

HUMANITIES FOR ALL TIMES MELLON GRANT

Humanities for *Our* Times: From Epistemologies and Methodologies to Liberatory Creative Practices and Social Justice

Call for Proposals: Course Development Grants

Colorado College was recently awarded a Mellon Foundation *Humanities For All Times* grant for our proposal, "Humanities For Our Times: From Epistemologies and Methodologies to Liberatory Creative Practice and Social Justice." Over the next two years, this grant will fund a variety of opportunities for faculty to reflect critically and collaboratively on how humanities methods contribute to social justice work and to apply these methods in their classrooms and on the streets. We have attached a full copy of our proposal to the email announcing this CFP.

The first phase of grant activities is a call for proposals from faculty who are interested in creating a new course, or significantly revising an existing course, that will fulfill the *Equity and Power* designation, the *Creative Processes* designation, or both. We recognize that each of us is coming at this work from a different place. Some of us may only teach courses with these designations, while others may never have taught a course with either designation. We want to reiterate that no one is excluded from applying for a course development grant, and we expect that each individual faculty member will use the grant and associated grant activities to continue deepening their own commitment to anti-oppression and social justice and, when appropriate, draw on their expertise to help others do the same.

All permanent CC faculty who research or teach in the humanities, including the humanistic social sciences, are eligible to apply, and successful proposals will be awarded a \$6000 grant in early summer 2023 to support this work. Proposals are due April 21 and should be submitted via this Google form:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScQxgAv-ukLhgVnOT34TEh_jMQTqXfn2drLlcCP5yLPO5-U7w/viewform?usp=sf_link

It is important to note that faculty will not be expected to do this work on their own. There will be four grant-sponsored opportunities over the next eighteen months to support faculty as they develop these courses. Participation in some of these opportunities will be compensated separately, but **faculty who receive a grant to design a new *Equity and Power* and/or *Creative Processes* course must participate in at least two of them** to receive the full grant. Dates and brief descriptions are in Appendix 1 of this document and can also be found in the full text of our proposal. More detailed descriptions are forthcoming.

Proposals should be submitted via the link above (please note that in the interest of equity and transparency, we have provided a suggested word count). Proposed courses do not need to be fully developed at this time, and it is sufficient to submit an idea or concept for a course. Proposals for co-taught courses are acceptable, though we would ask that each faculty member submit a separate form (the same responses are okay). In this instance, the \$6000 grant would be split between the two faculty members. While you do not need to respond explicitly to the following questions, please consider them as you prepare your proposal.

- How can we continue to critically examine the histories, narratives, methods and theories that structure our disciplines under an antiracist lens, and what impact does this examination have on course content, pedagogies, and student experience?
- How may humanistic questions, methods and creative practices be harnessed for liberatory projects?
- How can we continue to decenter whiteness in our respective humanistic disciplines so that we genuinely hear, teach, and critique the voices of previously marginalized scholars and creatives in their fields?
- How do we strengthen existing interdisciplinary programs and forge new interdisciplinary collaborations within the context of the college's antiracism commitment?
- Can we still talk meaningfully about a universal "human condition" in the 21st century? What are the constraints and what are the opportunities offered by this concept, and how do they relate to the struggle for social justice against a landscape of political and cultural polarization?
- Are justice and other moral and ethical claims inherent in forms of humanistic analysis?

The grant Key Team Members--Claire Oberon Garcia, Chet Lisiecki, Natanya Pulley, Jameel Paulin, Steven Hayward, Nene Diop, and Kris Stanec – will review the proposals. The team will evaluate responses to the following six questions individually, scoring each response from 1 (does not meet or address the criterium) to 5 (shows evidence of strong promise) and then averaging their scores together. Proposals that receive an average score of 15 or higher will be approved, and should a proposal receive a lower score, there will be a fair and transparent process for reviewing it collaboratively and providing feedback if the team feels it is appropriate.

