We live in a time of head-spinning complexity for humanists and our institutions. Every day, our interpretive powers confront the tide of efforts to silence analytical voices through distortions of history and culture—by banning books and constriciting curricula, but also by cutting budgets for instruction in languages and other kinds of basic knowledge. At the same time, the rise of artificial intelligence demonstrates the urgent need for the skills and perspectives we cultivate, especially judgment. In this moment, the role of our Humanities Center is to demonstrate how advanced research enriches the experience of scholars, educators, students, and the public.

The 2022–23 academic year marked another step in our continuing project of remaking the SHC to meet this future of unprecedented challenges and expanded horizons—intellectual, digital, and international. In January we welcomed a new Associate Director, Helen Malko. An archaeologist with a PhD from Stony Brook University, Helen joined us from the American Center of Research in Jordan, bringing a perspective that strengthens our efforts to internationalize the SHC and reach new audiences.

Two months later, we introduced an entirely new staff role, Digital Manager and Web Editor. The arrival of Rachel Karas, a PhD in English from UC Santa Barbara, in that role coincided with the soft launch of our reimagined digital platform. Now our community may gather not only in person but virtually, and those who lacked access to the ideas produced at the SHC—such as alumni, K–12 educators, or prospective students—are able to participate in the conversation.

Over a year ago, the SHC prompted the creation of a new staff position for a Research Development Specialist, Stanford’s first in the humanities. Madison Priest, a PhD in English from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, started in that role in May 2022. What a difference it makes already to provide support to faculty and graduate students across the humanities in obtaining external funding and, of course, the visibility that comes with it.

Yet another colleague, Svetlana Turetskaya, a scholar of philosophy and a poet, arrived last fall to manage the International Visitors Program and the Hume Honors Program, two programs that connect our work to the world and to the future, respectively.

I’m already looking forward to meeting you here next year for another chapter in the reinvention of our SHC. But please don’t wait for the Annual Report when you can visit us online anytime.

Roland Greene
Anthony P. Meier Family Professor and Director
The Stanford Humanities Center offers residential fellowships to scholars from Stanford and elsewhere at all career stages—from undergraduates to senior faculty—providing time, funding, and collegial enrichment for their projects. The 2022-23 fellowship year marked a return to fully in-person operations, with the addition of hybrid events and activities. Lunches, social gatherings (both on campus and off), workshops, and seminars took place with renewed energy and intensified pace.

The Center’s fellowships are made possible by gifts and grants from the following institutional foundations, and other Stanford offices: the Esther Hayier Bloom Estate, Theodore H. and Frances K. Gehalle, Mimi and Peter Haas, Jeff and Sara Small, Marta Sutton Weeks, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Mericos Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the offices of the President, the Dean of Research, and the Dean of Humanities and Sciences.

This year was a wonderful and enriching experience. The scholarly community we were able to develop was so mutually constructive, and we were so engaged in each other’s development. All of this together assisted me as I landed a tenure-track job (here at Stanford) and advanced my own research on my book. I also taught two new courses, one of which was particularly successful and will surely serve as a model for my future teaching.

I have no words to describe how wonderful my experience has been in these few months—a life experience and a great academic experience. I continue with my classes on drugs and visual culture, and every day I visit Green Library to develop my research project. The year helped me to hone the scope of the project and think about the broader impact I want my book to have outside of my research area in African American religious history—namely, to speak to how social scientists quantify African American religious orientations through national American surveys. The Humanities Center exceeded (and overwhelmed!) my expectations with the resources and events scheduled throughout the year.

Having the time and space to read and think allowed me to make a series of breakthroughs that seeded my writing and thinking all year long. Conversations with other fellows as well as listening to their talks transformed my approach to academic culture and to my own work. It helped me to fine-tune my own positionality in ways that I think have significantly improved my relation to my archive and the stories I’m_positioning in ways that I think have significantly improved my relation to my archive and the stories I’m interested in telling.

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I learned about fields that I know nothing about. Work aligns more closely with mine, to lunches in which so many disciplines, from research talks by peers whose different fields and universities. I learned so much from the tenure clock. I particularly appreciated the opportunity to know and learn from a group of fellows from the Center alongside faculty was absolutely essential. Professionalization has been a priority, and as a result, I have benefited in building community and fostering positive relationships with the other fellows, some I suspect will be lifelong friends.

My year at the SHC has been all I hoped for and more. It has been meaningful not only because of the intellectual and financial support the Center provides but also because of the sense of community, solidarity, and mutual support I found here. I am excited to begin as a Harper-Schmidt Fellow and Collegiate Assistant Professor in the Liberal Arts at the University of Chicago but am equally sad to bid farewell to the community here.

During my fellowship year, I made substantial progress on the research and writing of my book manuscript, which I hope to submit in nearly final draft form for publication in the fall of 2023. My conversations with other fellows and my encounters with their research have substantively reshaped my thinking about the importance of humanities research in the academy today, and as a result, will most definitely impact the shape of my subsequent project.

I had a productive year. I wrote two full dissertation chapters, and I presented a section of one of these chapters at the premier conference in my subfield (New Ways of Analyzing Variation), where it was awarded the Best Student Paper Award. I really loved the weekly research talks this year. I was also blown away by the warmth and collegiality of this cohort of fellows—quite literally the best group of people I’ve met at Stanford.

It’s such an amazing opportunity to be able to dedicate time to research and writing without the pressure of the tenure clock. I particularly appreciated the opportunity to know and learn from a group of fellows from different fields and universities. I learned so much from so many disciplines, from research talks by peers whose work aligns more closely with mine, to lunches in which I learned about fields that I know nothing about.

I started the year with the aim not just of making progress on existing research but of thinking deeply in a way that I hadn’t really been able to since at least the beginning of the pandemic. While I can’t yet say that a finished product exists, the SHC has been instrumental in allowing me to learn how to approach research questions differently from my usual routine. This has been a true gift.

