At the reception for the 25th anniversary of the Franke Institute in November 2015, guests raised a toast to Barbara and Richard Franke.
Last year, I remarked on the Franke Institute’s upcoming 25-year anniversary. That milestone has now been achieved, and in November 2015 it was celebrated with “Humanities Research: The Future of an Idea.” At this multidisciplinary symposium, faculty panelists each spoke eloquently about the many dimensions of humanistic research: its intersection with the arts, the public sphere, emergent technologies, and the “hard” sciences.

While listening to my colleagues raise provocative questions and offer compelling hypotheses about these various aspects of the humanities, I was struck by what a rare opportunity it is to witness such a presentation. Conferences that address a single topic or a targeted cluster of ideas are fairly common, but academics too rarely gather together across departmental boundaries to evaluate collectively the state of our shared domains.

The Franke Institute’s 25th-anniversary event was inspiring and enlightening, demonstrating the insights to be gleaned when scholars from different areas are engaged in meaningful conversation. Further, the public nature of the program ensured that its reach extended beyond the faculty, allowing students, staff, and members of the University community to benefit from the wisdom of the panel and to share in the excitement and promise of our shared future. Thus, the symposium exemplified the Franke Institute’s essential role in catalyzing intellectual discourse on our campus and beyond.

As the Franke Institute moves forward, it continues to promote discussions of the humanistic enterprise, with ongoing projects tackling such ambitious topics as algorithmic technologies, climate change, and music’s impact on human history. Through these and other initiatives, the Franke Institute will continue to support the exceptional disciplinary diversity and dialogue that have defined the past quarter-century of the Humanities at the University of Chicago.

Martha T. Roth
Dean, Division of the Humanities

As the photographs in these pages document, this year marked the 25th anniversary of the Franke Institute. We celebrated the event in fine style with a symposium, “Humanities Research: The Future of an Idea,” which featured eight scholars from diverse fields discussing the challenges and opportunities ahead. The symposium was followed by a champagne toast to Barbara and Richard Franke, who returned to Chicago for the festivities. Numerous faculty, staff, and students were on hand to thank them for their longstanding support of the Humanities at Chicago. The remarkable level of activity and productivity at the Institute over this quarter-century would simply not have been possible without the generosity of our eponymous benefactors.

Over these twenty-five years, the Institute has also benefited from the support of the four Deans whose terms its history spans: Philip Gossett, who implemented a faculty recommendation to found a humanities institute in 1990, Janel Mueller, Danielle Allen, and Martha Roth. Dean Roth and I worked closely together during this past decade, and I would like to take the occasion of her stepping down as Dean this past summer to salute her for her leadership and her service. Finally, on a more somber note, I must add a word of commemoration for the untimely passing of Alison Winter, one of the panelists who spoke at the 25th-anniversary symposium in November. It would be impossible to enumerate her contributions to the work of the Franke Institute over the past decade: she served on the committee that created the Center for Disciplinary Innovation, helped secure and propel several other initiatives funded by the Mellon Foundation, and contributed to the intellectual success of a myriad of occasions. It is not easy to imagine our future without her.

James Chandler
Director, The Franke Institute for the Humanities

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Martha T. Roth
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What should we understand by the phrase ‘Humanities research’? It names a concept both difficult and crucial for the research university. Humanities research has historically been recognized as “scientific” in some understandings of the term – for example in being defined by an original contribution to knowledge – but not in the narrower sense that applies to, say, physics or biology. Problems of norms and definition have, accordingly, always figured importantly in how we think about this central idea in higher education. Lately, however, new challenges and opportunities seem to call for renewed attention to what we mean when we speak of humanities research.

This brief symposium celebrates the 25th anniversary of the Franke Institute for the Humanities by addressing three opportunities: the integration of the practicing arts into academic disciplines, the new trends toward making the humanities more publicly oriented, and the transformations of scholarship made possible by new technologies. We will also revisit the question of the relation of humanities scholarship and scientific research as itself a subject of ongoing change in the coming years.

~ November 10, 2015

Introduction

“I raise the question of humanities research – how it understands its place and its future in the research university – because the question has recently acquired a new urgency on account of a range of pressures and challenges. How, for example, does one understand contributions to the arts in a framework designed to produce and assess “contributions to knowledge”? The second opportunity comes from what for short we might call public humanities… how we think of it as relating to a research paradigm, and in relation to a certain evolving asymmetry between public humanities and public science. The third challenge comes from the relation of the humanities to new technologies. What new picture of humanities research virtues emerges in such an environment? Already implicit in some of these questions is the topic for a fourth inquiry about the future relationship of humanities research to scientific research.”

Integrating the Arts

“The arts are now an integral part of this University in a way they simply were not twenty-five years ago or even ten years ago. How can we get from the effective physical integration of the arts to something that is an intellectual integration that has something to do with the intellectual ecology of this university? I want to talk about what it has meant to me to have Theaster Gates and Jessica Stockholder as part of my intellectual work. From Theaster, I feel an intense pressure to keep asking an urgent question about assembly. From Jessica, I hear an amazing answer to a fundamental question about the autonomy of the object. This is what I feel I have learned from Theaster Gates and Jessica Stockholder and their work. It’s been learning about how not just to think about art, but to think with it and to think about the way it can transform the kind of research we do.”

