Background
Over the past five years, the Black Like Me Podcast has produced over 170 episodes dealing with various issues related to blackness and race in Madison as well as on the national stage. Dr. Alex Gee’s raw honesty about these issues has drawn both other black people as well as non-black people in a unique space to share their experiences with the same rawness and vulnerability. These unguarded, frank discussions of race have drawn a listenership that is both deeply interested in seeking truth on these matters and being a part of positive change. Additionally, Black Like Me with Dr. Alex Gee was voted best local podcast in 2022 by Madison Magazine.

Over the past two years, the podcast has hosted two in-person events—both to celebrate the podcast’s success and to give the audience an opportunity to gather, connect, and even share some stories of their own. These events confirmed what we had been seeing in digital interactions with listeners and on social media, that the podcast listenership was majority non-black, and that the show was indeed a unique space that allowed for discussions that could not be found elsewhere.

The Black Like Me Podcast seeks to create and cultivate a “space” both digitally and in-person to facilitate honest, respectful, productive, vulnerable, and change-oriented discussions amongst its listeners. A number of podcast listener spaces have developed in the past 2-3 years with the explosive growth of podcasts since 2020, but the uniqueness of the Black Like Me Podcast as an agent of change makes this undertaking unique, delicate, and potentially very powerful.

Project Description
The Black Like Me Podcast is seeking a graduate student (or highly qualified undergraduate senior) who is interested, motivated, and capable of creating, curating, and moderating a digital space for listeners of the podcast to discuss the content of the show and to build a community oriented toward change on the issue of race. This student will work with the existing Black Like Me Podcast team to identify and facilitate the creation of a suitable platform for the discussion space, as well as develop a method for guiding and moderating the space that is consistent with the aims of Dr. Gee’s work and the “feel” of the podcast, which contains both elements of anger
and curiosity, honesty and humor. In addition to creation of the digital space, the student will develop a plan to train other moderators/discussion leaders to allow for the long term, high quality, sustainable moderation and discussion.

In conjunction with the curation of this digital discussion space, the student will also work with the Black Like Me Podcast team to plan several (1-3) in-person events. These events may take the form of meet-and-greets, story slams, live shows, or something new. The Black Like Me Podcast team is excited to see what kind of creative new ideas a HEX scholar will bring to this aspect of the project.

Responsibilities

1. October–November 2023: Meet with Black Like Me Podcast team to develop a plan for a digital discussion space. The student will be expected to develop a proposal based on both the needs of the podcast and their own research, present it to the team, and then create the proposed discussion space.

2. December 2023–May 2024: Actively moderate and guide discussions in this digital space under the supervision of Dr. Gee and the Black Like Me Podcast team.

3. January 2024: Develop a proposal for 1-3 in person events for local viewership and participate in the organizing and execution of those events in Spring 2024.

4. February–March 2024: Create a training plan for moderators/discussion leaders and train 2-4 moderators in conjunction with the Black Like Me Podcast team in April-May 2024.

5. Attend regular podcast team meetings (mostly virtual) and actively participate in the creative process that drives the show.

Proficiencies Desired

1. Experience with discussions and leading discussions on issues of race in the United States, both in print and face-to-face.

2. Familiarity with the implementation and management of an online discussion space, social media, and digital media.

3. Ability to collaborate in group team settings as well as work independently, reporting back to the primary team with progress and eventually completed work.

4. Previous work on the issue of race and social change in the academic or personal context.
5. A compassionate, fierce, and creative approach to moving the world forward.

**Potential Transferable Skills Gained**


3. Appreciation of the unique landscape of race issues in a deeply divided city like Madison and current efforts to bring about change.

**Timeline**

*Full Academic Year (Two Semesters)*

*October–May (8 Months)*

The workload will average 2-5 hours a week over the course of the project. Wednesday afternoons are the primary slots for team meetings and recording sessions, though the team will often meet at other times when needed. Most meetings will be virtual, though some will be in person. The Scholar’s schedule will be determined and reevaluated throughout the course of the project to accommodate both the student’s coursework and other commitments with the workflow and needs of the Black Like Me Podcast team.

**Compensation**

The HEX Scholar will receive a $4000 honorarium for their work with the Black Like Me Podcast. Compensation will consist of two elements (*$4000 Total*):

1. $2600 from HEX
2. $1400 from the Black Like Me Podcast ($700 stipend / semester)

**To Apply**

Please send the following materials to applications@humanities.wisc.edu. If you have any questions during the process, or would like to schedule an in person meeting to discuss this opportunity, please reach out to Public Humanities Program Coordinator, Danielle Weindling at applications@humanities.wisc.edu.

**Application Deadline**: Monday, October 2, 2023.

1. Cover Letter highlighting your interest in and your qualifications for this project (1 page)
2. Resume and/or CV (1 page)
3. Academic Transcript (unofficial)