This was a rich experience that provided plenty of opportunities to discuss my own research with colleagues from all over the world and from various disciplines. Meetings with editors and publishing houses and the Friday talks were extremely helpful. It was also very good to work together with people who are at the same stage of the academic path. Finally, being housed at the Center alongside faculty was absolutely essential.

This year gave me the time and space to reconsider my dissertation and figure out what shape my first book will take. I would wish for all recent PhD graduates to have a year like this to recover from the stress of completing the dissertation and to consider how their work will fit into a longer research trajectory. I will start a tenure-track position refreshed and with a clear plan to fit into a longer research trajectory. I will start a tenure-track position refreshed and with a clear plan to fit into a longer research trajectory. I will start a tenure-track position refreshed and with a clear plan to fit into a longer research trajectory. I will start a tenure-track position refreshed and with a clear plan.
My hope as a fellow this year was to find community among scholars who could help me write for a public audience, especially for the interreligious social justice networks currently working on environmental issues in the Central Valley. The Stanford Humanities Center is unmatched in support and thoughtfulness. Having a dedicated space to write every day and, moreover, a community with whom to share both struggle and triumph, made it possible for me to finish.

This was my second opportunity to be a fellow at the Center over the last decade. My book project progressed well during this second time round despite some hiccups. The book will strive to make sense of unresolved puzzles at the interface of biopolitical theory and gender through the reevaluation of his- tories of tobacco. Thank you, SHC! I could not have developed this book without the support of your staff and community of fellows.

My fellowship allowed me space and time to develop my dissertation, including drafting an introduction, revising earlier chapters, and writing a new chapter. The facilities and staff of the Center were invaluable in the completion of this goal. I cannot emphasize enough just how much it helped to have an office I could go into each day and to have access to printing and technology resources that meant I could focus more on my work.

During my time at the Center, I presented a paper at the flagship conference in my field, wrote and revised three dissertation chapters, and defended my dissertation, including drafting an introduction, revising earlier chapters, and writing a new chapter. The facilities and staff of the Center were invaluable in the completion of this goal. I cannot emphasize enough just how much it helped to have an office I could go into each day and to have access to printing and technology resources that meant I could focus more on my work.

My year at the Humanities Center has been a productive, inspiring, and successful one. I completed my dissertation, which was immensely strengthened by conversations with, feedback from, and the chance to present my research to an interdisciplinary community of scholars. I’m delighted to report that I’m headed to Eastern Oregon University as a professor of history in the fall. I couldn’t have asked for a better way to end my journey at Stanford.

This year I finished both my degrees and was successful in the academic job market. I completed a dissertation in comparative literature titled “The Drama of Our World: Spectator and Subject in Medieval Kashmir and Early Modern Europe.” I also wrote an MS thesis for the Symbolic Systems Program titled “Literary Reasoning in Large Language Models,” alongside finishing relevant coursework for the degree. Finally, I accepted a tenure-track offer from Claremont McKenna College as Assistant Professor of Literature.

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During my time as the Center, I presented a paper at the flagship conference in my field, wrote and revised three dissertation chapters, and defended my dissertation in my home department. I was expecting to find time dedicated to research and writing, which I found in abundance. But I was surprised at how supportive and engaged the cohort was, and I truly benefited from speaking with others and through listening and thinking about their work.

My nine months gave me the precious time to finish a number of projects, free from the demands of full-time teaching. I significantly expanded three chapters of my book on Homer and non-Greek oral traditions, which put me in a position to finish it (I hope) by year’s end. I also learned a good deal about the whole range of topics represented by the remarkable SHC cohort, from senior faculty to the amazing undergrad Hume Fellows.

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Having a group of early career scholars from diverse areas of study was very useful in terms of floating ideas about research and job talks. The ability to think through and try new big ideas is invaluable. I also feel I have grown as a professional thanks to interactions at the SHC. In sum, I think the time and space that the Mellon program provides, within a great intellectual community, are its biggest strengths.

I used this year to complete a draft of the introduction and four chapters of my book, and the SHC was instrumental in achieving this goal. I was able to workshop my ideas through presentations to the fellows, the Arts + Justice workshop, and a presentation to an art history graduate seminar. The opportunity to work every day without having to worry about other responsibilities created the necessary mental space that had been unattainable until now.

Being at the Stanford Humanities Center was a transformative experience for my book thanks to the brilliant minds and congenial engagement of the graduate students, postdocs, faculty, and staff throughout the academic year. The composition of my cohort was key and offered me extraordinary access to individuals whose expertise enriched my methodology and vision for my project. The synergies between my fields of research and those of the other fellows created a true think tank environment.

This year I was able to make significant progress on my book manuscript, complete a book proposal, and secure the representation of a literary agent for the project. In addition to writing and conducting archival research, I was able to undertake important research trips and conduct interviews with key interlocutors during my time as a fellow. I am so grateful for the time, space, and collegiality of the fellowship at the SHC. Do I have to leave?

What a great year this has been! I co-organized the Department of History’s second Agnotology Workshop and was able to finish a draft of a new book, which looks at how cigarette makers have used changing concepts of nature and nativity to sell cigarettes. I also completed two essays. But all that pales when juxtaposed to the great joy I had of meeting new friends and potential collaborators; the Humanities Center is truly a gem in the world of academia.

