

HUMANITIES CENTER FACULTY FELLOWS - SPRING 2021



Verena Erlenbusch-Anderson

Humanities Center Fellow, Arts & Sciences
Associate Professor, Philosophy

Project: *The Politics of Terrorism: Political Violence and the Challenge of Liberalism*

After a series of high-profile instances of white supremacist and misogynist violence in the United States, calls to identify such acts as terrorism have surged in national public discourse. Government agencies like the Department of Homeland Security have begun to apply the term “terrorism” to what they describe as a set of new threats posed by homegrown violence. This project examines the arguments of proponents and critics of this recent policy change to explicate the notion of terrorism and elucidates its dependence on political liberalism. By probing the history of social justice advocacy in the United States, it seeks to make legible alternative understandings of terrorism that are irreducible to a liberal framework. While these alternatives are typically moralized, pathologized, or reduced to consistent uses of the traditional notion of terrorism, this study makes them legible as genuine political alternatives that challenge the presumed universality of liberal values.



Azra Hromadžić

Humanities Center Fellow, Maxwell
Associate Professor, Anthropology

Project: *“We will not give up Una!” Riverine Citizenship and the City in Love with the River in Bosnia & Herzegovina*

In 2015, Bihać, a northwestern Bosnian “City in Love with the River,” witnessed a spirited political protest. Thousands of people got together to object to the city’s decision conceding to a Russian-Bosnian Energy Company to build a dam on the city’s river Una. The river is famous for its fast currents, emerald color, tourist potential and for keeping Bihać’s population safe during the 1990’s war. Armed with love for the river, protesters achieved a significant outcome—pressured by the people, the government reversed its decision to grant the concession. This was the only reversal of a city government’s decision in its postwar history. Hromadžić’s project begins from this moment when the political rule stumbled to examine the relational nature of the river, people, love and politics. She illuminates how such elusive elements as love and affect travel between humans and non-humans and inform riverine citizenship in contemporary Bosnia.

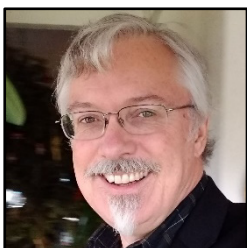


Will Scheibel

Humanities Center Fellow, Arts & Sciences
Associate Professor, English

Project: *Out of a Misty Dream: Gene Tierney, Female Stardom, and Hollywood’s Homefront*

The star of *Laura* (1944), *Leave Her to Heaven* (1945), and *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* (1947), Gene Tierney was one of Twentieth Century-Fox’s major contract players during the 1940s (according to Darryl F. Zanuck, the head of production at Fox, she was “the most beautiful woman in movie history”). Tierney was also one of the first celebrities in the U.S. to undergo treatment for mental illness publicly. Contrary to her popular identification with the iconic *Laura* portrait, this book argues that her films and performances expose social imaginings of women as passive objects of beauty, and that her star image in the war and immediate postwar U.S. makes an active, dynamic female presence visible. Chapters examine her image-making, unmaking, and remaking across the roles of pinup girl and “war worker,” domesticated Army wife, mother, female psychiatric subject, and comeback star.



James W. Watts

Humanities Center “Symposium” Fellow, Arts & Sciences
Professor, Religion

Project: *Imagining the Economics of Jubilee: Utopia Before and After Utopias*

Watts’ career-long research on the biblical book of Leviticus now hones in on chapter 25. It contains utopian legislation for resetting agriculture, land transactions, and slavery every 50 years, during what it calls the “Jubilee” year. While the surrounding story of the exodus to the promised land is famous for both inspiring freedom movements as well as being used to justify settler colonialism in the Americas, Africa, and the Middle East, the influence of this chapter’s vision of a static agrarian community is less well known. Later Jewish and Christian traditions have often used the Jubilee as a symbol of release and freedom. Yet the distinction between native and foreign slaves, freeing the former but not the latter in the Jubilee, has been used to justify racialized chattel slavery. Watts’ exploration of the history of Leviticus 25 in interpretation and economic practice offers a vantage point for observing some of the social effects—both oppressive and liberating—from envisioning economic futures based on a utopian vision of the past.

