

Institute for Humanities Research Arizona State University

just, ethical. sustainable words start with the humanities

2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT

GRANTS + AWARDS RESEARCH ADVANCEMENT EVENTS + WORKSHOPS INITIATIVES

## letter from the director

As the new director of the Institute for Humanities Research, I was supposed to arrive at Arizona State University in August 2020, but I could not make it until March 2021. My late arrival was of course due to COVID-19 and the delays it created in visa issuing as well as several cancellations of flights from Australia to the U.S.

During this delay, however, I was in weekly contact with the team at the institute, and I was impressed by the success of the online programming they had put in place.

Measured by large attendance numbers by both faculty and community as well as positive feedback, its success was due to the staff's innovative know-how, professionalism and dedication to the humanities.

Some highlights of the past year include the Distinguished Lecture on community, identity and belonging by adrienne maree brown; the selection of the 2021 Book Award winner "That Most Precious Merchandise: The Mediterranean Trade in Black Sea Slaves: 1260-1500," by Hannah Barker; and Kathryn Yusoff's

"Institute of Inhumanities" seminar

Professional workshops were offered to assist faculty and students with their teaching, research and writing. In particular, the institute hosted workshops on grant writing, journal publishing and designing successful book proposals, as well as weekly sessions dedicated to scholarly writing that continued throughout the year.

The institute's ongoing seed grants and the Fellows program have not only supported innovative and exciting internal research projects - many of which showcased the vital role the humanities plays in safeguarding the well-being of individuals, communities and our democratic institutions - but consequently have generated successful external research proposals.

Our initiatives in Black Ecologies, Desert Humanities, Digital Humanities, Environmental Humanities, Health Humanities and Humane Technologies all engaged important speakers and discussions addressing some of the most current and pressing issues our society is facing, such as the

Black Lives Matter movement, climate change and species loss and the impact of the coronavirus on the health of our communities.

In the coming year the institute aims to continue to support research projects, enable internal and external grants and fellowships and host events that address the issues we are facing today in order to inspire and generate ideas and advance interdisciplinary collaborations.

I look forward to the institute facilitating significant and innovative contributions and solutions to industry, government, community and the real-world problems of our time, and to increasingly engaging and involving humanities students and faculty across ASU campuses.

A very big thanks to all of our constituents - faculty, students, staff, the administration, donors and community members - for your support this past year, and we look forward to working with you in the coming year.

Nicole Anderson, **Director, Institute for Humanities Research** 

# table of contents

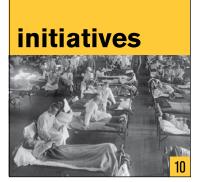
### grants + awards











Lower left image: Portrait of adrienne

maree brown. Photo by Anjali Pinto.

Lower right image:

Camp Funston, at Fort Riley, Kansas, during the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic. Photo courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

# grants + awards

Grants and awards at the institute imagine and create better futures by funding humanities-based projects and publications.



dollars in grants and distributed in 2020-21



projects received funding in 2020-21



percent of seed grant projects funded in 2020-21 were interdisciplinary



percent of seed grant projects funded in 2020-21 supported marginalized communities



### fellows

The Fellows program provides funding for faculty to commit to a year of intensive, collaborative research.

What does it mean to be human and humane in an age that undermines our humanity? "Recovering the Human(e) in an Age of Dehumanization" was the 2020-21 theme for the institute's fellowship program.



Ana Hedberg Olenina, assistant professor, **School of International** Letters and Cultures

Project: Eisenstein's Embodied Spectatorship in the Context of Contemporary Neurocognitive Approaches to Film.

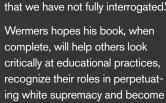
### Is Shakespeare an 'engine of inequity'?

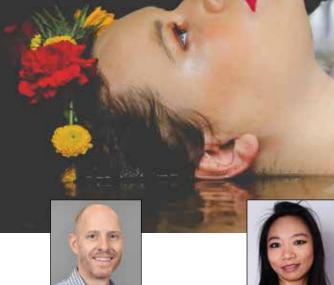
Fellow James Wermers' project examines the ways that teaching Shakespeare in U.S. American schools is often rooted in a logic of white supremacy and has therefore been used, even if accidentally, as a tool of structural racism and oppression.