I completed my project in collaboration with colleagues from the Wellcome Trust, London, and University of Copenhagen, Denmark, and my fourteen-person international advisory board. This work was published in Science in September 2022. The SHC allowed me time to develop a portal on the Gendered Innovations website (genderedinnovations.stanford.edu) that presents a roadmap for national science funders who wish to implement policies supporting sex, gender, and diversity in the design of research. I hope you agree it’s quite beautiful!
My time at the SHC was instrumental for making progress on, and significantly reframing, my trade book project Changing Gender. The intellectual community enabled me to do original research that offers a revisionist history of the gender concept itself. I think the work I’ve done has the potential not only to intervene in the public sphere, but to reshape “gender studies” as a field and to reposition transgender studies and trans lives as a more central concern.

This past year at the SHC, I forged relationships with a new set of colleagues that I’ll carry with me through my career. I completed my Next Generation professional development project, which was cataloging a 1,200- plus specimen collection of pressed plants from early colonial America that is now fully described in the Online Archival of California. Also, I just celebrated the publication of my first book, Natural Things in Early Modern Worlds.

I’ve had a very rich year and have made good progress on my book project. When I started the year, the project was large and unwieldy. Thanks to the Center, I’ve been able to narrow and focus the project in ways that will increase its impact. The community created by staff and fellows alike gave me a delightful sense of the humanities being a group project and of my own work as part of a team effort.

My favorite aspect of being part of the Stanford Humanities Center was that for the first time during my career at Stanford, I was merely one disciplinary-unities being a group project and of my own work as part of a team effort. The generous support of the Stanford Humanities Center made for an extraordinarily productive year. I completed two chapters of my book manuscript and was able to share this work with audiences in three separate invited presentations. The time away from teaching allowed me to field some very rewarding meetings with potential publishers, and the pleasure of conversations with acquisitions editors and other audiences ower a great deal to the fellows’ close engagement with my work.

Aside from the general intellectual nourishment, my main achievement is that I drafted half the substantive chapters in my book project. I workedshop two with Stanford’s Center for Law and History and Center for Medieval and Early Modern Studies. I can best describe this year as being one in which I visited intellectual gardens I had long neglected and discovered intellectual gardens I never knew existed. In the process, borrowing from Frantz Fanon, I was “endlessly creating myself.”

This year was successful on several fronts. I entered the academic job market and secured a three-year visiting assistant professorship at the University of Montréal in the Department of World Languages and Literatures. Perhaps the biggest asset of being at the Center was the talk. Never had I been exposed with such intensity to so many well-thought-out projects, nor had I seen so many compelling speakers one after another. I did much self-reflection.

Heather Vrana  
External Faculty Fellow  
Department of History, University of Florida  
Guarantees, Medicine and Disability in Cold War Central America

Esther Yu  
Internal Faculty Fellow  
Department of English, Stanford University  
Experiencing the Novel: The Genre of Tender Conscience

Adnan A. Zulfiqar  
External Faculty Fellow  
Law School, Rutgers University  
Duties to the Collective: Jurists, Islamic Law, and the Search for Cohesion, 945–1258 CE

Victoria Zurita  
SHC Dissertation Prize Fellow  
Department of Comparative Literature, Stanford University  
The Paradoxes of Aesthetic Individualism: Fashioning Communities and Selves in Fin-de-siècle France and Spanish America
At the heart of the Center is a cohort of fellows engaged in a lively intellectual exchange of ideas. Our youngest group, the Hume Honors Fellows, are important members. This past year we welcomed a group of ten Hume Honors Fellows, all undergraduate seniors, each majoring in a humanities discipline and working on projects in linguistics, art history, sociology, international relations, and other fields. They share an office at the Center, receive a stipend for research, and participate in group activities that inspire friendship and deepen their scholarly focus.

The symposium in May, at which the Hume Fellows presented, was an impressive display of humanities research. Each student previewed their honors thesis for peers, advisors, SHC fellows, and the program benefactors.

The Hume Honors Fellowships are made possible by gifts from Mr. George H. Hume and Dr. Leslie P. Hume.

Calico Ducheneaux

Linguistics
Advisors: Katherine Hilton, Rob Podesva
Shared Identity Amongst Sovereign Nations? A Perception Study of Native American English

Ducheneaux intends to pursue a PhD in linguistics to work on the Cheyenne River Reservation’s language revitalization efforts.

Ananya Karthik

Political Science and Computer Science, Honors in Ethics in Society; Minor in Human Rights
Advisor: Debra Satz
Digital Border Walls: Threats to Migrants’ Rights Posed by Border Enforcement Technologies

Karthik will be pursuing an internship in the Foreign Department of The Economist in London, followed by the John Gardner Public Service Fellowship at a legal advocacy nonprofit.

Angie Lopez

Art History; Minor in French
Advisor: Alexander Nemerov
In a Queer Time and Spirit: The Cross-Temporality and Mysticism of Georgiana Houghton’s Spirit Drawings

Lopez will be interning at the Cluny in Paris before beginning a PhD in art history at Yale University in the fall.

Ximena Sanchez Martinez

Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity; Minor in Biology
Advisors: Tomás Jiménez, Jonathan Risa, and Rebecca Guirt
The Next Step: Reframing the Vulnerability and Difficulties of Undocumented Students Through Higher Education Milestones

Martinez is applying to medical school and graduate school to pursue an MD/PhD.
Claudia Nmai

Sociology; Minor in African and African American Studies
Advisor: Matthew Clair

A Privileged Positioning: The Role of Class and Ethnicity in Shaping Police Talk Narratives Among Black Immigrant and Black American Parents

Nmai anticipates starting a research assistant position at a think tank or nonprofit. By the fall of 2024, she plans to apply for a JD/PhD in sociology.

Ashwin Pillai

Philosophy and Political Science, Honors in Ethics in Society; Minor in Music
Advisor: Wendy Balkin
Standing Against Injustice: An Expanded Vision of Standing Doctrine for Public Law Litigation

Pillai is applying to law school to pursue a career in legal academia or public interest law.

