Humanities Labs Application

Looking for a chance to pursue independent research in the humanities in a collaborative setting?

The Gould Center’s Humanities Labs offer students a funded opportunity for hands-on experience in humanities research in a team-based format and in close mentorship with a faculty member. These year-long labs engage students in creative, project-based problem solving related to some of the most central humanistic issues facing us today on both a personal and global scale. Research findings will be presented in both traditional and creative formats, from academic papers to op/eds, short stories, films, websites, and podcasts. Open to CMC students of all class years, with preference given to humanities majors or students with demonstrated interest in the humanities.

Selected students will receive a $2000 research stipend plus up to $250 for project-related expenses. Workload per week will vary, but is expected to average approximately six hours per week.

This initiative has been made possible through financial support from the President’s Office.

APPLICATION DEADLINE:  Friday, September 4 at 5 p.m.

There are three different labs, each of which has places for up to 10 students. Students are allowed to participate in only one lab per year, but may apply to more than one. If you do apply to more than one, please indicate your lab preference.

Lab #1:  Spiritual Impulse of Black, Latinx, and Native American Civil Rights Movements
Faculty mentor:  Professor Gastón Espinosa, Department of Religious Studies
This lab explores the spiritual impulse of the Black, Mexican American, and American Indian civil rights struggles from the 1950s-1970s and then their influence on modern struggles today from Ferguson to Latino immigration reform to Standing Rock to Minneapolis. Despite the critical role that religion played, the movement and leaders have largely been stripped of their spiritual expressions and contributions by society. However, a reading of the writings by civil rights leaders and a review of documentaries and interviews from the period make it clear that spirituality (indigenous, popular, and non-institutional forms) played a decisive role in shaping their understanding and moral visions of racial equality and how to build a more just society.

We will explore a wide range of religious traditions (Protestant, Pentecostal, Baptist, Catholic, Muslim, Native American) and key leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, Fred Shuttlesworth, Jesse Jackson, Fannie Lou Hamer, Ella Baker, Malcolm X, César Chávez, Dolores Huerta, Reies López Tijerina, James Baldwin, Dennis Banks, Russell Means, Mary Crow Dog, Vine Deloria, Angela Davis, Huey Newton, BLM leaders, and others. We will also create a website and/or a report that can be used by students, teachers, and the general public, which contains primary source readings, secondary source interpretations, photographs, YouTube and documentary clips, movement chronologies, bibliographies, and short bios. You will contribute 3-4 writing projects (e.g., two-page bios, event summary, movement description), other tasks for the website/report, and possibly a creative project of your choice for the website.

Lab #2:  Legend, Lies, and Us
Faculty mentor:  Professor Briana Toole, Department of Philosophy
The moment that Brandon Stark discovers that Robert’s Rebellion is a lie - that its origin was not to free the people of Westeros from an oppressive king but to vindicate a lover scorned – we share in his sense of disorientation. It calls into question everything we have come to know in the Game of Thrones universe - who we think of as the hero or villain, who deserves redemption, who ought, at the end, sit on the Iron Throne.

The stories that we tell matter. They shape who we are and remind us of where we have been. They offer a direction for the future. Stories shape and guide us, they help us understand ourselves and our relationships to others. They offer values to live by and fight for. But, what happens when we learn that those stories are lies?

We’ll examine the role of myths, legends, and folklore in the construction of the self and the communities we exist in, as well as how we grapple with the realization that those stories may tell untruths. Moreover, we’ll explore the relationship between myth, propaganda, and ideology to evaluate how these become part of the story we tell ourselves about ourselves. And, we’ll explore how these stories can be reimagined as tools of resistance.

Lab #3:  Covid19@CMC
Faculty mentor:  Professors Lily Geismer and Tamara Venit-Shelton, Department of History
Covid19@CMC is a digital archive of interviews and images that reflect the lived experience of the Covid-19 pandemic among the CMC community broadly defined. The archive will be housed in Special Collections and the Claremont Colleges Library and made accessible to the public. By these means, it will provide a space where our community can express their understandings, hopes,
and fears about the pandemic as well as where future researchers, policy makers, activists and artists can reflect on the current crisis and its lessons. In Summer 2020, a team of CMC students launched the interview and collection process, and this lab will build and expand on their work under the guidance of Professors Lily Geismer and Tamara Venit-Shelton from the History Department. Students selected for this lab will be trained to conduct oral histories and work with archival and exhibition software. They will prepare supplementary materials for researchers, write their own reflections on the process for the project website, and gather images that capture the lived experience of the pandemic and CMC’s response to it.