"My work on Shakespeare in this project has forced me to rethink how and why we do the work of education in U.S. America," Wermers said.

important realizations: One, educators are generally amazing individuals who care passionately about their students and about the content they teach. Two, educators, myself included, are deeply reliant on narratives and logics that we have not fully interrogated." Wermers hopes his book, when

"This has, in turn, led me to two





### **Dave Fossum**, assistant professor, School of Music. **Dance and Theatre**

Project: Making Copyright Global: Musical Creativity and Intellectual Property in Turkey.

Linh D. Vu, assistant professor, School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies (SHPRS)

Project: Disembodiment of Sovereignty: Human Remains, Modern China and the World.



actively engaged in creating more equitable learning environments.

"My aims here are small but, I think, important. It has taken a long time to build a nation so profoundly and uncritically steeped in inequity, and it will take a long time to undo what has been done," he said.

"I just want to be a part of that process."

### Read the full article:





James E. Wermers, clinical assistant professor, College of Integrative **Sciences and Arts** 

**Project:** Teaching Shakespeare: White Supremacy and Dehumanization in U.S. American Education.

Portrait inspired by Ophelia from Shakespeare's "Hamlet." Photo courtesy Unsplash.

### seed grants

The institute's seed grant program empowers the ASU community to imagine. innovate and create humanities research that addresses significant social challenges in the past, present and future.

### Spring 2020 seed grant recipients

### a Public Good in the US, 1910-40

A Highway in the **Desert: Christians in** the Valley of the Sun

Jason Bruner, associate professor, SHPRS.

### **The Amazonian Social Relation to Nature:** A Digital Variable **Pathway Resource**

Janis Nuckolls, professor, Brigham Young University; Tod D. Swanson, associate professor, SHPRS.

### **Constructing the Maghrib: Contested** Landscapes

Chouki El Hamel, professor, SHPRS, director, Center for Maghrib Studies; Said Ennahid, associate professor, Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane; Edward Oetting, librarian, ASU Libraries; Matthew Toro, director of maps, imagery and geospatial services, ASU Library Map and Geospatial Hub.

Immigrant Artists, **Alternative Modernisms** and Collecting as

Photo courtesy Sen

Lee, Unsplash

Julie Codell, professor, School of Art.

**Rebirth and Resurgence** in Southern Arizona: A Political History of Hia Ced O'odham **Sovereignty Since 1850** 

David Martínez, associate professor, American Indian Studies.

**Reframing Theories** of Evil: Interventions in Philosophy

Imge Oranli, assistant professor, College of Integrative Sciences and Arts.

### The Sound of Social **Change: A History of** Women's Music

Julia Himberg, associate professor and director of film and media studies, Department of English.

### Fall 2020 seed grant recipients

**What Happened** Here is Not

### **Right': A Critical Oral History of Post-**9/11 Detention and Surveillance

Anand Gopal, assistant research professor, Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict and Center on the Future of War; Daniel Rothenberg, center co-director and professor of practice, School of Politics and Global Studies.

> Conspiracy **Pedagogies: QAnon, Social** Media and the **Teaching of Far-Right Extremism**

Jennifer Sandlin, professor, School of Social Transformation.

### **Mapping Black Ecologies**

J.T. Roane, assistant professor, School of Social Transformation, program lead, Black Ecologies Initiative; Huewayne Watson, instructor, School of Social Transformation.

### **Book Award**

The institute's Book Award celebrates outstanding writers whose contributions to the humanities change the conversation by fostering new directions for their discipline. The 2021 award was open exclusively to publications by ASU faculty.

### Winner That Most Precious Merchandise: The Mediterranean Trade in Black Sea Slaves, 1260-1500

### THAT MOST PRECIOUS MERCHANDISE The Mediterranean Trade in

Black Sea Slaves, 1260-1500

HANNAH BARKER



Author: Hannah Barker, assistant professor, SHPRS

Publisher: University of Pennsylvania Press

The history of the Black Sea as a source of Mediterranean slaves stretches from ancient Greek colonies to human trafficking networks in the present day.

At its height during the 14th and early 15th centuries, the Black Sea slave trade was not the sole source of Mediterranean slaves; Genoese, Venetian and Egyptian merchants bought captives taken in conflicts

### Short-listed works

### **Beyond Hashtags: Racial Politics and Black Digital Networks**

Author: Sarah Florini, associate professor, Department of English Publisher: NYU Press

**Colonial Legacies in** Chicana/o Literature and **Culture: Looking Through**  Sciences and Arts Publisher: University of Arizona Press **Psychomotor** 

**Aesthetics: Movement** and Affect in Modern Literature and Film

**4** • INSTITUTE FOR HUMANITIES RESEARCH **ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21** 



throughout the region, from North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, the Balkans and the Aegean Sea.