Stephen Sharp Queener

International Relations; Minor in German Studies
Advisor: David Cohan
The Limits of Permissiveness: International Law, the UN, and the War in Ukraine

Queener will be moving to Nuremberg, Germany, to study at the Friedrich Alexander Universität Erlangen-Nuremberg, eventually earning a master’s degree in human rights.

Christina Shen

Art History
Advisor: Richard Vinograd
Flesh Matters: Corporeal Materiality, Medical Commodification, and the Social Body in Chinese “Flesh” Art

Shen will be moving to New York City in the fall to begin a master’s program in art history at the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University.

Camellia Ye

English and Economics
Advisor: Blakey Vermeule

The Organic Body Against the Coming of the Machine: Poetics of Digestion in “Paradise Lost”

In the fall, Ye will be attending the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago to pursue her interests in energy, the environment, and economic policy.

Vivian Zhu

East Asian Studies and International Relations; Minor in Economics
Advisor: Haiyan Lee

Stealing Pleasure: Chinese Woman Writing and Reading Online “Danmei” Fiction

After traveling throughout Southeast Asia, Zhu plans to work as an associate consultant at Bain and Company’s San Francisco office.
The International Visitors Program was dynamic. Visitors came from Denmark, Mexico/Netherlands, Israel, India, and Turkey/Germany: The Center hosted an award-winning documentary filmmaker; scholars specializing in Hebrew, Italian, Latin American, and comparative literatures; a scholar researching neo-Buddhist culture in Karnataka, India; a nongovernmental-organization pioneer who works on pressing social issues in India; and a scholar investigating the politics of art in Turkey and Germany. During their stay, International Visitors were able to connect with faculty, students, and other fellows through lectures, presentations, workshops, and other, sometimes unexpected, ways.

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International Visitors Program

“Presenting my work to the forum members and having their responses was certainly a great gift, and listening to others present their brilliance is probably the most conspicuous benefit of the Center.”

Uri S. Cohen
Department of Literature, Tel Aviv University

Uri S. Cohen is the author of several books and other projects, including a documentary film. He is the author of Survival: Scenes of Death Between the World Wars in Italy and Palestine, The Poetics of Orly Castel Bloom, and The Security Style in Hebrew Literature as well as the documentary film Traces of Ida Fink (Jerusalem Film Festival, 2004). Nominated by the Taube Center for Jewish Studies, Cohen gave a talk entitled “The Ends of Primo Levi” at the Humanities Center and spoke about Primo Levi and Philip Roth during a public conversation with Steve Zipperstein.

Roberto Hernández
Bliss Carnochan
International Visitor
World Justice Project, Mexico

Roberto Hernández is an Emmy Award-winning documentary filmmaker whose films—El tunel, Justicia expuesta, and the Emmy Award winner Presunto culpable (2008)—were influential in shaping policies in the Mexican justice system. A lawyer and World Justice Project researcher, Hernández also helped to create Mexico’s first national survey of incarcerated persons, exploring the experiences of the criminally accused with the police, the prosecution service, and the courts. Hernández was nominated by the Center for Latin American Studies. During his visitorship, he gave a talk entitled “Fight for Feeling: My Role in Policy Design Through Storytelling.” The screening of Presunto culpable, sponsored by Stanford Global Studies and the Department of Art and Art History, was followed by a Q and A.

Banu Karaca
Aron Rodrigue
International Visitor
Director of the Research Group Beyond Restitution: Heritage, (Dis)Possession, and the Politics of Knowledge, EUME, Forum Transregionale Studien, Berlin

Banu Karaca works at the intersection of political anthropology and critical theory; art, aesthetics, and cultural policy; and museum studies and feminist memory studies. She is the author of The National Frame: Art and State Violence in Turkey and Germany and co-editor of Women Mobilizing Memory. She has published on freedom of expression in the arts, the visualization of gendered memories of war and political violence, visual literacy, and restitution. As the co-founder of Siyah Bant, a research platform that documents and analyzes censorship in the arts in Turkey, she has also contributed to the Universal Periodic Review of Turkey before the UN Human Rights Council. Karaca was nominated by the Abbas Program in Islamic Studies. During her visitorship, she gave a talk titled “Beyond Restitution: Heritage, (Dis)Possession, and the Politics of Knowledge.” The Anthropology Department also sponsored a talk on her most recent book.
Nivedita Narain is a development professional with nearly thirty-five years of experience as an organization builder, researcher, teacher, and trainer. Currently she heads Charities Aid Foundation India as its Chief Executive Officer. She has worked with Professional Assistance for Development Action from 1987 to 2021, holding various leadership positions. Having made pioneering contributions to the establishment of India’s first self-help groups, she has worked in the areas of gender, livelihoods, organization development, and human resources management for nonprofits, setting up development practice as an academic discipline. Nominated by the Department of Political Science, Narain gave a talk titled “The Role of Civil Society Organizations in India” during her visit.

Rahamath Tarikere is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Kannada Literature Studies, Kannada University, Hampi (Karnataka, India). He has published many books on Muharram, Sufism, Nathism, Shaktism, and other local mystic cults of Karnataka. His research includes works in literary criticism, multilingual texts, poetics, and cultural studies on Kannada literature, as well as a book on Hindi film actress and singer Amirbai Karnataki. Tarikere received Karnataka Sahitya Academy Book Awards in 1992, 1998, 2000, and 2010, and he is currently working on the neo-Buddhist culture of Karnataka. Tarikere was nominated by the Center for South Asia, which sponsored his talk “Popular Religious Movements in Contemporary Karnataka.”