“This university over the past years has rediscovered not only its rich public art collection, but also the ways in which public art forms a unique resource – for research teaching and public engagement all at once. And what better place to examine the opportunities but also the limitations of such a convergence of such high-level expertise and public education than the university? With respect to limitations, we can afford to value art expertise in choosing and defining what qualifies as artworks worthy of our intellectual life on campus. The number one takeaway here, I think is this: when the integration of the arts works, be it in the realms of practice and scholarship, arts-based and scientific research, or public art, it does because we integrate based on, and without compromising, expertise – and especially of course, art expertise.”

James Chandler

Bill Brown

Christine Mehring
“HUMANITIES RESEARCH: THE FUTURE OF AN IDEA,” CONT.

Public Humanities

“Digital tools are neither a threat to the humanities nor a panacea that will merely make the humanities more scientific. Technologies are both objects AND methods of study for the twenty-first century humanities. We regularly use technology in our work both in the objects we create and the methods we use. Many of the questions that we are facing in the twenty-first century exceed traditional disciplines and divisions. We live in a world where media and mediation are more central to everyday life than ever. We need well-researched interventions that incorporate design, development, and dissemination in order to tackle issues such as global climate change, resource depletion, public health, online ethics, and the persistence of race, class, gender, and sexuality-oriented discrimination. We need the humanities to help us think through the social, political, and cultural dimensions of these issues.”

“Community videos also are generative for thinking about how it is that we frame projects in the public humanities. So, if a public humanities project is one that seeks the participation of community members…if a public humanities project is one that seeks to speak beyond academic audiences…then these projects have to engage in more than extracting information. They also need to be formulated in ways that get us to think about different modes of knowledge creation…more than filling in gaps in histories, we can think about how these are documents of creative practices, of interpretive humanities practices in their own right. They’re not scholarly, maybe not even self-consciously artistic…but they’re vernacular media practices, sort of moving snapshots, in which we can see people doing really interesting interpretive work. They are reminders to me that humanities work is happening everywhere – the creation, appreciation, and interpretation of art culture and history.”

New Technologies

“So where does this leave us with respect to the host of approaches often arrayed under the banner of the “digital humanities”: data mining, machine learning, digital mapping, network visualization, and so on. Is this merely a difference in degree – more technologies, and more powerful – or have we crossed some sort of qualitative Rubicon, a difference in kind that would transform the humanities as we know it? Nevertheless, I don’t share the worry that the advent of DH will cause the humanities to be subsumed into the sciences – or more fearfully – to become somehow lost in the technology itself. On the contrary, in my experience, new technologies have a way of bringing into focus precisely those humanistic surpluses that elude quantification: questions of significance, identity, phenomenology, affect, and so on.”

“How do computers fit into humanities research? Ontological diversity, observational uncertainty, and interpretive disagreement can be explicitly represented within a larger common framework in which researchers may analyze and compare many different observations, interpretations, and terminologies to inform their own judgments…the challenge is to design software that captures the conceptual distinctions and relationships of interest to scholars and to do so in a way that is faithful to our own research practices. In so doing, we are not abandoning traditional practices but drawing attention to them and rehabilitating them, as Jerome McGann does when he argues for a revival of nineteenth-century philology as the paradigm of humanities research enabled by the digital web of knowledge. Perhaps the digital tools are taking us “back to the future” – realizing in a new way an old vision of Wissenschaft.”

Rethinking Humanities and the Sciences

“I wrote a book on the history of the memory sciences, on memory as a scientific object…I think without exception, the initial response assumed that I was either a scientist or a science journalist, and asked me to weigh in on the nature of memory, I, being quite clear that I was a historian…could not weigh in on the nature of memory – what I work on is the history of how people talk about it. But it was interesting that my work was consistently read this different way. So that’s good news – that the humanities has always been a part of this problem of climate change.”

For more photos of the symposium and the reception: http://franke.uchicago.edu/franke25.html
Over the past eight years, the Center for Disciplinary Innovation (CDI) has provided faculty the opportunity to collaborate on 49 unique team-taught, graduate courses across a variety of disciplines. Since 2012, the CDI has offered one to two courses per year with an inflection concerning Disciplines & Technologies. The CDI also supports a Disciplines & Technologies faculty-working group, primarily focused on algorithms.

Since its creation, the CDI at the University of Chicago has been instrumental in supporting a consortium of centers for disciplinary innovation, fostering a partnership with humanities centers at Columbia, Cambridge, and Berkeley. This consortium serves to address how universities of the twenty-first century should respond to the challenge of disciplinary change in the humanities and social sciences.

For more information about the CDI, please see: http://franke.uchicago.edu/cdi.html

COURSES, 2015-16

Nomads, Networks, and Political Complexity in the Ancient Near East
Emily Hammer, Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations (Archeology)
Richard Payne, Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations (History)

Related Lectures
The Development of Pastoralism in Central Asia
Michael Frachetti, Washington University in St. Louis
Silk Routes Rewoven: Inner Asia at 4,000 and 1,000 Years Ago
Michael Frachetti, Washington University in St. Louis

Reproduction/Reproduction: A Context for Dante
Justin Steinberg, Romance Languages & Literatures
Carlo Ginzburg, University of California, Los Angeles

Philology as a Way of Life: Humanism and the Classics
Rocco Rubini, Romance Languages & Literatures
Boris Maslov, Comparative Literature

Data Visualization: Aesthetics, Intent, and Practice
Jason Salavon, Visual Arts
Gordon Kindliman, Computer Science

Related Lecture
Writing Images/Picturing Words
Srikanth Reddy, English Language & Literature
Jessica Stockholder, Visual Arts