HUMANITIES CENTER DISSERTATION FELLOWS, 2020-2021



Carolyn Garland, Ph.D. Candidate, Philosophy

Dissertation: *The Metaphysics of Grief*

This project provides a literal understanding of the common expression of grief that in losing a loved one, the bereaved loses part of herself. Call these, 'grief utterances.' They are commonplace, and their accompanying phenomenology suggests they are true. Yet, few have considered the extent to which a philosopher's toolbox, well-equipped with notions like parthood and persons, can help establish an account of what makes them so. Garland uses these neglected resources to establish two potential answers to this question. We may either accept a view on which

two individual persons can form a plural person to which is identical; or accept a view on which the practical identity of an individual can be bound to and constituted by a plurality of other persons. Regardless, to account for the grief utterances, we must accept that persons are not simple, isolated agents.



Alex Hanson, Ph.D. Candidate, Composition and Cultural Rhetoric

Dissertation: *Not Appropriate for Children: A Look at Composition Practices and Rhetorical Strategies of Single Moms in Academia*

Hanson explores how single mothers in higher education across geographic locations, academic ranks, disciplines, and identities build support systems and draw on rhetorical strategies derived from their embodied knowledge to survive and navigate in academia. Single mother experiences are underrepresented in scholarship about parenting in higher education (Télez 2013; Nora et. al. 2017; Vieira 2018). This absence is evidenced in policies, systems, and

structures that prioritize the needs of heteronormative family units. The lived experiences and material realities of single mothers reveal how their lives outside academia shape and are shaped by their lives within it, including scholarly activity, interactions with colleagues, and relationships with their children. This dissertation argues that higher education needs to make shifts to better support single mothers, thereby benefitting others who are marginalized due to race, class, gender, and ability.

HUMANITIES NEW YORK Public Humanities Graduate Fellows, 2020-2021



Dana Olesch, Ph.D. Candidate, Anthropology

Project: *Community Dynamics in Contested Spaces: Documenting the Legacies of the Fifteenth Ward in Syracuse, New York*

The destruction of Syracuse's Fifteenth Ward persists in the living memory of many residents today. This area in the heart of the city housed a variety of multiethnic and multiracial communities throughout the first half of the twentieth century, only to be systematically destroyed by urban renewal projects leading to the construction of Interstate 81 in the 1960s. Olesch intends to create an interactive online platform designed to analyze, disseminate, and preserve

the history of the area. The site would serve as both an archive for historic documents, such as aerial views of the ward, census data schedules, security maps, and other oral and written histories, as well as an interactive mapping platform to display demographic data, provide resource accessibility assessments, and demonstrate patterns of eviction throughout the ward from 1890 to 1960. Olesch collaborates with Southwest Community Center and the Board of Frumah Packard Cemetery to encourage others to contribute and interact.



Evan Starling-Davis, Ph.D. Student, Literacy Education

Project: *MONUMENTS: An Ecosystematic Approach to Literacy Engagement*

Navigating an ocean of forgotten keepsakes, identities, and histories residing within America's Rust Belt, this interdisciplinary project both celebrates and critically examines the Afro-diasporic literacy experience within the city of Syracuse. Starling-Davis questions why the Arts—and the benefits of art-influenced literacy—are still widely inaccessible to Black and Brown communities in Syracuse. Honoring the art-activism devised from the (re)emergence of the 'Freedom School' via The Community Folk Art Center, Starling-Davis embarks on a quest to incite liberatory and alternative learning

processes of marginalized community members and their literacies, developing storyworlds devised from the fantastical subconsciousness of Afro-diasporic community members surviving the current state of living and learning in this region. This Afrosurrealistic voyage through digital and analog curations aims to create narrative bridges between arts centers, city school district youth and the local community.