



# SIMPSON CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES

The Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities fosters intellectual discovery across boundaries, supporting crossdisciplinary exchange among scholars at the University of Washington and beyond. It is known internationally for its leadership in the digital humanities and public scholarship.



As one of the largest and most comprehensive humanities centers in the United States, the Simpson Center offers University of Washington scholars a rich spectrum of opportunities for intellectual community. The Center supports research and collaboration that allows scholars to build networks nationally and internationally.

The Center's mission supports four objectives:

- Crossdisciplinary research and inquiry
- Initiatives in the humanities at the leading edge of change
- Innovative study at the graduate level
- Scholarship that reaches audiences beyond the academy

The College of Arts and Sciences established the Center for the Humanities in 1987 with a mandate to support interdisciplinary activities. In 1997, Barclay and Sharon Simpson endowed the Center, which was renamed the Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities, in tribute to Barclay Simpson's father, a lifelong supporter of humanistic education.

The Center relies on the support of donors and funding agencies to fulfill its mission. Since 1999, it has received more than \$13 million in grants and gifts.

## Collaboration and Crossdisciplinarity

Simpson Center programs are grounded in collaboration and crossdisciplinarity. The Center provides funding and support for **fellowships, research clusters, graduate study groups, conferences, and symposia**, allowing faculty and graduate students to exchange ideas and develop projects with colleagues, visiting scholars, and members of cultural institutions in the community.

## RESEARCH & TEACHING: RECENT TOPICS

American Indian & Indigenous Studies

Anthropocene Literature

Black Embodiments Studio

Crowdfunding Health Care

Disability Studies

Environmental Humanities

Genomics

Global Health Partnerships

Histories and Futures of the Book

Horn of Africa

Humanitarianisms

Race and Capitalism

Transcultural Approaches to Europe

Transformative Education Behind Bars

Translation Studies



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## Digital Humanities

The Simpson Center maintains a suite of programs in the growing field of digital humanities. After successfully completing a \$2.5 million challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Center established annual **Digital Humanities Summer Fellowships**, supporting inventive and experimental research inspired by new technologies. The Center also supports the Digital Humanities Summer Institute at the University of Victoria, sending scholars to intensive week-long training sessions. These programs bring together faculty, graduate students, librarians, computer scientists, and designers to develop digital research and scholarship.

## Public Scholarship

The Simpson Center has gained national recognition for its work in the public humanities, a field that promotes both doing and circulating research beyond the academy. In partnership with the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences at UW Bothell and the UW Graduate School, the Simpson Center helped establish the Certificate in Public Scholarship, currently located in the Center for Communication, Difference, and Equity.

Aside from funding a number of public scholarship projects each year, the Simpson Center also awards the Barclay Simpson Prize for Scholarship in Public biannually to UW faculty who practice humanities scholarship as a public good, from transforming education behind bars and building community through workshops on women in popular music to the creation of a digital history of Seattle Civil Rights and Labor Movements.

The Center also hosts the Solomon Katz Distinguished Lectures in the Humanities, which feature leading thinkers such as Nancy Fraser, Paul Farmer, Lauren Berlant, Anne Balsamo, and Robin D. G. Kelley in events that are free and open to the public.

## Reimagining the Humanities PhD

As part of its commitment to public scholarship, in 2015, the Simpson Center launched *Reimagining the Humanities PhD and Reaching New Publics*, a program forging new forms of scholarship and teaching, supported by a \$750,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The four-year program established a partnership between the UW and two-year colleges in the Seattle area, provided course development funds for faculty, and created new summer fellowship opportunities for graduate students to develop publicly-engaged research projects.

In 2019, the Simpson Center launched a new iteration of this initiative—*Reimagining the Humanities PhD and Reaching New Publics: Catalyzing Collaboration*—thanks to a second generous grant from The Mellon Foundation. With an emphasis on collaboration, the program continues to pursue change in doctoral education among the core humanities disciplines of English, History, and Philosophy.



“As a participant in the Simpson Center’s Society of Scholars and Reaching New Publics programs, I’ve had a rare opportunity to enrich my historical research through multiple levels of collaboration—with scholars in other disciplines, with researchers and teachers in other kinds of academic institutions, and with the wider intellectual community of which UW is a part.”

— Adrian Kane-Galbraith,  
Doctoral Candidate (History)

## SCHOLARLY NETWORKS AND PARTNERS

Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes

Digital Humanities Summer Institute, University of Victoria

Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory (HASTAC)

Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life

National Humanities Alliance

Western Humanities Alliance

## RECENT LOCAL PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture

El Centro de la Raza

Henry Art Gallery

Humanities Washington

KEXP 90.3 FM

North Seattle, Seattle Central, and South Seattle Colleges

Northwest African American Museum

On the Boards: Behnke Center for Contemporary Performance

Pacific Northwest Ballet

Seattle Art Museum

Wing Luke Museum of the Pacific Asian Experience

University Beyond Bars

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