Mads Rosendahl Thomsen’s most recent publication, finished during his Stanford visit, is a short book on the concept and history of text. He is the author of Mapping World Literature: International Canonization and Transnational Literatures (2008) and The New Human in Literature: Posthuman Visions of Changes in Body, Mind, and Society after 1900 (2013) and is a coauthor with Stefan Helgesson of Literature and the World (2019). Thomsen was nominated by the Program in Modern Thought and Literature. During his residence at the Humanities Center he delivered several talks: “What Is Literature Not Good At?” (SHC), “Resource Site for Literary Digital Studies” (Literary Lab), and “Adjusting to the Age of Automated Writing” (Modern Thought and Literature).

“Among the benefits were the many conversations on my own work and being inspired by the way other humanities scholars work.”

Mads Rosendahl Thomsen
Aarhus University, Denmark
The Research Workshop Program, now in its twenty-ninth year, brings together faculty, students, and scholars from Stanford and beyond to present and discuss current research and explore topics of common intellectual concern. The workshops range from intimate, in-person gatherings to hybrid events broadcast around the globe. The 2022-23 program hosted over 118 events and included over 1,820 participants. Its presence as a vibrant space for interdisciplinary exchange has resulted in a record number of new applications.

Arts + Justice
Blokker Research Workshop

Justice, a capacious conceptual category, impacts lives in quotidian and spectacular ways, influencing political institutions, impacting social relations, and inscribing bodies with deeply ingrained habits of thought. This workshop series brings together art historians, performance theorists, literary scholars, political scientists, anthropologists, race theorists, and immigration scholars, among others, to explore the intersections of discourses around arts and justice.

Concerning Violence: A Collaborative Research Group
Humanities Center Fellows Research Workshop

Concerning Violence has become an ongoing initiative that challenges the political, economic, ontological, and epistemic violence of coloniality with the goal of rethinking the premises of cultural and literary scholarship toward the practice of transformational knowledge production. Our theme this year was Coloniality, Gender, and Empire: Theorizing Gender Violence and Transnational Feminisms.

Critical Data Practices in Humanities Research

This workshop explores the unique challenges that face the arts and humanities as we ground data-driven insights in real-world human complexity, and in various social, cultural, and historical contexts.

Data Scarcity and Historical Institutionalisms

Data scarcity concerns all historical inquiries but is particularly significant in the long-term study of institutional transformations. By facilitating the collaboration of historians and archaeologists with researchers, this workshop aims to produce an interdisciplinary discussion of not only research methodologies for studying institutional change but also the context, nature, and intensity of the diffusion processes leading to shared social, political, and economic institutional formations.

Digital Aesthetics

From IBM punch cards to digital census forms, from ASCII art to Oculus Rift, how do we think and feel on screens and online, on disk or in the cloud, at the keyboard or off the grid? How do digital objects and code blur boundaries between text, image, and performative act? How do they trouble our understanding of the distinctions between a medium and its content, and how do new media create new subjects, objects, and worlds? This workshop hosts conversations about digital technology and culture beyond traditional disciplinary lenses.

Education and the Humanities
Claire and John Radway Research Workshop

Education is one of the most contested spaces in American society today. Drawing on the unique interdisciplinary community that Education and the Humanities provides, we strive to uncover the roots of current debates about educational institutions and ideas, promote pathbreaking scholarship, and create opportunities for collaboration to make a bigger impact on the public conversation.

Ethics and Politics, Ancient and Modern
Marta Sutton Weeks Research Workshop

Ethics and Politics, Ancient and Modern aims to provide a focus for Stanford faculty and students with a primary or secondary interest in classical moral and political philosophy, engaging faculty and students from different departments in interdisciplinary inquiry into foundational ethical and political questions.
Eurasian Empires

Eurasian Empires explores the connected and comparative history of empires from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. Our intellectual remit combines histories of global and regional imperial formations, including the Russian, Ottoman, Safavid, Qing, Uzbek, Mughal, Chinese, Dutch, Portuguese, British, French, and Spanish empires. Merve Tekgürler, a PhD student in history and multiyear graduate student co-chair for this workshop, secured a Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Innovation Fellowship to further research in this area.

Feminist, Queer, and Trans Studies Colloquium

Zora Neale Hurston wrote, “Research is formalized curiosity.” Such curiosity is at the heart of this research workshop. The Feminist, Queer, and Trans Studies Colloquium seeks to disrupt norms of thinking within the academy and transgress institutional boundaries. The workshop cultivates discussions focused on aesthetics, archives, and art in feminist, queer, and transgender studies.

Religion, Politics, and Culture

What role does religion play in human societies? Is religion merely a vehicle to pursue political and economic agendas? Or are politics and the pursuit of power merely a means to serve religious ends? Our workshop invites scholars from across disciplines to explore the role of religion not merely as a political or social institution, nor as a cynical rhetorical device, but as a source of powerful ideas, attitudes, beliefs, and ways of being.

Matters of Voice

Marta Sutton Weeks Research Workshop

There is an inherent excess in voice—it resounds both within and outside meaningful speech. The Matters of Voice workshop aims to support research agendas that engage with both the embodied nature of voice (music, film, sound studies, performance studies, and gender and sexuality) and its relational nature (literature, linguistics, anthropology, and philosophy).

Working Group in Literary and Visual Culture

The Research Workshop in Honor of John Bender

How do ways of seeing and reading inform our sense of history or place? What is the relationship between close reading, an essential tool for literary critics, and close looking, central to art history? We consider projects that transcend disciplinary boundaries in terms of both content and form, considering materials often overlooked in more conventional scholarship.

The Medical Humanities

Linda Randall Meier Research Workshop

The Medical Humanities explores the concept that intersections between medicine and the arts/humanities/social sciences matter because they show that the object of medicine is cultured, gendered, and historically specific. The modern pandemic has made clear the role of class, race, and inequality in the response to disease. Returning from the extraordinary conditions imposed by the pandemic, the members’ need to explore the meaning of illness experience becomes more urgent.