1. The faculty member briefly explains their experience using humanities methods for anti-oppressive practices (including teaching, scholarship, and activism).
2. The proposal is explicit about how the course will teach and employ humanities methods (including creative processes).
3. The proposal articulates a relationship between humanities methods and social justice.
4. The proposal explains how and why the proposed course would meet the requirements for the *Equity and Power* designation, the *Creative Processes* designation, or both (see Appendix 2).
5. If the course is a redesign, the proposal explains why the changes to readings, assignments, and pedagogy will be significant enough to merit a development grant.
6. The faculty member commits to participating in at least two of the four grant-sponsored activities detailed in Appendix 1.

Faculty who have already submitted a proposal may submit another, but priority will be given to those who are applying for the first time. This is the final round of funding through the Mellon Grant.

Appendix 1

“Humanities for Our Times: New Perspectives on Humanistic Approaches, Ethics, and Social Change” Conference (June 14-17, CC campus)

How do the humanities contribute to anti-oppressive work, and how can humanities methods – from inquiry and critique to creative production and performance – dismantle systems of oppression, create and sustain community and solidarity, and advance liberation? How can we, as educators, empower and prepare students to embark effectively on social justice projects and enact social change? How can we harness the power and potential of the humanities to forge dynamic synergies between the classroom, the archive, and the streets?

The dominant claim in the mid-century American academy was that the humanities disciplines dealt with something called “the human condition,” a concept which has barely survived the critical scrutiny from scholars of postmodernism, Critical Race Theory, postcolonialism, and intersectionality. Where does the debris of an idea of a secular universal human being (gendered cis male and raced white) that emerged during the European Enlightenment era – uninflected by the particularities of history, identity, and culture – leave the humanities now? How do ahistorical ways of thinking about the humanities, which call for the nostalgic resurrection of universal and transcendent concepts, stand in tension with current analyses of systems and structures of injustices and oppression? And where might legitimate, rational critiques of methodologies like Critical Race Theory and intersectionality take the humanities in the future?

As a recipient of the Mellon Foundation’s *Humanities For All Times* Grant, Colorado College is hosting an academic conference with the goal of bringing together educators, artists, and activists to engage these questions and consider the relationship between humanities methods and social justice today. This conference will take a hybrid format with panel sessions in the morning followed by events such as symposia, workshops, round tables, film screenings, and/or performances in the afternoon and evening (the full conference schedule will be published soon). All events will focus on epistemologies and knowledge production, humanistic methodologies, liberatory creative practices, and social justice.

We are currently seeking papers on any of these topics. Participation in the conference is not limited to individuals appointed in Humanities divisions, and we welcome interdisciplinary and creative approaches, as well as papers describing social justice projects.

Please submit a 250-word abstract and short (3-5 sentence) bio at www.HumanitiesForOurTimesCC.org by March 31, 2023 and direct all questions to MellonHumanities@coloradocollege.edu. Registration will open by March 15.

Retreat for Grant Recipients and Organizers

“Beyond Antiracist Pedagogies: Reframing the Relationship Between Humanities Methods in the Classroom and Social Justice” (August 2023)

Creative Processes Seminar Series #2: Investigations of Creativity towards Inclusivity (Fall Semester 2023)

Creativity does not exist in a vacuum. Nor does imagination. Both are informed by the socio-cultural power structures around us. Therefore, engaging in creativity means recognizing that narratives, aesthetics, and art movements can and do affect how individuals are treated – and how we view groups of peoples. To engage in the creative process, then, is to participate in a politicized field. In order for students to pursue social justice or projects in social justice, they need to recognize how their ideas are shaped and when to re-evaluate a process of creation. Investigating creativity's role in the humanities is part of this project – and our hope is that we can find a way to actively engage all of the humanities in this relationship between creativity and social justice.