Yet the trade in Black Sea slaves provided merchants with profit and prestige; states with military recruits, tax revenue and diplomatic influence; and households with the service of women, men and children.

Reading notarial registers, tax records, law, merchants' accounts, travelers' tales and letters, sermons, slavebuying manuals, literary works and treaties, Barker gives a rich picture of the context in which merchants traded and enslaved people met their fate.

### the Kaleidoscope

Author: Vanessa Fonseca-Chávez assistant dean of diversity, equity and inclusion, College of Integrated Author: Ana Hedberg Olenina, assistant professor. School of International Letters and Cultures Publisher: Oxford University Press

### Women, Sex, and **Madness: Notes** from the Edge

Author: Breanne Fahs, professor, School of Humanities, Arts and **Cultural Studies** Publisher: Routledge

### research advancement

The institute offers support to The College's Division of Humanities at ASU as well as internal funding recipients in developing and crafting humanitiesbased projects for external funding applications.

Support includes identifying funding sources as well as providing assistance with all aspects of an external application, with no regard to the size, scope, funding level or experience of the researcher(s).\*

\*Research advancement data are measured over an 18-month project period (Jan. 1, 2020-June 30, 2021).



**16** collaborative proposals were submitted

proposals included direct engagement with local communities

6 • INSTITUTE FOR HUMANITIES RESEARCH **ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21** 

46 **ASU** faculty participated in sponsored projects in collaboration with the Division of Humanities



This infographic shows the number of faculty (in collaboration with the Division of Humanities) who have applied for external funding and the number of proposals that were submitted and awarded funding during the 18-month project period (Jan 1. 2020-June 30, 2021).

# proposals were

awarded funding (with 12 still pending at the time of reporting)

RESEARCH ADVANCEMEN

### events + workshops

Institute events centralize the humanities in building just, ethical and sustainable worlds. Additionally, professional development workshops help faculty and students thrive as scholars in the humanities.

> Here are some highlights of this programming from the past year.



**84** virtual events and workshops were offered to the community



**34** events employed humanities methodologies to advocate for more just futures for marginalized communities



**18** events addressed challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and the role of the humanities in overcoming those challenges

#### 8 • INSTITUTE FOR HUMANITIES RESEARCH ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

### Adaptation, Resiliency and Care series

In this broader time of uncertainty, this series sought to provide conversations and resources to create a community of mutual support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Topics included parenting, community building and distance learning and teaching.

### Designing for Care and Embracing Ungrading with Jesse Stommel

Stommel argues that grading creates a hierarchical system that stifles community, social justice, self-confidence and compassion.

In this lecture, Stommel discussed the relationship between ungrading and designing inclusive pedagogies in order to help educators imagine new learning environments centered on care instead of competition.

### Examining TikTok with T.X. Watson

The Digital Humanities Initiative and Race, Queerness and TikTok research cluster hosted a presentation by humanities-focused TikTokker T.X. Watson on "Examining TikTok: Investigations and Findings of The Online Creators' Association."

Watson discussed the built-in prejudices in TikTok's algorithms, such as the artificial suppression of disabled and LGBTQ creators.

### Identity, community and belonging with adrienne maree brown

Black feminist scholar, activist and podcaster adrienne maree brown presented a virtual lecture to the community as the institute's

### 2021 Distinguished Lecturer.

She discussed how people with "a lineage of displacement" can find belonging, community, joy and power.

### Medicalizing Blackness with Rana Hogarth

As part of the Health Humanities Initiative's "Plagues Epidemics and Culture: Histories of Crisis and Care" series, Hogarth discussed the creation of ideas about racial difference in North America and the Caribbean as they emerged through the language of medicine and other related fields.

### How do we belong to this **place**?

How do we belong to this **planet**?

How do we belong to this **species**?

adrienne maree brown 2021 Distinguished Lecturer Hogarth explained how the professionalization of medicine and the production of scientific knowledge in the Americas was bound up with the making of race.

### Scholarly Series on Hope and Empowerment

This series featured scholars whose lectures revealed how personal challenges, triumphs and backgrounds can become an integral part of change-making scholarship.

Topics included hope in



Watch recordings of these events and more at youtube. com/ihrasu.

Black Lives Matter movement, Asian American stories in the western canon and the power of Indigenous storytelling.

