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**Call for Graduate Student Seminar Participants: Deadline November 6, 2017**

The Center for Ideas and Society invites applications from UCR graduate students to participate in the final of four quarter-length seminars in its Advancing Intercultural Studies project funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Awardees receive a GSR appointment to release them from TA or employment obligations during the seminar quarter.

**Project Overview:**

From September 2017 through December 2018, the AIS project will host a series of four quarter-long seminars to explore key themes and topics surrounding economic inequality, diversity in education, religious heterogeneity and contested histories.

* Each seminar includes faculty, graduate and undergraduate students.
* Seminar members meet weekly on a formal basis to discuss research.
* Each seminar participant generates an original paper.
* Each seminar group hosts a public lecture and a film screening.
* Each seminar group hosts a wrap-up meeting for the larger AIS project team.
* Seminars are complemented by two summer film series and a final conference featuring and extending the work of seminar participants.

**Project Dates:**

**Summer 2017 Film Series**

**Fall 2017 Seminar #1: Responses to Economic Inequality**

Convener: Mathew Mahutga (Sociology)

**Winter 2018 Seminar #2: Beyond Access: Diversifying Higher Education**

Convener: Jennifer Nájera (Ethnic Studies)

**Spring 2018 Seminar #3: Religious Identity: Harmony or Discrimination?**

Convener: Muhamad Ali (Religious Studies)

**Summer 2018 Film Series**

**Fall 2018** **Seminar #4**: **Contested Histories: How to Write History**

Convener: Georgia Warnke (Political Science)

**Spring 2019 Final Conference**

**Application Details:**

Applications are now being accepted for up to four graduate students for the Fall 2018 seminar, “Contested Histories.” Applicants will be selected based on eligibility and a demonstration of a research agenda that engages or enhances the seminar topic. Applicants must be able and willing to engage in inter-disciplinary research that draws on disparate disciplines to create common purposes and vocabularies and to participate fully in the seminar events, quarterly wrap-up meetings and final conference. Participants will be appointed as GSRs for the quarter to release them from TA or employment obligations. (Graduate Division will cover fees/GSHIP. This does not include non-resident supplemental tuition or the $2 per unit technology fee.) Eligible students must be making acceptable progress to their degree, have a 3.0 GPA and no more than 7 units incomplete, be on a normative exam schedule in their department and have satisfactory progress on their research. Preference will be given to applicants who did not participate in previous AIS seminars.

Application should include:

* name of seminar and quarter for which applying
* one-page CV
* one-page research project abstract that indicates potential to contribute to the seminar topic, format and aims of the grant
* letter of recommendation from a UCR faculty member
* statement of eligibility from departmental graduate advisor
* signed and completed Application Cover Page

Email as a single PDF to katharine.henshaw@ucr.edu by November 6, 2017. Full project description and Application Cover page available on the CIS website: ideasandsociety.ucr.edu/projects/mellon-ais/

**Seminar Themes:**

**Seminar #1: Responses to Economic Inequality**

Convener: Mathew Mahutga (Sociology)

Economic inequality has been on the rise in most rich Democracies for nearly three decades. Two very different kinds of responses have arisen. On one hand, movements including Occupy Wall Street and the Bernie Sanders campaign as well as radical resistance to austerity and the promotion of multiculturalism in Europe advocate progressive responses that seek to reduce economic inequality. On the other, right-leaning populist and anti-immigrant parties/movements in Europe and the United States, including Brexit (UK), the National front (France) and the Donald Trump phenomenon (US), have responded with attempts to scapegoat and exclude already marginalized groups from a shrinking economic pie. This seminar will take up historical and empirical approaches to economic inequality, examine the impact of increasing economic inequality and class disparities and consider the paradoxical relationships between rising inequality and bigotry, on the one hand, and progressive politics, on the other.

**Seminar #2: Beyond Access: Diversifying Higher Education**

Convener: Jennifer Nájera (Ethnic Studies)

While the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the University of Texas’s affirmative action program in June 2016, diversity efforts in higher education arguably need to go beyond attempts to provide greater access to consider the gender and racial culture of the institutions themselves. Issues include intra-student racial tensions (as those that arose at the University of Missouri); disparate undocumented student access (largely dependent upon state policies); gender equality, safety, and other Title IX issues (unsettling almost every campus in the United States); racially charged symbols (e.g. flying the Confederate flag at the Citadel); and concerns about so-called safe spaces (e.g. the controversy over the Silliman College e-mail at Yale). This seminar will ask what colleges and universities owe their students in terms of resources, safe spaces, curriculum, symbols and the like and what new policies might be necessary to deal with sexual harassment, violence, and ethnic tensions.

**Seminar #3: Religious Identity: Harmony or Discrimination?**

Convener: Muhamad Ali (Religious Studies)

This seminar will examine issues of religious identity and diversity. The United States is one of the most religiously diverse countries in the world. Academic discourses and publication on religious harmony, tolerance, pluralism, and freedom have developed significantly. Yet religious diversity also takes other forms: religious tension, conflict, violence, terrorism, and discrimination. The terrorist shootings in San Bernardino near Riverside, the killings in Orlando, the shootings of Sikhs, and the 2016 Presidential Campaign, have raised fears of an increased Islamophobia. The ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Syrian civil war, and the Muslim Rohingya issue in Buddhist Burma, have raised tension and public debate about the role and impacts of religious identity more globally. This seminar will consider questions of religious identity and diversity, violence and peace, discrimination and harmony, hate speech and love activism, and the vexed relation between religion and politics.

(Applications for the fourth seminar will open Spring 2018.)

**Seminar #4: Contested Histories: How to Write History**

Convener: Georgia Warnke (Political Science)

The subtitle of a 2003 article on the 1873 Colfax Massacre in which white southerners slaughtered a group of African Americans who had assembled in a local courthouse after a contested election reads “Stumbling on a forgotten Reconstruction tragedy.” Yet this headline represents the fate of countless similar events not only during slavery and reconstruction but well afterwards, among them: the vast number of lynchings that followed the Civil War and continued into the 20th century, a pattern of racial violence in the years before World War I in which white mobs stormed and destroyed entire black communities, the expropriation of black farmland by the federal government without compensation during World War II, New Deal policies that excluded African Americans, redlining, housing covenants and white violence that kept African Americans in ghettos through most of the 20th century. Similar omissions beset the study of the histories of other marginalized groups in the United States. While recent scholarship reflects new interest in correcting the historical record, more needs to be done. This seminar would result in papers exploring still unexplored aspects of our history.