Artist Talks by
Jan Bervin, poet and visual artist
Dianna Frid, University of Illinois, Chicago
Tan Lin, New Jersey City University
Jason Pickelman, JNL Graphic Design
Karen Reimer, Renaissance Society

Color & Culture in Japan & Beyond: An Interdisciplinary Approach
Chelsea Foxwell, Art History
Henry Smith, Columbia University

Related Lecture
Introduction to the Methods of Conservation Science
Francesca Casadio, Art Institute of Chicago

Enslavement and Performativity in Comparative Perspective
Agnes Lugo-Oritz, Romance Languages & Literatures
Reginald Jackson, University of Michigan

COURSES, 2016-17

The Debt Drive: Philosophy, Psychoanalysis, Neoliberalism
Eric Santner, Germanic Studies
Aaron Schuster, Sandberg Institute, Amsterdam

Reason and Religion
Shadi Bartsch-Zimmer, Classics
Robert Richards, History

A Global Sonic History in 30 Objects
Philip V. Bohlman, Music
Lars Christian-Koch, University of Cologne

Women’s Rights, Cultural Nationalisms, and Moral Panics: Comparative Perspectives from Africa and India
Rochona Majumdar, South Asian Languages & Civilizations
Jennifer Cole, Comparative Human Development

The Discovery of Paganism
Clifford Ando, Classics
Claudia Brittenham, Art History

Ruins
Françoise Meltzer, Comparative Literature
Jas’ Elsner, Art History

On the course, Philology as a Way of Life: Humanism and the Classics:
“Professor Rubini’s and Professor Maslov’s different disciplinary affiliations, and the course’s generous cross-listings, brought together a wide array of students from numerous fields. In lesser hands the scope of this material and array of perspectives could have been daunting, but I found that many of the most rewarding insights that emerged during our discussions were those that could only have emerged as a result of interdisciplinary study and collaboration.”
– Kris Palmieri, Committee on Conceptual & Historical Studies of Science

On the course, Reproduction/Reproduction: A Context for Dante:
“The Dante seminar I conducted with Justin Steinberg has been, in my view, a very successful experiment. The diversity of our respective approaches, as well as the openness and friendliness of our dialogue, immediately involved the students. The debates we had in class were lively and productive. For me, this has been a most rewarding teaching experience – one of the best I ever had.”
– Carlo Ginzburg, University of California, Los Angeles
The Franke Institute has been awarded a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to support a three-year international, interdisciplinary, and collaborative project entitled “Studies in Climate Change: The Limits of the Numerical.” The Franke is hosting two, three-year postdoctoral scholars pursuing in-depth studies of the role numbers do and do not play in the humanistic understanding of environmental problems related to climate change. The umbrella project - “The Limits of the Numerical” - covers three main strands of social policy. In addition to the climate change strand at Chicago, there is a healthcare strand at Cambridge, and a higher education strand at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Taken as a whole, “The Limits of the Numerical” explores some of the most pressing questions for the contemporary human sciences. What is the effect of the pervasive introduction of numerically based quantification into all aspects of social evaluation? When does the use of numbers work against the very values (such as precision, ease of communication) they are introduced to support? How do numbers as a system of evaluation clash with social values that cannot be so quantified?

2015–18 Studies in Climate Change: The Limits of the Numerical

POSTDOCTORAL SCHOLARS

Elizabeth Chatterjee

Elizabeth “Liz” Chatterjee holds a DPhil in International Development from the University of Oxford, where she was a Fellow of All Souls College. Liz’s dissertation, “Underpowered,” traced the evolution of India’s electricity sector since 1991. She analyzed institutional and bureaucratic sources of dysfunction in energy policymaking. Liz’s “Limits of the Numerical” project examines the political life of numerical climate targets, both as rhetorical tools and as they are translated and negotiated in practice.

Greg Lusk

Greg Lusk received his Ph.D. in Philosophy of Science from the University of Toronto in 2015. Greg’s dissertation, “Quantifying Nature,” examined a variety of emerging scientific practices, including computer simulation and remote sensing. He argued that despite the relative lack of physical interaction with their targets, such practices meet conditions sufficient for empirical and explanatory knowledge in certain situations. Greg’s “Limits” project pursues an analysis of the epistemic and ethical values at work in models employed in climate science and decision-making.

2015-16 EVENT

Climate Change: Disciplinary Challenges to the Humanities and Social Sciences

Elizabeth Chatterjee, “The Asian Anthropocene”  
Greg Lusk, “Who Should We Blame? The Merits of Extreme Weather Event Attribution”

ASSOCIATED FACULTY

Fredrik Albritton Jonsson, History  
James Chandler, English Language & Literature  
Dipesh Chakrabarty, History  
Michael Greenstone, Economics  
Mark Lycott, Program on the Global Environment  
Joseph Masco, Anthropology  
Benjamin Morgan, English Language & Literature  
Kathleen Morrison, Anthropology  
Emily Lynn Osborn, History  
Eric Slauter, English Language & Literature

For more information on the Limits of the Numerical Projects, please visit https://franke.uchicago.edu.
Fellows’ Research Projects, 2015-16

This year, the Franke Fellows brought to their bi-weekly discussions a spectrum of disciplines - from nine of fourteen Humanities departments and a Social Sciences department. Since the Franke fellowship doesn’t have an annual theme, fellows share the challenge of engaging with unfamiliar topics and investigating common themes in each other’s work, often discovering current issues in humanistic research. For example, how is materialism represented in literature? How can community be envisioned through archaeological artifacts, linguistic dialects, aspirational practices, or musical compositions and their stagings? How do historical predecessors inform modes of reasoning or aesthetics?