> Portrait of adrienne maree brown. Photo by Anjali Pinto.

# initiatives

These dynamic programs are designed to make an impact in critical areas of contemporary life through interdisciplinary humanities research.

> They are windows into imagining and building better futures for us all.



interdisciplinary initiatives were supported in 2020-21





events were hosted by institute initiatives

**10 • INSTITUTE FOR HUMANITIES RESEARCH ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21** 

### **Black Ecologies**

The Black Ecologies Initiative encompasses various multi-media projects to document, amplify and create alternative cultural resources related to the ecological vulnerability Black communities in the U.S. and around the African Diaspora face.

The initiative supports cultural workers, organizers and intellectuals, providing alternative epistemic entryways for historicizing and interrupting the current overlapping ecological, social and political crises.

#### **Desert Humanities**

Deserts are demanding and pose

### 'Extraction. **Disposability** and Resistance'

The "Extraction, Disposability and Resistance" series hosted by the Black Ecologies Initiative brought together environmental justice organizers, farmers, performance and visual artists and intellectuals.

Together, participants discussed overcoming extraction and disaster, confronting ecological crises and connecting Black communities across time and place.

large questions to us – questions that invite large ecological solutions The Desert Humanities initiative intersects our home in the desert with the humanities issues that arise in such a harsh environment.

### **Digital Humanities**

Digital humanities work is interdisciplinary and creative. It weaves new media tools and data and computational sciences with humanities methods, primary materials and theoretical frames to address the challenges of current digital cultures. The Digital Humanities Initiative is a feminist, antiracist and inclusive space.

The environmental humanities explore how art, history, literature, philosophy and other humanities topics serve as entry points to discussions about the relationships between people, place and planet.

### **Health Humanities**

Environmental

**Humanities** 

The Health Humanities Initiative transcends boundaries by bringing academics, clinicians, caregivers and students together to address grand social challenges in areas of health and healthcare.

The Plagues, Epidemics and Culture: Histories of Crisis and Care series hosted by the Health Humanities Initiative explored historical changes in the cultures of care that arose from past epidemics. Speakers addressed how bias, racism and colonialism are intimately bound up in the histories of epidemics and what can be learned from these histories.



Over the past year, the initiative has argued for humanities methodologies to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Humane Technologies**

Humane Technologies brings together tech leaders, entrepreneurs and humanists to co-create the frameworks, tools and skill sets needed to overcome the potentially dehumanizing effects of new technologies.

This initiative is now central to the work of ASU's Lincoln Center for Applied Ethics, whose mission is to engage the humanities to shape technologies keyed to human flourishing.

Left image: Photo courtesy Suad Kamardeen, Unsplash.

Right image: Camp Funston, at Fort Riley, Kansas, during the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic. Photo courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

### Bias, racism and colonialism in the history of epidemics

The COVID-19 pandemic is not the first or the only disease outbreak that has threatened human health and disproportionately affected those already disadvantaged by established institutions and networks of care.

INITIATIVES - 11

# thank you

The past year has brought on challenging new circumstances and called attention to existing social injustices. In response to these challenges, the institute has funded and organized events, initiatives and projects that seek to build better futures through humanities methodologies.

> Thank you to our friends, colleagues and stakeholders who have supported these efforts.

#### 2020-21 Advisory Board

### **Staff**

Leslie Alexander, associate professor, SHPRS

**Lois Brown**, director, Center for the Study of Race and Democracy

Serena Ferrando, assistant professor, School of International Letters and Cultures

**Karen Kuo**, associate professor, School of Social Transformation

**Ilana Luna**, associate professor, School of Humanities, Arts and Cultural Studies

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**Barbara Dente**, business operations specialist

Liz Grumbach, assistant director and Digital Humanities Initiative program lead

Sarah Moser, senior research advancement administrator

**Celina Osuna**, coordinator and Desert Humanities assistant director

Lauren Whitby, senior marketing/ communications specialist

### mission

The mission of the Institute for Humanities Research is to develop and facilitate **significant and innovative humanities research** events, contributions and solutions for organizations, communities and the real-world problems of our times in order to be a leader in creating a **socially just, ethical and sustainable world**.

We fulfill this mission by:
Funding humanities research that has real-world impact.
Developing and supporting public and academic humanities programming.
Encouraging interdisciplinary collaborations.
Engaging students in humanities research.
Becoming a leading humanities institute.

12 • INSTITUTE FOR HUMANITIES RESEARCH ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

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