* Required

1. Email address *

2. Name *
   First and last name

3. Phone number *

4. Which lab are you applying for? *

   Check all that apply.
   - Humanities Lab #1: Spiritual Impulse of the Black, Latinx, and Native American Civil Rights Movements
   - Humanities Lab #2: Legend, Lies, and Us
   - Humanities Lab #3: Covid19@CMC

5. If you are applying for two or more labs, which is your top choice?

   Mark only one oval.
   - Humanities Lab #1: Spiritual Impulse of the Black, Latinx, and Native American Civil Rights Movements
   - Humanities Lab #2: Legend, Lies, and Us
   - Humanities Lab #3: Covid19@CMC

6. The Humanities Labs are yearlong experiences. Will you be enrolled at CMC for the entire academic year 2020-21? *

   Mark only one oval.
   - Yes
   - No
7. What is your class year? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ 2021  
☐ 2022  
☐ 2023  
☐ 2024

8. What is your major (or your expected major)? *

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

9. If you are not majoring in a humanities field, please explain how your academic interests align with or will supplement the humanities labs.

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________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

10. Why are you interested in participating in the Humanities Labs? *

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11. What classes have you taken, if any, that are relevant to the topic of the lab? *

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________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Files submitted:

12. What other experience do you have, if any, that is relevant to the topic of the lab? Feel free to include books you've read or films you've watched, etc.*

13. Where are you from/where did you grow up? *

14. Submit your resume (not required for Class of 2024)

Files submitted:

15. Submit your transcript (unofficial is fine; not required for Class of 2024)

Files submitted:

Application Statements

Please complete the relevant application statement for the lab to which you are applying. If you are applying to more than one lab, please submit both application statements.

Application Statement for Lab #1: Spiritual Impulse of the Black, Latinx, and Native American Civil Rights Movements

Martin Luther King, Jr. talks about the inescapable network of mutuality and the role of religion in their activism. Some argue he reflected what Robert Emmons calls spiritual intelligence. The three main components of spiritual intelligence are the ability to:

(a) "have a sense for the synchronicity [interconnectedness] of life and struggles,"

(b) "sanctify everyday life experiences with the sacred – recognize the divine in ordinary activities, life, events, struggles, and relationships – and to invest them with the sacred;" and

(c) "utilize spiritual resources to solve [social and personal] problems, and the capacity to engage in virtuous behavior" – like showing compassion, humility, forgiveness, and gratitude – to people not only inside, but also outside of your community.

From the quote below, do you see any evidence that MLK demonstrated spiritual intelligence? If so, which components? Where? How might this SI help explain his success, effectiveness & popularity? What 2 things do you find most interesting/surprising about his spirituality & how it shaped his activism?

Martin Luther King wrote:

"In a real sense all life is inter-related. All men are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly... I have tried to stand between these two forces, saying that we need emulate neither the "do nothingism" of the complacent nor the hatred and despair of the black nationalist. For there is the more excellent way of love and nonviolent protest. I am grateful to God that, through the influence of the Negro church, the way of nonviolence became an integral part of our struggle."

Answers should be between 300-500 words.

16. Statement upload, Lab #1

Files submitted:
**Application Statement for Lab #2: Legend, Lies, and Us**

What's a story that you tell about yourself - or that your family tells about you, or that your family tells about itself - that contains a small untruth (big or small)? How did the story come about and why is this story told? Why is it important (to you or to others) that the story is told the way that it is, even if it is not entirely true? How has this story shaped how you (and others) think of yourself?

Alternatively, you may want to think about stories that your family tells about itself and whether those stories are true, why they matter, and how they have shaped your or your family.

Answers should be between 300-500 words.

17. Statement upload, Lab #2

Files submitted:

**Application Statement for Lab #3: Covid19@CMC**

Imagine that you had the ability to interview anyone in the world about their experience with Covid-19. In a brief statement (around 200 words), describe who that person or group would be and what would you ask them. Why would you ask those questions? What would you be most curious to learn?

18. Statement upload, Lab #3

Files submitted:

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