Postcolonial Spatialities: Spatial Concepts

Colonialism is conventionally defined as the control of external territories by European nations. However, another definition is that it entails the management of heterogeneous populations under the elusive rubric of the nation. The objective of this workshop is to focus on the spatial concepts that might be rigorously applied to studies of colonial and postcolonial societies. Spatial concepts such as chronotope, cartography, spatial fix, center/periphery, and globalization will be augmented with newer ones such as spatial traversal, means of locomotion, and geocriticism to generate a comprehensive and flexible set of terms for application to different contexts.

The Workshop in Poetics

The Workshop in Poetics is concerned with the theoretical and practical dimensions of the reading and criticism of poetry. Over the workshop’s seventeen-year history, the exposure to multiple perspectives and the atmosphere of mutual investment have been essential to the success of many dissertations.
The Stanford Humanities Center embraces emerging digital methods to complement traditional kinds of analysis and interpretation through its ongoing partnership with the Center for Spatial and Textual Analysis (CESTA). The SHC is proud to offer support to CESTA, and together we serve as the hub of an international network of fellows, visiting scholars, students, and alumni.

Digital Humanities

The Year in Review

Undergraduate Research Internship Program
CESTA continued its Undergraduate Research Internship program, through which it awarded internships to forty-four students and supported seven CESTA-affiliated students. Working part-time during the academic year and full-time during summer, our interns continued to advance digital humanities scholarship and created a rich research community at Wallenberg Hall through collaborative events with Stanford Data Science interns. The program was supported by two Stanford graduate mentors, Annie Lamar and JJ Lugardo, both PhD students in the Classics Department.

Digital Humanities Fellows Program
CESTA welcomed our new cohort of Digital Humanities (DH) Fellows, under the leadership of Associate Director of Research Will Fenton and Nicole Coleman, Digital Research Architect for the Stanford University Libraries, with support from Senior Graduate Fellow Andrew Nelson, a PhD student in East Asian Languages and Cultures. This year’s cohort of eleven fellows included graduate students and postdocs from the departments of Classics, Comparative Literature, East Asian Languages and Cultures, History, and Philosophy. Their research was showcased in an end-of-year symposium.

Critical Data Practices
In the SHC-sponsored Critical Data Practices workshop, CESTA faculty and students continued their discussions of the unique challenges that face the arts and humanities as we ground data-driven insights in real-world human complexity, and in various social, cultural, and historical contexts.
The past year was a productive one for CESTA scholars, with numerous publications and distinctions awarded to affiliate researchers.

Nora Barakat, creator of the Open Gulf project, published her first book, *Bedouin Bureaucrats: Mobility and Property in the Ottoman Empire* (Stanford University Press), and Estelle Freedman published an article in the *Oral History Review* that draws upon the dataset that she and Barakat developed through her CESTA project, the Oral History Text Analysis Project. Rowan Dorin was awarded the Mary L. Dudañi Digital Legal History Prize for his CESTA database of ecclesiastical legislation, Corpus Synodalium.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded Mark Algee-Hewitt a grant to apply text-mining methods to explore a new history of twentieth- and twenty-first-century literary theory and criticism and to test the feasibility and limits of the text-mining exemption to the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. CESTA affiliate Eric Harvey (Near Eastern and Judaic Studies, Brandeis University) was awarded an ACLS Emerging Voices Fellowship, and 2023 DH Fellow Merve Tekgürler (History PhD student) secured a Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Innovation Fellowship. CESTA faculty director Giovanna Ceserani together with CESTA faculty members Mark Algee-Hewitt, Grant Parker, and Laura Stokes have been awarded a Mellon Foundation grant that will support a yearlong Sawyer Seminar series titled “The Data That Divides Us: Recalibrating Data Methods for New Knowledge Frameworks Across the Humanities,” alongside one postdoctoral and two graduate fellowships.

Along with these milestones, CESTA has continued to incubate the next generation of digital scholarship, with pathbreaking new projects from faculty and staff at the Center for Racial Justice (Transparency and Racial Equity in Public Corporations), the School of Education (Expanding the Discipline of English Language Arts and Using Data Visualizations to Help Students See Texts Differently in English Language Arts), and Stanford Libraries (Know Systemic Racism).

### Postdoctoral Fellow

CESTA’s research ecosystem was enhanced by the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellow, Valentina Dal Cin (Department of History, Ca’ Foscari University). In addition to serving as a 2023 DH Fellow, Valentina organized the daylong seminar “Rethinking the Long Eighteenth Century: Social, Literary, and Political History in Pre- and Post-Revolutionary France.”

### New Faces at CESTA

CESTA was pleased to promote Jonathan Clark from interim Center Manager to Manager of Finance and Operations. Nicole Constantine, a PhD student in the Classics Department, served as Communications Coordinator, and Daniela Perez, an undergraduate at San Francisco State University, joined as Office Management Intern, courtesy of the Peninsula Bridge Program.

### Global Horizons of the Digital and Public Humanities

CESTA launched a new international research institute developed in collaboration with the Venice Centre for Digital and Public Humanities, with the support of the Stanford Humanities Center. The institute will convene an international cohort of faculty, graduate students, and practitioners in 2023–24.
The Stanford Humanities Center welcomes leading scholars, artists, and practitioners addressing urgent issues in the humanities. This past year saw a full calendar of hybrid events, including capacity audiences for our Marta Sutton Weeks Lecture with feminist writer Sara Ahmed and the Presidential Lecture with Columbia University Professor Saidiya Hartman, two series not presented in person since 2019.

Online viewers

5,200+

Countries represented, with viewers logging on from Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, China, Czech Republic, France, Finland, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Palestinian Territories, Poland, Portugal, South Korea, Singapore, United Kingdom, Ukraine, and United Arab Emirates as well as the United States.