FRANKE FACULTY FELLOWS

Agnes Callard, Assistant Professor, Philosophy; Aspiration: The Agency of Becoming
I analyze the process by which agents actively work to acquire new values.

Whitney Cox, Associate Professor, South Asian Languages & Civilizations; Politics, Kingship, and Poetry in Medieval South India
I completed a book-length study of a transformative event in medieval Indian history through a reinterpretation of the contested accession of Kulottunga I (r. 1070-1120) as the ruler of the imperial Chola dynasty.

Laura Gandolfi, Assistant Professor, Romance Languages & Literatures; Itinerant Objects: Fiction and Material Culture in Nineteenth-Century Mexico
I look at the intersections between fiction and objects in post-independence Mexico, examining how literature and culture adapted and reacted to new “material environments.”

Heather Keenleyside, Assistant Professor, English Language & Literature; The Literary History of Ideas: Thoughts as Things in Eighteenth-Century Literature
My project recovers a distinctive materialist approach to ideas in eighteenth-century literature, and argues for the importance of this eighteenth-century tradition to key debates in twentieth-century criticism.

David J. Levin, Addie Clark Harding Professor, Germanic Studies, Cinema & Media Studies, and Theater & Performance Studies; After Regie: Opera, Performance, and the Stakes of Representation
My project seeks to map the landscape of opera production after “Regieoper” (or “director’s opera”), the reigning paradigm of experimental opera production: what are the stage practices “after Regie” and how do we describe their conceptual implications?

Yung-ti Li, Associate Professor, East Asian Languages & Civilizations; Kingly Crafts: State Craft Industries in Bronze Age China
My project explores the relationships between state sponsorship and the large-scale craft industries in Bronze Age China by examining archaeological data in North China.

Mark Miller, Associate Professor, English Language & Literature; The Unredemptive Middle Ages
My book argues that fourteenth-century English poetry, rather than aiming at the redemption of its readers, explores through its formal experiments the irreparability of ethical, political, and spiritual life.

Ada Palmer, Assistant Professor, History; Renaissance Lives of Classical Philosophers and Provisional Belief
One project seeks the roots of Enlightenment deism in humanist attempts to Christianize the ancients; the other begins a longue-durée history of the roots of scientific reasoning in philosophical skepticism.

FRANKE DISSERTATION-YEAR FELLOWS

James Burgin, Doctoral Candidate, Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations; Aspects of Hittite Religious Administration in the Late New Kingdom
I investigate the circulation of luxury goods in the state religious economy of the Hittite Empire.

Erin Epperson, Doctoral Candidate, South Asian Languages & Civilizations; Messenger Poetry in Translation: Exploring the Influence of Buddhism on the Tibetan Reception of Kālidāsa’s Cloud Messenger
I explore the transmission of Sanskrit poet Kālidāsa’s Cloud Messenger into Tibet to deepen our understanding of fourteenth-century Tibetan poetics.

Cesar Favila, Doctoral Candidate, Music; Music and Devotion in Novohispanic Convents, 1600-1800
My project investigates the ways in which nuns in early modern New Spain (present-day Mexico) used polyphonic music to enhance their liturgies and devotions.

“I was greatly aided in completing a chapter by detailed feedback from Agnes Callard, another Franke Fellow, whom I would never have met without the Franke Institute to bring us together.”  
– Ada Palmer

FRANKE FELLOWS, 2015-16

Top row, left to right: James Chandler, Director, James Burgin, Mark Miller, Whitney Cox, Ada Palmer, Heather Keenleyside; Bottom row, left to right: Gilad Nir, Margot Browning, Associate Director, Agnes Callard, Victoria Salinger, Erin Epperson, David Levin, Cesar Favila; Not pictured: Laura Gandolfi, Yung-ti Li, Han Zhang

The Franke Institute for the Humanities

2015-16 Annual Review
Gilad Nir, Doctoral Candidate, Philosophy; Wittgenstein on Inference
I offer a new account of Wittgenstein's critique of his mentors, Frege and Russell, focusing on their views of inference and its representation in logical symbolism.

Victoria Salinger, Doctoral Candidate, Art History; ‘Writing Calculations, Calculating Writing’: The Art of Hanne Darboven
I examine Hanne Darboven's calculation-based drawings in light of advances in and changing perceptions about mathematics and technology in the context of the Cold War.

Han Zhang, Doctoral Candidate, East Asian Languages & Civilizations; Dwelling in Language: The Practice of Wu Dialect in Late Qing Shanghai and Beyond
My dissertation focuses on the practice of the regional language primarily used in Lower Yangtze Delta in various literary and performance genres in early modern China.

AFFILIATED DISSERTATION-YEAR FELLOWS

Meeting over lunch at the Franke Institute, the Affiliated Dissertation-Year Fellows discussed their ongoing dissertation research across the span of Humanities disciplines. This year, Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations had the widest range of time scale - with one fellow studying Nubia in 1500 BCE and another studying the Ottoman Empire in 1500 CE, and Comparative Literature projects engaged with varied languages: French, German, English, and Turkish. Several dissertation projects in English and in Romance Languages discovered overlapping concerns about political resistance, political economy, and political (or personal) identities. Projects in Music, and in Cinema & Media Studies, explored performance, audience reception, and the development of new visual media.

