August 16, 2023, and the successful applicants must be on the Illinois campus by two business days before that date for employment processing and orientation. The Post-Doctoral Fellow will be required to live within 20 miles of Champaign-Urbana during the academic years of the appointment.

The fellowship carries a \$60,000 annual stipend, a \$6,000 research account, a modest moving allowance, and a comprehensive benefits package. (Foreign nationals' benefits eligibility is contingent upon meeting a "Substantial Presence Test," as determined by [IRS rules](#). The University of Illinois conducts criminal background checks on all job candidates upon acceptance of a contingent offer.

### **Application Guidelines**

**Applications must be submitted online at the [application portal](#).**

Applicants will be asked to create a password-protected account, to which they can return multiple times. The application system opens October 1 (and will not be accessible before then). No paper or emailed applications will be accepted. **The application portal closes at 11:59 p.m. U.S. Central Standard Time (CST) on November 28, 2022.** All materials, including letters of reference, must be submitted by that time. As HRI staff will not be available for any trouble-shooting assistance after 5:00 p.m. CST, applicants are strongly urged to submit their applications well prior to the close of business on November 28 (by 4:30 p.m. CST). Please be certain that you clicked through to reach the final section of the application system and clicked "submit" to actively complete and submit your application (simply uploading all your documents will not suffice to submit your application).

In addition to completing the online application form, applicants must upload the following application materials through the online system:

1. **A one-page abstract, with current project title** (250–300 words). The title and description should be for the research project the applicant will undertake during the course of the fellowship. Please upload under "abstract."
2. **A detailed narrative statement** (2,000 words) describing the research project the applicant will undertake during the term of the fellowship. The narrative statement should describe how the proposed project emerges from the applicant's prior work and should
  - a. provide a clear articulation of the applicant's community-based research questions;
  - b. explain how the applicant's research project engages or advances key conversations in the humanities as a social practice;
  - c. explain the applicant's enthusiasm for the specific opportunities of this fellowship—including joining a seminar comprised of Illinois faculty and graduate students, and collaborating on programming that centers community-based research and teaching;
  - d. briefly explain how the applicant might utilize and collaborate with the specific resources of the Humanities Research Institute and UIUC to advance their own work and the work of humanities-based social practice at Illinois or beyond.

Please upload the narrative under “research statement.”

3. **A curriculum vitae** (maximum 10 pages). Please upload under “CV.”
4. **Two (2) letters of recommendation to be uploaded by the applicant’s referees.** If the applicant’s degree has not been conferred at the time of application, one of these letters must be from the dissertation advisor, who should cover in some detail the candidate’s progress toward and likelihood of PhD degree *conferral* by July 31, 2023. Please note that this means not simply defense or even deposit of the dissertation but that the applicant’s degree has been *awarded* by then. One letter can be from a community partner well versed in your work; one must be a senior colleague or dissertation advisor.

In general, the letters of recommendation should come from colleagues who are familiar with the applicant’s work and the proposal being made for the fellowship. Letters must address the specifics of the project being proposed for the fellowship, the applicant’s research expertise and community-based public engagement experience/training in the humanities, and the contributions the proposed project would make to a variety of communities, academic and public. **(Only two letters will be accepted.)** Because the letters must address the specifics of the proposal and the position being sought, we strongly discourage applicants from sending general dossier files. One letter can be from a community partner well versed in your work; one must be a senior colleague or dissertation advisor.

We recommend entering your recommenders’ names and emails early in the online application process. The application system will generate an email request for letters of recommendation to those referees whose names and emails you submit, and the email will provide a link to the recipient for uploading the letter. Please note that you must enter your personal contact information in that section first before you can proceed to entering references information. Once this information is entered (and one clicks “continue” at the close of the reference-letter section), the designated referees should receive an email requesting their letters and containing a unique link at which they may be uploaded. Reference letters must be submitted via this link. Please be aware that these links expire with the fellowship application deadline; therefore, entering letter requests at the eleventh hour may result in an incomplete application at the time of the deadline. Incomplete applications will not be considered. **Please maintain communication with referees to ensure they have received the emails with uploading links and are aware of the deadline.** Referees should check their junk and spam email folders for letter requests that may have landed there. Please do not have the referees (or dossier service) email reference letters directly to HRI. The letters should be uploaded at the link provided in the email sent to the referee/dossier service by the application system.

Please note: Applicants choosing to use a dossier service, such as Interfolio, should allow ample time for the service to upload the reference letters to their applications. Requests are not always automatic and can take several business days to process. Last-minute requests to dossier services will *likely* result in incomplete applications, which will not be considered. It is the responsibility of the applicants to familiarize themselves with the dossier service’s policies and procedures, and to allow *ample* time for the uploading of their reference letters. (Typically, the email address one should enter for a referee in the application system in order to have his or her appropriate Interfolio dossier letter uploaded to one’s application involves entering something similar in form to “send.name.alphanumericidentifier@interfolio.com.”)

*Applications for which both letters of recommendation have not been uploaded by 11:59 p.m. Central Standard Time on November 28 will be deemed incomplete and will **not** be considered.*

## **Deadline**

**Online applications must be complete and actively submitted, including all letters of support uploaded by referees, by 11:59 p.m. CST on November 28, 2022, after which the application portal closes. The application system can be found at <https://my.atlas.illinois.edu/submit/go.asp?id=1721>.**

Deadline extensions will not be granted. The review committee will consider only complete applications. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all documentation is complete, and that referees submit their letters before the deadline.

## **Notification**

All applications will be acknowledged via e-mail, and all applicants will be notified when the search has concluded. Please do not contact HRI about the status of an application. Because of the volume of applications HRI receives, we are unable to answer questions about individual applications, including whether the proposed research project to be undertaken fits the subject rubric of the competition. The latter will be adjudicated by the selection committee.

View the [application system](#), where you will be asked to create an account. The system opens October 1, 2022.

Questions about these fellowships may be addressed to Dr. Nancy Castro, Deputy Director of HRI, at [ncastro@illinois.edu](mailto:ncastro@illinois.edu) or (217) 244-7913.

*The University of Illinois System is an equal opportunity employer, including but not limited to disability and/or veteran status, and complies with all applicable state and federal employment mandates. Please visit [Required Employment Notices and Posters](#) to view our non-discrimination statement and find additional information about required background checks, sexual harassment/misconduct disclosures, COVID-19 vaccination requirement, and employment eligibility review through [E-Verify](#).*