2022–2023 Highlights

October 27, 2022

Presidential Lecture in the Humanities

“Graces of the Unsung”

Saidiya Hartman, Columbia University

October 20, 2022

Stanford Homecoming Reunion: Classes Without Quizzes

“Failure: The History of an Idea That Didn’t Always Exist”

Roland Greene, Stanford University

Events

“Events”

Wanda M. Corn
Robert and Ruth Halperin Professor Emerita in Art History
Anthony P. Meier Family Director,
Stanford Humanities Center 1992–95

“ I’m a great fan of the 1891 Lectures in the Humanities. Not only does the event provide an opportunity to learn about and welcome a new colleague, but it also jump-starts the new appointment’s finding a community at Stanford.”

Wanda M. Corn
Robert and Ruth Halperin Professor Emerita in Art History
Anthony P. Meier Family Director, Stanford Humanities Center 1992–95

October 27, 2022

Celebrate the Fellows

“What Difference Do We Make? Research at the Stanford Humanities Center”

Paul Nauert, Eve Oishi, Christy Pichichero
Inside the Center:
Book Talks

This online series highlights some of the most provocative, groundbreaking, and unusual work happening under our roof.

“Genres of Listening: An Ethnography of Psychoanalysis in Buenos Aires”
September 29, 2022
Xochitl Marsilli-Vargas, 2020–21 Fellow

Digital Horizons

This lecture series, co-presented with CBSTA, is the intersection of the humanistic and the technological.

“How a Pandemic Becomes a Story: Narrative and Social Crisis in the Platform Age”
October 4, 2022
Richard Jean Su, McGill University

How Change Comes:
Knowledge + Justice

How can distinctive, original scholarship encourage the pursuit of justice in society or the academy?

“Viral Justice: How We Grow the World We Want”
October 18, 2022
Ruha Benjamin, Princeton University

February 13, 2023
Lerone Martin, Department of Religious Studies

The 1891 Lectures in the Humanities

In 1891, thirty-five scholars gathered to form a community in a new university. In that spirit, this series welcomes new senior humanities faculty of the Stanford community to present their work.

“A Genealogy of the University”
November 3, 2022
Emily Levine, Graduate School of Education

“A Tree and a Buddha: Imagining an Arboreal Humanities”
December 1, 2022
Gregory Levine, University of California, Berkeley

Harry Camp Memorial Lecture

The Harry Camp Memorial Fund was established in 1956 by friends and associates of Harry Camp, a prominent businessman and philanthropist in San Francisco.

“Imagine! Creating Earth Futures?”
May 2, 2023
Harriet Hawkins, Royal Holloway University of London

Marta Sutton Weeks Lecture

A gift to endowment from Marta Sutton Weeks in 1987 provides funds to bring distinguished lecturers to Stanford University for stays varying in duration from one week up to one quarter.

“Losing Your Hand: Complaint, Common Sense, and Other Institutional Legacies”
April 4, 2023
Sara Ahmed, Independent Feminist Scholar and Writer

Raymond F. West Memorial Lecture

The Raymond F. West Memorial Lecture series was established in 1930 by Mr. and Mrs. Frederic West of Seattle in memory of their son, a student at Stanford University.

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Watch event recordings at shc.stanford.edu/news.
Research Development in the Humanities

New Support for Faculty Projects

Together with the Vice Provost and Dean of Research (VPDoR), the Stanford Humanities Center brought on Madison Priest as the first Research Development Specialist dedicated to supporting faculty in the humanities, arts, and interpretive social sciences. Grant proposals, especially for collaborative projects and federal funders, have grown increasingly complex and difficult to manage. Madison’s support helps make proposals more competitive, bringing additional funds to faculty projects.

Partnerships

The role is co-housed in the SHC and VPDoR’s Research Development Office. The affiliation with the SHC has proven an indispensable entry point into the thriving humanities culture at Stanford. Additional successful cross-institutional partnerships include the following:

- CESTA
- The Changing Human Experience
- University Corporate and Foundation Relations
- The Offices of Faculty Development, Diversity, and Engagement

Additional Resources for Faculty

In addition to hands-on proposal development support, Stanford faculty in these fields now have access to a suite of materials specifically tailored to their needs, including a funding primer for first-time grant applicants and information on recurring funding opportunities for the Digital Humanities and the Public Humanities.

Faculty Perspectives

“I can’t speak highly enough of the support I received from Madison Priest...The project we worked on was collaborative, with stakeholders from across schools. I would not have been able to produce the application without her support.”

Margaret Cohen
English

“Madison Priest’s expertise in the humanities, arts, and social sciences is especially welcome since the grant-writing needs of humanists differ from those submitting applications in quantitative fields.”

Emily Levine
Graduate School of Education

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Emily Levine
Graduate School of Education

20 Faculty/Teams Served
10 Proposals Submitted
5 Presentations
1 Workshop
9 Departments/Units

2022–2023 ANNUAL REPORT
The Stanford Humanities Center gratefully acknowledges the following individuals and organizations who made gifts in support of the Humanities Center between September 1, 2022, and August 31, 2023.

Donors

Anonymous
Diana Bowes
Victory Van Dyke Chase (in memory of Bliss Camochan)
Kristin and John Clark
Grace Hoagland
Leslie and George Hume
Patricia and David Nelson
Laurence Richter
William Riley
Juliet and Peter Seymour
Sara and Jeff Small

Named Gifts/Grants

Gifts to endowment have made it possible to carry out the Center’s mission and to secure its core activities in perpetuity. The dates in parentheses indicate the year the endowment was established.