Hadij Bakara, Doctoral Candidate, English Language & Literature; Empire of Dignity: A Literary History of Human Rights in the Twentieth Century
My project retells the political and institutional history of global literatures through five representative figures: the refugee, the witness, the prisoner, the legislator, and the dissident.

Tristan Bates, Doctoral Candidate, Comparative Literature; Literary Space in Turkish Novels of the Long 1980s
My dissertation explores the spaces of urbanized Turkey – vacation houses, city apartments, and squatter settlements – as depicted in formally experimental novels written around the “global turn” of 1980.

Brian Berry, Doctoral Candidate, Comparative Literature; Serious Doubt: Philosophical Skepticism in Samuel Beckett and Stanley Cavell
Drawing on Cavell’s interpretation of philosophical skepticism, my project considers the relation of Beckett’s prose and drama to both philosophical language and ordinary language.

Monica Felix, Doctoral Candidate, Comparative Literature; Aesthetics, Deception, and the Topos of Memory in the Romantic Imagination
My dissertation develops a transnational notion of Romanticism by exploring affinities between the German and Russian literary traditions.

Carl Fuldner, Doctoral Candidate, Art History; Evolving Photography: Naturalism, Art, and Experience, 1889-1909
My dissertation explores how changing cultural beliefs about nature and human agency following Darwin shaped modern ideas about the photographic medium.

Sarah Iker, Doctoral Candidate, Music; An Experience-Oriented Approach to Analyzing Stravinsky’s Neoclassicism
My dissertation focuses on how people experienced Stravinsky’s early neoclassical reception, suggesting new music-analytical methods in response to these historical experiences.

Rehanna Kheshgi, Doctoral Candidate, Music; Sounding Rural Modernities: Gender, Performance, and the Body in Assam, India
I investigate the power of contemporary folk music and dance performance in relation to embodiment, youth culture, and global media in northeast India.

Cassidy Picken, Doctoral Candidate, English Language & Literature; Rendering Empire: British Romanticism, the Theory of Rent, and the Making of Liberal Imperialism
My work explores how British writers and poets of the romantic-era theorized empire as a practice of turning natural devastation into economic value.

Linsey Sainte-Claire, Doctoral Candidate, Romance Languages & Literatures; Quelques figures de la folie dans la littérature Caraïbo-Guyanaise
My dissertation analyses the representation of figures of madness in contemporary Antillean fictions and plays from French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Haiti, and Martinique.

Amanda Swain, Doctoral Candidate, English Language & Literature; The Politics of Being Personal: Genres of Community and Ethics of Personhood after 1960
My project traces a genealogy of the concept that the personal is political across the postwar U.S. and the models for community and personhood that constituted its political life.

Linsey Sainte-Claire, Doctoral Candidate, Romance Languages & Literatures; Quelques figures de la folie dans la littérature Caraïbo-Guyanaise
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Ahmet Tunc Sen, Doctoral Candidate, Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations; Astrology in the Service of the Empire: Knowledge, Prophecy, and Politics at the Ottoman Court, 1450-1550
My dissertation examines the intellectual, cultural, and political history of knowledge in the early modern Ottoman context by exploring the astrological corpus.

Mario Slugan, Doctoral Candidate, Slavic Languages & Literatures; Fiction, Narratives, and Early Cinema
I explore how around 1900 the distinction between actuality and fictional cinema arose despite the fact that both were based on photographs of actual objects.

Amanda Swain, Doctoral Candidate, English Language & Literature; The Politics of Being Personal: Genres of Community and Ethics of Personhood after 1960
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Selected by the Governing Board of the Franke Institute for the Humanities, the fourteen incoming Franke Fellows hail from ten departments in the Humanities, and one department in the Social Sciences:

**FRANKE FACULTY FELLOWS**

**James Conant,** Chester D. Tripp Professor of Humanities, Philosophy; Kant’s Critique of the Layer-Cake Conception of Human Mindedness  
**Daniel Desormeaux,** Professor, Romance Languages & Literatures; *The First Haitian Historians’ Account of the Making of a Free Black Republic*  
**Ghenwa Hayek,** Assistant Professor, Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations; ‘Carrying Africa’, Becoming Lebanese  
**Robert Kendrick,** Professor, Music and Romance Languages & Literatures; *Fruits of the Cross: Passionside Music Theater in Habsburg Vienna*  
**Wei-Cheng Lin,** Associate Professor, Romance Languages & Literatures; *Performative Architecture of China*

**Sarah Nooter,** Associate Professor, Classics; *The Mortal Voice in the Tragedies of Aeschylus*

**Michael Rossi,** Assistant Professor, History; *The Language Organ: A History of Embodied Speech in American Linguistics, 1900–2000*  
**Yuri Tsivian,** William Colvin Professor, Art History, Cinema & Media Studies, and Slavic Languages & Literatures; *Montage: A History of Theory and Practice*  

**FRANKE DISSERTATION-YEAR FELLOWS**

**Rebecca Crisisfulli,** Doctoral Candidate, Romance Languages & Literatures; *Sincerity and Social Transformation in the Work of Louise d’Épinay*  
**Andrew Inchiosa,** Doctoral Candidate, English Language & Literature; *Found Among the Papers of the Early Republic*  
**Thomas Kelly,** Doctoral Candidate, East Asian Languages & Civilizations; *Substantive Marks: The Poetics of Object Inscriptions in Early Modern China*  
**Branden Kosch,** Doctoral Candidate, Classics; Demoselens and His Readers  
**Daniela Licandro,** Doctoral Candidate, East Asian Languages & Civilizations; *I Must Confess: Life Writings and the Culture of Jiantao in Modern China*  
**Adhira Mangalagiri,** Doctoral Candidate, Comparative Literature; *The World Within: Reading Colonial Literary Encounters Between China and India*

On the first or second Wednesday of the month, once every quarter, University alumni and friends gather for a public lecture by a University faculty member at the downtown Gleacher Center. For the seventeenth year, the Visiting Committee to the Division of the Humanities Centennial Endowment has funded these lectures for the Franke Forum, and the receptions that follow. To reserve a seat for an upcoming forum, please email franke-humanities@uchicago.edu.