This series will be guided by several key questions. How is creativity framed in the different humanities disciplines, and how does this inform our interaction with the arts on campus, in our community, towards our students' futures? How might we expand our understanding of creativity across disciplines and outside of a settler-colonizer framework? Finally, how might we embrace a rhizomatic approach to including creativity throughout all disciplines in discernable ways in support of the creative process requirement? Through interactive workshops and a speaker series, the "Investigations of Creativity towards Inclusivity Project" will expand course offerings and institutional discourse on creativity in order to (1) bridge the study of creativity within the humanities and the practice of it within the Arts, (2) deconstruct approaches and definitions of creativity, and (3) expand our study of creativity beyond the humanities in meaningful ways. This series will culminate in a special issue of the online journal *Hairstreak Butterfly Review* and a blog focusing on the many endeavors funded by the grant. Working in collaboration with CC's archivist Jessy Randall and Digital Liberal Arts specialist Dr. Jennifer Golightly, this series of exchanges and discussions will be archived at CC's Tutt Library with the aim of creating an enduring online repository that can serve as a resource to colleagues both at CC and outside of it. The *Creative Processes Seminar Series* will include a capstone event featuring a marquee keynote speaker that brings together students, faculty, activists, and social justice organizations.

Appendix 2

The *Creative Process* designation

Creative process constitutes engagement in the generation and development of novel ideas or productions. These courses are designed to offer students an understanding of principles that underlie creative processes and a meaningful experience of creative work. All courses will involve engagement with critical or contextual frameworks, creative experience, and reflection. While some courses might entail cultivation of a particular art form, other courses might focus on using creative modalities for idea generation and problem solving in any discipline.

Curricular goals

- Ask students to engage with research, texts or other sources that provide a context for understanding creativity;

- Involve students in a first-hand creative experience, such as a form or forms of creative expression or problem-solving using creative modalities, and engage processes of collaboration, experimentation, and/or iteration;
- Provide opportunities for students to reflect on their own creative experiences and connect them to their critical or contextual understanding of creativity;
- Prepare students to bring knowledge and experience of the creative process to their subsequent courses at CC.

Learning outcomes

As a result of taking a course in Creative Process, students will be able to:

- **Describe how their experience in carrying out a creative process helped them synthesize critical and contextual knowledge (assessment outcome);**
- Discuss, in depth, frameworks for understanding the creative process;
- Reflect meaningfully on what they learned through their creative experiences;
- Synthesize critical and contextual knowledge with their own experiences in the creative

The Equity and Power designation

Engaging questions of equity and power in both U.S. and global contexts, is essential to a liberal arts education. Courses that fulfill this requirement expect students to examine how systems of power create and shape notions of self, relations with others, access to resources and opportunities, and the production of knowledge. In these courses, students develop analytical and interpretive tools and/or reflective habits and interpersonal skills for thinking critically about how inequities are produced, reinforced, experienced, and resisted.

Equity and Power courses may be taken as part of the Critical Learning Across the Liberal Arts categories.

Curricular goals

- Students will gain an understanding of social, political, cultural, epistemological and/or economic forces that have produced and/or now sustain multiple forms of inequalities and their intersections;
- Students will identify, analyze, and evaluate the ways in which individuals and groups have unequal experiences, social positions, opportunities or outcomes based on the intersections of race, indigeneity, caste or class, citizenship, gender, gender identity, sexuality, size, (dis)ability, religious practices, belief systems, or other dimensions of difference;
- Students will seek to identify and challenge their implicit biases and assumptions while learning to participate respectfully and productively in potentially uncomfortable discussions about equity and power and their position in relationship to others

Learning outcomes

As a result of taking a course in Equity and Power (US and Global), students will be able to:

- **Explain how systems of power (such as white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, ableism, classism, capitalism, or colonialism) produce forms**

**of inequality related to race, gender, sexuality, religion, ability, class, or nation, etc.
(assessment outcome)**

- Describe how a system of power reproduces inequalities over time – and/or – how a system of power has been critiqued by people who have been disempowered or discriminated against due to race, gender, sexuality, religion, ability, class, or nation, etc.
- Explain how the production of knowledge is mediated by power, noting how the positionalities of knowledge producers (such as scholars, writers, artists, government officials, scientists, or activists) inform their perspectives.
- Describe their own positionality in relation to one or more systems of power that establish a form of inequality or injustice.