

SIMPSON CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES

The Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities fosters intellectual discovery across boundaries, supporting crossdisciplinary exchange among scholars at the University of Washington and beyond. It is known internationally for its leadership in the digital humanities and public scholarship.



As one of the largest and most comprehensive humanities centers in the United States, the Simpson Center offers University of Washington scholars a rich spectrum of opportunities for intellectual community. The Center supports research and collaboration that allows scholars to build networks nationally and internationally.

The Center's mission supports four objectives:

- Crossdisciplinary research and inquiry
- Initiatives in the humanities at the leading edge of change
- Innovative study at the graduate level
- Scholarship that reaches audiences beyond the academy

The College of Arts and Sciences established the Center for the Humanities in 1987 with a mandate to support interdisciplinary activities. In 1997, Barclay and Sharon Simpson endowed the Center, which was renamed the Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities, in tribute to Barclay Simpson's father, a lifelong supporter of humanistic education.

The Center relies on the support of donors and funding agencies to fulfill its mission. Since 1999, it has received more than \$12 million in grants and gifts.

Collaboration and Crossdisciplinarity

Simpson Center programs are grounded in collaboration and crossdisciplinarity. The Center provides funding and support for **fellowships, research clusters, graduate study groups, conferences, and symposia**, allowing faculty and graduate students to exchange ideas and develop projects with colleagues, visiting scholars, and members of cultural institutions in the community.

Since 2000, the Simpson Center has funded **136 faculty fellowships** and **45 dissertation fellowships** supporting scholars from **30 campus units** across the humanities, arts, social sciences, and professional schools.

RESEARCH & TEACHING: RECENT TOPICS

Access to Information as a Human Right

African American Political Thought

Climate Ethics

Crowdfunding Health Care

Disability Studies

Histories and Futures of the Book

Intellectual Property, Privacy, and the Freedom of Speech

Islam and Forgiveness

SeaTac-Seattle Minimum Wage Campaign History

Socially Engaged Art in Japan

Teaching with Technology

Transformative Education Behind Bars

WIRED: Women Investigating Race, Ethnicity, and Difference



Digital Humanities

The Simpson Center maintains a suite of programs in the growing field of digital humanities. After successfully completing a \$2.5 million challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Center established annual **Digital Humanities Summer Fellowships**, supporting inventive and experimental research inspired by new technologies. The Center also supports the Digital Humanities Summer Institute at the University of Victoria, sending scholars to intensive week-long training sessions. These programs bring together faculty, graduate students, librarians, computer scientists, and designers to develop digital research and scholarship.

Reimagining the Humanities PhD

In 2015, the Simpson Center launched *Reimagining the Humanities PhD and Reaching New Publics*, a program forging new forms of scholarship and teaching beyond traditional academic circles, supported by a \$750,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The four-year program establishes a partnership between the UW and two-year colleges in the Seattle area, pairing UW doctoral students with faculty at two-year colleges, where they examine the increasingly important role those institutions play in higher education. The program also provides course-development funds to faculty and summer funding to graduate students to develop projects that demonstrate scholarship as publicly engaged practice.

Public Scholarship

The Simpson Center has gained national recognition for its work in the public humanities, a field that promotes mutually beneficial partnerships across institutions and sectors, providing pathways for scholars to share their work with broader audiences.

The graduate **Certificate in Public Scholarship** is a portfolio- and project-based program that enables graduate students and faculty mentors to integrate their scholarly, social, and political commitments with their intellectual and professional development. The certificate was founded at the Simpson Center and is now jointly led by the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences at UW Bothell, UW Graduate School, and the Simpson Center.

The Center also hosts the **Solomon Katz Distinguished Lectures in the Humanities**, which feature leading thinkers such as Cathy N. Davidson, Shu-mei Shih, Doris Sommer, Anne Balsamo, and Robin D. G. Kelley in events that are free and open to the public.



“The most robust graduate program for the new public humanists is the Certificate in Public Scholarship, at the University of Washington’s Simpson Center for the Humanities.”

— Julie Ellison, founding director,
Imagining America

SCHOLARLY NETWORKS AND PARTNERS

Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes

Digital Humanities Summer Institute, University of Victoria

Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory (HASTAC)

Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life

Maker Lab in the Humanities, University of Victoria

National Humanities Alliance

Washington Consortium for the Liberal Arts

Western Humanities Alliance

RECENT LOCAL PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture

El Centro de la Raza

Experience Music Project

Frye Art Museum

Henry Art Gallery

Humanities Washington

KEXP 90.3 FM

North Seattle, Seattle Central, and South Seattle Colleges

Northwest African American Museum

On the Boards: Behnke Center for Contemporary Performance

Seattle Art Museum

Wing Luke Museum of the Pacific Asian Experience

University Beyond Bars

last update: November 2015