**2015-16**

**November 4**  
**Hillary Chute**  
Associate Professor, Department of English Language & Literature  
*Disaster Drawn: Visual Witness, Comics, and Documentary Form*

**March 2**  
**D. Nicholas Rudall**  
Founding Director, Court Theatre  
Professor Emeritus, Department of Classics  
*What We Call Greek Tragedy*

**May 4**  
**Christine Mehring**  
Chair and Professor, Department of Art History  
*Material Matters in Postwar Art*

**2016-17**

**October 5**  
**Patrick Jagoda**  
Associate Professor, Departments of English Language & Literature and Cinema & Media Studies  
*Game Experiments (or: Playful Ways to Design Serious Research Interventions)*

**March 1**  
**Geoffrey L. Stone**  
Edward H. Levi Distinguished Service Professor of Law  
*Sex and the Constitution: The Road to Roe*

**May 10**  
**Darby English**  
Carl Darling Buck Professor of Art History  
*The Painter and the Police*

Recent Franke Forums can be viewed on the Franke YouTube channel: [http://youtube.com/frankeinstitute](http://youtube.com/frankeinstitute)

For more information on the Franke Forum series, follow us on Twitter: @UChiFrankeInst
Helping faculty members stay abreast of their colleagues’ current work from any department in the humanities or humanistic social sciences, the Every Wednesday Luncheon Series was created nineteen years ago to provide University humanities faculty with regular opportunities to assemble informally. On most Wednesdays during the academic year, a faculty member gives an informal talk over a catered lunch at the Institute about his or her work-in-progress and afterwards responds to questions from the audience. For each talk, participants also include five graduate students who are invited on behalf of the speaker. In addition to “Every Wednesday” talks about ongoing faculty members’ works-in-progress, this series also presents talks by new faculty members in the humanities, by visiting professors, about collaborative faculty projects, and about current affairs.

**WORKS IN PROGRESS**

- **Travis A. Jackson**, Music
  *Rock* Experimentalism

- **Emily Lynn Osborn**, History
  Containers and the African Anthropocene

- **Marta Praszynska**, Music
  The Role of Inspiration in Creative Processes

- **Eric Santner**, Germanic Studies
  The Subject-Matter of Political Economy

- **Candace Vogler**, Philosophy
  Exploring the Links Between Virtue, Happiness, and Purpose

**NEW FACULTY**

- **Larissa Brewer-Garcia**, Romance Languages & Literatures
  African Intermediaries in the Early Modern Atlantic

- **Leah Feldman**, Comparative Literature
  Global Souths

- **Allyson Nadia Field**, Cinema & Media Studies
  Cinema and African American Modernity

- **Ariel Fox**, East Asian Languages & Civilizations
  Cornucopias and Capital

- **Rachel Galvin**, English Language & Literature
  Latin@ Poetry

- **Ghenwa Hayek**, Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations
  Emigration Anxiety in Lebanese Fiction

- **Wei-Cheng Lin**, Art History
  Modern Traditional Architecture in Contemporary China

- **Maria Anna Mariani**, Romance Languages & Literatures
  The Posthumous Life of Anne Frank

- **Susanne Paulus**, Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations
  Babylonia, Beer, and Barley

- **Hervé Reculeau**, Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations
  Mesopotamian Agriculture and Climate Change

**COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS**

- **Alison LaCroix**, Law School
  Historical Meaning in Law

- **Jason Merchant**, Linguistics
  Early Modern Reading Practices in India (and the World)

- **Tyler Williams**, South Asian Languages & Civilizations
  Dostoevsky and Holbein

**NEW FACULTY LARISAS BREWER-GARCIA**

**NEW FACULTY LEAH FELDMAN**

**NEW FACULTY ALYSON NADIA FIELD**

**NEW FACULTY ARIEL FOX**

**NEW FACULTY RACHEL GALVIN**

**NEW FACULTY GHENWA HAYEK**

**NEW FACULTY WEI-CHENG LIN**

**NEW FACULTY MARIA ANNA MARIANI**

**NEW FACULTY SUSANNE PAULUS**

**NEW FACULTY HERVE RECULEAU**

**NEW FACULTY VICTORIA SARAMAGO**
The University’s College is renowned for its common core curriculum in the humanities, social sciences, biological sciences, and physical sciences with which undergraduates begin their degree programs. Yet how can a program of courses also provide a transition from college to whatever comes next – at a job or in graduate school?

The Big Problems program, coordinated by the Franke Institute and the College, provides a capstone curriculum for third- and fourth-year students. These elective courses offer students opportunities to broaden their studies from their departmental major by focusing on a “big problem” – a matter of global or universal concern that intersects with several disciplines and affects a variety of interest groups. By their nature, “big problems” call for interdisciplinary teamwork, yet their solutions may not be obvious or finally determinable.

