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UW CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES ANNOUNCES SIX PUBLIC HUMANITIES FELLOWSHIPS AT ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT MADISON

Madison, WI – For the second year in a row the UW-Madison Center for the Humanities will place graduate fellows in staff positions at cultural institutions across Madison, where they will contribute their knowledge and skills toward the development and support of new and existing programs, while gaining professional experience outside of the university.

The Center’s Public Humanities Fellowships are part of “Engaging the Humanities”, a multiyear project funded by the A.W. Mellon Foundation to create opportunities for UW-Madison faculty and graduate students to extend the impact of their research beyond the academy.

The 2014-2015 Public Fellowships will be hosted by the Fairshare CSA Coalition, the University of Wisconsin Foundation, the Center for the Humanities’ school-based Great World Texts Program, the Wisconsin Humanities Council, and Wisconsin Public Television. A sixth position will be jointly hosted by the Madison Children’s Museum and the Madison Public Library. The program provides fellows with salary and benefits, an award stipend, tuition remission, and an office. The application deadline is February 28, 2014. Details are available here.

Several exciting projects and collaborations have resulted from the program’s first year:

• Creation of a curriculum to teach Nobel Laureate Orhan Pamuk’s novel Snow to high school students across Wisconsin. The Department of Public Instruction has adapted this curriculum as a model for teaching that fulfills the mission of the common core state standard, and the project brought over 600 students to campus to meet and present their work to Pamuk.

• A collaboration with Wisconsin Public Radio’s To the Best of our Knowledge (TTBOOK) to organize a national flash science-fiction contest that will culminate at a public symposium with renowned science fiction author Kim Stanley Robinson (The Mars Trilogy), UW-Madison
faculty member Monique Allewaert, and Wisconsin Institute of Discovery director David Krakauer. “We need to be open to all of the tools we have to make sense of the world,” said Public Fellow Stephanie Youngblood, “and not let institutional boundaries stop us from seeing where meaning emerges. This project allows us to have a conversation about what forms we can use - science? literature? philosophy? fantasy? - to approach our shared problems and concerns. It also lets people both within and outside of the university participate in the conversation, especially through the fiction contest. …[W]e’re taking seriously how science and art come together across the popular and literary spectrum to approach global concerns such as climate change, overpopulation, food production, or digital surveillance.”

The 2013-2014 public fellows will host workshops as part of our annual Public Humanities Conference on April 25th, at Union South on the UW-Madison campus and at the Madison Public Library. After addresses by Chancellor Rebecca Blank and scholar Christopher Newfield, Public Library fellow Kelly Hiser (Musicology) will lead a Wikipedia Edit-a-thon, Children’s Museum fellow Anna Zeide (History of Science), and Great World Texts fellows Gabriella Ekman (English) and Heather DuBois Bourenane (African Languages and Literature) will lead a workshop on creating humanities programing for youth, and Public Radio fellow Stephanie Youngblood (English) will host a workshop on writing for the radio.

The UW Center for the Humanities advances the humanities on campus and beyond, by drawing faculty, staff, students, and the public into informed, thoughtful, and civil discourse on the political, literary, ethical, and aesthetic questions of the day. The Center’s programs encourage innovative research; illuminate new ideas; foster teaching innovations; and provide a critical forum for understanding what it means to be human. Our support of public scholarly engagement has helped graduate students and faculty create mutually rewarding partnerships with public schools, prisons, senior centers, hospitals, community gardens, and more. In tandem with its goals to support world-class research and teaching, the Center is guided and inspired by The Wisconsin Idea – the principle that the university’s impact on people’s lives should reach beyond the classroom. Information at humanities.wisc.edu.

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