Director’s Circle ($10,000+)

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Sara and Jeff Small

Benefactor ($5,000+)

Mary Anne Rothberg and Andrew Rowan
Katherine and Dhiran Shah

Patron ($1,000+)

Andrew Aguilar**
Ann and John Bender
Kimberly Oden and Donald Brewster
Cynthia Gordon and John Bunnell
Ardan B. Down
Audrey and David Egger (in memory of Helen M. Egger)
Roberta and Charles Katz
Carla Kerr Stearns
Vickie and Steven Masri
Joanne and Joel Mogy
Betty Morgenthaler
Laura Arroyo Murawczyk
Mauri Okamoto-Kearney and Terry Kearney
Kathleen Hoenan and Clarence Olimstead
William Reiter
The Seaver Institute
Andrea and Lubert Stryer

Associate ($100+)

Anonymous
Anonymous
in honor of Dr. Helen Brooks
YZhuo and Marcello Bastia-Forte (in memory of Eliani Bastia)
Cheryl Parnell and Samuel Dickerman**
Ari Ganguli
Matthew Gilman
Gretchen and Richard Grant
Loring Guessed
Laura Koloski*
Steven Macias
Jen and Joe Sullivan

Friend (<= $100)

Gonzalo Munevati*

Matching Gifts

Benefivity Social Ventures, Inc.
The Walt Disney Company

Gifts in Kind

Erik and Julia Falk
Barbara Koenig
Mary Anne Rothberg and Andrew Rowan

Research Workshop Program

Research Workshop Program (2007)
Anonymous

Individual Research Workshops

Humanities Center Fellows Research Workshop (2008)
Peter S. Bing and Humanities Center Fellows
Claire and John Radway Research Workshop (2006)
Claire and John Radway

University Support

With the support of the Office of the President, the Humanities Center stages the Presidential and Endowed Lectures in the Humanities and the Arts, which include a signature event and derive additional funds from the Harry Camp Memorial and Raymond F. West Memorial Lectures. Each year these ongoing series present a variety of lectures by distinguished scholars, writers, and artists from around the world.

The Humanities Center also gratefully acknowledges support from the Dean of Research, the Dean of the School of Humanities and Sciences, and the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education.

Grants to Endowment

Foundation grants to endowment are supporting the Humanities Center’s fellowships and workshops in perpetuity.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (2003)
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Financial Highlights

Below is a functional expense breakdown based on total program expenditures of $5,962,344.

FISCAL YEAR SEPTEMBER 1, 2022, TO AUGUST 31, 2023

Program Expenses

- Fellowship Program: 63%
- Workshop Program: 5%
- Pilot Programs: 6%
- Program Administration: 16%
- Public Lectures and Conferences: 6%
- International Scholars: 4%

Funding Sources

- Endowment: 88%
- University Funds: 7%
- Expandable Gifts: 5%
Giving Opportunities

To keep the Stanford Humanities Center among the leading institutes of its kind, your help is indispensable.

What We're Working On: A Vision for Our Next Era

Along with support for core programs, the Humanities Center is focusing on three initiatives:

01
An Outlet for the Public Humanities: Our Digital Platform

Our new website is part of an ambitious project that invites a public audience beyond campus to experience cutting-edge research through Stanford Humanities Today, the Stanford Humanities Center, CESTA, and Arcade, now linked into a single digital platform. In the coming years, we aim to provide a highly visible, interactive home for public-oriented projects connected to humanities research at Stanford.

Making a multiyear pledge of three to five years is especially meaningful as we seek to expand our programs and share the work of humanities scholars with our community and the world.

For a list of gift opportunities, please visit our website at shc.stanford.edu/support.

02
Next Generation Scholar Fellowships

Now in their third year and growing, these late-stage fellowships (formerly called Career Launch Fellowships) provide PhDs with necessary funding to bridge their transition to a teaching position within the profession after Stanford’s substantial investment in them. The Stanford Humanities Center is unique in offering this kind of flexible support to get PhDs over the finish line—but the demand is great, and more support is needed.

Unrestricted, expendable gifts are particularly helpful in enabling the work of the Center to continue to thrive. You may make such gifts to the following funds.

Annual Fund
Gifts of Any Amount
Unrestricted Annual Fund gifts help sustain programs not funded by endowment and facilitate strategic campus partnerships and new, original programming that benefit the wider community.

Director’s Fund
Gifts of $10,000 and Above
Director’s Fund gifts enable SHC leadership to advance the most-urgent needs and priorities of the Center and include membership in the Director’s Circle.

Ways to Give

Every Gift Supports the Humanities
- Make an online gift—one time or recurring (shc.stanford.edu/support)
- Write a check (payable to Stanford University)
- Make a multiyear pledge by sending an email to Susan Sebbard at sebbard@stanford.edu
- Donate your honorarium (shc.stanford.edu/ways-to-give)
- Transfer stock sales

All gifts are tax deductible. For more details on ways to give, visit our website at shc.stanford.edu/support or contact Assistant Director Susan Sebbard at sebbard@stanford.edu or 650.723.3053.
This past academic year was my first year at the Stanford Humanities Center, and it was an eventful one.

With my colleagues, I worked through the administrative transition of the SHC from the Dean of Research to the School of Humanities and Sciences, confirming our commitment to and support of the humanities across campus. Navigating this process allowed for new connections, friendships, and learning experiences that will continue to evolve.

At the heart of the humanities, SHC’s programs and events offered a fantastic opportunity to peek into the research of scholars and faculty in various fields. As an academic trained in archaeology/anthropology/cultural heritage, I enjoyed connecting with fellows and visitors and discovering research overlaps and connections in ways I would never have thought of.

Among the highlights of this year were welcoming new staff, strengthening our digital projects, and expanding our academic collaborations. At the same time, we wished farewell to staff whose valuable contribution is the backbone of the SHC’s mission. I am excited to work with colleagues at the Center and across campus as we continue growing our operation and role within the university and beyond.

Helen Malko
Associate Director