In keeping with the multiple perspectives needed to study a big problem, these capstone courses are team-taught by faculty members from different disciplines, engaging the students in the dialogue and debate between the instructors.

**FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS**

On the course, *Digital Humanities/Digital History*:

“It has given me things to think about in my daily life. It has made me more conscious of my decision-making, stress management, and other factors concerning wisdom. Super interesting stuff.”

“The instructors offered good insight in their respective fields. Their varying perspectives gave a richer understanding of wisdom.”

“Made me a much more introspective and insightful human being.”

On the course, *Understanding Wisdom*:

“Advantages and Disadvantages of Ethanol as a Motor Fuel: Cross-Country Comparisons between the U.S. and Brazil”

“Hydraulic Fracturing: Past, Present, and Future - An analysis of the economic and environmental impacts of ‘fracking’ in the United States”

*Nuclear Waste Management: A social, technical, and economic approach*

*Outlook for Energy Storage Technology: A Basic Materials Perspective*

*The Clean Power Plan by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: An Analysis of States*

For more information, please see: [http://franke.uchicago.edu/bigproblems/bp-energy.html](http://franke.uchicago.edu/bigproblems/bp-energy.html)

**COURSES, 2015-16**

*Colloquium: Digital Humanities/Digital History*

Robert Morrissey, Romance Languages & Literatures
James Sparrow, History
Cloris Gladstone, ARTFL

*Drinking Alcohol: Social Problem or Normal Cultural Practice?*

Michael Dietler, Anthropology
William Green, Neurobiology

*Energy and Energy Policy*

R. Stephen Berry, Chemistry
George Tolley, Economics

*Health Care and the Limits of State Action*

Haun Saussy, Comparative Literature
Evan Lyon, Medicine

*Understanding Wisdom*

W. Clark Gilpin, Divinity School
Anne Herdy, Psychology

**COURSES, 2016-17**

*Alternate Reality Games: Theory and Production*

Patrick Jagoda, Cinema & Media Studies
Heidi Coleman, Theater & Performance Studies

*Anxiety*

Malyne Sternstein, Slavic Languages & Literatures
Anne Flannery, Oriental Institute

*Art and Human Rights*

Mark Bradley, History
Leslie Buusbaum-Danzig, Theater & Performance Studies

*Biology and Sociology of AIDS*

Harold Pollack, Social Service Administration
John Schneider, Medicine

*Energy and Energy Policy*

R. Stephen Berry, Chemistry
George Tolley, Economics

*Inequality: Origins, Dimensions, Policy*

Allen Sanderson, Economics

*Jews and Christians in the Middle East*

Orit Bashkin, Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations
Angie Heo, Anthropology & Sociology of Religion

*Understanding Wisdom*

W. Clark Gilpin, Divinity School
Anne Herdy, Psychology

For more information about the Big Problems program, please see [bigproblems.uchicago.edu](http://bigproblems.uchicago.edu)
The Institute sponsors conferences on interdisciplinary topics in the humanities, including themes and issues drawn from the social sciences, that are co-sponsored with University of Chicago centers, departments, workshops, and divisions, as well as with other institutions. During 2015-16, the Institute co-sponsored seventy-five conferences, lectures, and other events.

**CONFERENCES**

**August – September**

The New Ancient Legal History

The Global Midwest: Linkages of African & Midwestern Universities

Empires of Faith: Comparativism, Art, and Religion in Late Antiquity – India to England, AD 200-800

V21 Symposium: Presentism, Form, and the Future of History

The State and Its Past: Consolidating National Identities Through History

Martin Buber: Philosopher of Dialogue

Xenophobia and Allophobia in Pre-Modern Ottoman Lands

October

Xenophobia and Altophobia in Pre-Modern Ottoman Lands

Empires of Faith: Comparativism, Art, and Religion in Late Antiquity – India to England, AD 200-800

V21 Symposium: Presentism, Form, and the Future of History

The State and Its Past: Consolidating National Identities Through History

Martin Buber: Philosopher of Dialogue

Xenophobia and Altophobia in Pre-Modern Ottoman Lands

November – December

City/Cité: A Transatlantic Exchange

Symbolic Everyday Lives: New Directions in Research of Vijayanagara

A Symposium on Toleration

9th Macedonian-North American Conference on Macedonian Studies

Fiction/Non-Fiction: The Uses and Truths of Literature

Words Unofficial: Gossip, Circulation, Mediation

A Voice as Something More

Individual and Community in Urban Upheavals: Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor

Living and Leaving the Japanese Empire

Moving Images in Art Symposium

February – March

Cultural Melting Bath: New Work on Contemporary Art and the Environment in Japan and Beyond

In Empire’s Long Shadow: Modern Constructions of Central Eurasia, 1900–1941

13th Annual South Asian Graduate Student Conference: Dying in South Asia

Midwest Graduate Music Consortium

Where Literature Begins: The Practice and Poetics of Multilingual Address

Politics of Difference: Migration, Nation, Postcolonial Left and Right

April

Scaling Forms: Dialogues Across Disciplines

The Acquisition and Transmission of Knowledge

Post-Anthropocentric Modulations in Contemporary Brazilian Thought

The Future of Religious Minorities in the Middle East

Found in Translation: Russia and the West in Dialogue

(Cont. on page 24)
CO-SPONSORS for EVENTS

*External Co-sponsors*
Agence nationale pour la cohésion sociale et l'égalité des chances, Alliance Française de Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago, Arts Council of Chicago, British Museum, Cultural Services of the French Embassy in Chicago, Experimental Sound Studio, Goethe-Institut Chicago, Graham Foundation, Humanities Without Walls Consortium, Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities, Institut Français, Institute for the Humanities, Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Chicago, Lescarboult Trust, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Ministère de la Ville, de la Jeunesse et des Sports, Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport (Spain), National Gallery of Art, Northwestern University Center for Screen Cultures, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science (Berlin), Pragda, Seminary Co-op Bookstores, SOVUZ: The Research Network for Postsocialist Cultural Studies, SPiN: Arts and Culture Program, Sports Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership, Title VI National Resource Center Grant from the United States Department of Education, United Macedonian Diaspora, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, University of Oxford, University of Toronto

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Anthropology, Art History, Cinema & Media Studies, Classics, Comparative Literature, East Asian Languages & Civilizations, English Language & Literature, Germanic Studies, History, Linguistics, Music, Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations, Philosophy, Political Science, Romance Languages & Literatures, School of Social Service Administration, Slavic Languages & Literatures, South Asian Languages & Civilizations, Visual Arts

*At the Franke Institute:*
The Adelyn Russell Bogert Fund supports activities involving the arts. This year, the Bogert Fund co-sponsored six events:
• CinéVardaExpo
• A Conversation about the Gramsci Monument – A Living Sculpture
• Cultural Muling Bath: New Work on Contemporary Art and the Environment in Japan and Beyond
• Salvage 3.1: Fashion
• Spanish Film Club Festival
• Still Walking, Still Sleeping, Still Life: Slow Aesthetics and the Moving Image

The ten speakers’ presentations congregated around three themes: (1) theories of studying race relationally, comparing theories of racial formation, intersectionality, and the social construction of race; (2) historical case studies; and (3) contemporary issues, which will be published as articles in a forthcoming book.

Under the Ground: Coal, Water, and Labor in Environmental Documentaries From China and Taiwan
At a time when workers have become relatively invisible in East Asian cinema and public perception, these film screenings and Q&As with the two film directors generated a better understanding of the intersection of labor and environmental issues and the challenges of representing them through visual media from mainland China and Taiwan.

LECTURES / WORKSHOPS / DISCUSSIONS

**October**
The Inquisition and Information Control Before and After Galileo
The Chicago Linguistic Society 52nd Annual Meeting
Still Walking, Still Sleeping, Still Life: Slow Aesthetics and the Moving Image
Sites of South Asian Studies
Islam and Regimes of Evidence

**May**
Gender | Publics | Panics in the Global South
The 31st Annual MEHAT Conference
Technologies of Semiosis
The Global Midwest: A History of World Music Recording
Studying Race Relationally: A CSRPC 20th Anniversary Conference

**November – December**
Vowels/Consonants: The Legend of a “Gendered” (Sexual) Difference Told by Cinema
Michel Chion, University of Paris III: Sorbonne Nouvelle
Questions of History: A Conversation with Carlo Ginzburg

**February**
Gender and Sexuality in Middle Eastern History Lecture Series
Marion Katz, New York University
The Nationalism of Hikikomori and the Shameless Evasion of Shame
Naoki Sakai, Cornell University

**March – April**
Ringing in a New Year: Balkansky’s Kuker Music as Bellwether for a Bulgarian Spring

(Cont. on page 26)
For 2016–17, the Governing Board of the Franke Institute has awarded thirty-four grants to faculty members and graduate students for events on widely ranging topics, including the ones listed below. For information about these events throughout the year, please see franke.uchicago.edu.

**AUTUMN**
- China, Art, History: New Orientations – in Honor of Wu Hung
- Conference in Honor of Josef Stern
- The Cultural Legacy of Ludovico Ariosto’s Orlando Furioso
- Evil: The Bad, the Ugly, and the Depraved in Ancient Greek Philosophy
- From Quantitative to Qualitative Analysis
- Habitation: Literature and Architecture
- Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Semiotics of the Image
- International Conference on Strategies and Conflicts of Authority and Power in Golden Age Theater
- Irreverence and the Sacred – in Honor of Bruce Lincoln
- Justice at Work
- The Limits of Empire in Ancient Afghanistan
- Linguistic and Other Cultural Exchanges Across Brazilian History
- Marianne Midwest Lecture Series
- Seeing Movement, Being Moved: An Exploration of the Moving Camera
- Untold Futures: Speculation, Redemption, Disappointment
- Vernacular Practices Across East Asia

**WINTER**
- Down to the Hour: Perspectives on Short Time in the Ancient Mediterranean
- In the Shadow of the Grand Tour
- Skepticism as a Form of Philosophical Experience

**SPRING**
- The Bridge
- Chicago Tamil Forum: Poesis/Politics of Language and Place in Tamilagam, A Workshop in Honor of John Bernard Bate
- Civil War: Discord Within
- Concrete Happenings
- Fact and Fiction – Creation, Forms, Boundaries
- Gwendolyn Brooks Centennial Conference
- Hebrew Literature in Europe
- Indological Connections between Chicago and Paris II
- Querelles des femmes, or the Long History of Feminism
- Questions of Syncretism and Hybridity in Chinese Religious History
- Renaissance Workshop Graduate Student Conference
- Scripts and Scripture: Writing and Religion in Arabia, ca. 500–700 C.E.
- Slavery and Visual Culture
- Thought and Action in the Renaissance
- Writing and Picturing
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2015–16 Annual Review

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