

The Humanities Center

▶ At their most fundamental, the humanities encourage us to fully explore and embrace what it means to be human. They prompt questions about thought and experience. They teach us how and why things matter. They probe the components of culture and the bases of belief. They teach creativity and self-expression. They encourage the understanding that is fundamental to any profession.

In a global, data-rich, results-oriented society, it is crucial to draw attention to the vitality of the humanities and their centrality to life at the University of Rochester. Our obligation to students and faculty is to increase opportunities for interaction, collaboration, and creativity across disciplines.

With this in mind, the University has established the Humanities Center. The center supports projects in literature, history, visual and performing arts, cultures, and



▲ Canadian multimedia artists Louis Couturier (left) and Jacky Georges Lafargue prepare to install their work in the Ronald Rettner Hall for Media Arts and Innovation at the University during a one-week art residency on the River Campus.

philosophies past and present. As an interdisciplinary home base, the center is both a planned physical space (to be located in Rush Rhees Library) and a community committed to scholarly exchange and collaboration.

Our dedication to the humanities, along with the ideas, knowledge, research, and understanding that springs from them, will thrive here.

Programming

Inaugural Year

The center's theme for its inaugural year is "Humanities at the Crossroads—Charting Our Future." Lectures and workshops will feature four current and past humanities center directors from other universities who will speak about their research and programs. For this first year, the theme will help establish the center's guiding principles. The center will embrace a different scholarly theme each year.



"Studying the humanities here has prepared me well for the future. I have become a better communicator and have improved my ability to reason, empathize, and see the world through eyes other than my own."

—Daniel Browning '16

history major with a minor in Spanish

New Programs

The center launched these new programs in the 2015–16 academic year:

- **The Annual Hagop and Artemis Nazerian Humanities Lecture:** Thanks to the generosity of University Trustee Ani Gabrellian '84 and her husband, Mark Gabrellian '79, this lecture series will support collaboration and interaction among University faculty members with distinct backgrounds and research interests. It will rotate at least once every four years between Rochester and New York City, and speakers will receive a research honorarium to support their ongoing scholarship or current work. This series honors Ani's parents and their belief in the benefits of a humanistic education.
- **Undergraduate Conversations:** These informal monthly gatherings provide opportunities for students to connect with a faculty member and with each other around a topic related to humanistic study.

Current Programs

In addition to enhancing the study of the humanities here, the center will help strengthen ties to related disciplines. It will also leverage, grow, and link to successful programs, including the following:

- **Ferrari Humanities Symposia:** This annual event features a distinguished 14th- to 17th-century humanist and is supported by Trustee Bernard T. Ferrari '70, '74M (MD) and Linda Gaddis Ferrari.
- **Visiting Humanist Program:** The center will carry on the tradition of hosting a

“The Humanities Center will foster interdisciplinary scholarship and build on the success of our individual humanities departments. It will be a functional and physical hub of multidisciplinary life at the University.”

—**Gloria Culver**, dean of the School of Arts & Sciences

distinguished visiting humanist for lectures and symposia. These will enhance the undergraduate and graduate student experience and foster connections among faculty, students, the community, and external scholars.

- **Humanities Project:** This provides an annual platform to engage students and faculty on diverse research topics that involve the production of art, music, and thought. The topics also investigate and contribute to the ethical and aesthetic experience of the world.
- **Digital Scholarship Lab:** (formerly the Digital Humanities Center): The lab connects students and faculty to cutting-edge technology—including 3D modeling and printing, text encoding and analysis, and

geographic information systems (GIS) and spacial analysis—in the support of collaborative research.

The Community

Many of the center's activities will be open to the public, including lectures, book discussions, and film showings. Thematic, intellectual, and cultural programming will enhance the already close relationship between the University and the community and will provide fundamental opportunities for creativity, conversation, and inspiration.

For instance, the center recently collaborated with the School of Arts & Sciences, the Eastman School of Music, and the Rochester Oratorio Society to offer lectures, panel discussions, and a concert related to the works of Mendelssohn.

▼ These AIDS awareness posters were part of “Looking at AIDS 30 Years On,” a 2011 Humanities Project retrospective at the University of Rochester that highlighted the digital release of a collection of more than 6,200 AIDS education posters from around the world.



FERRARI HUMANITIES SYMPOSIA



▲ The 2013 Ferrari Humanities Symposia focused on the role of religion in contemporary culture, culminating in a conversation between Russell Peck, the John Hall Deane Professor of English at the University of Rochester, and keynote speaker Diarmaid MacCulloch, Professor of the History of the Church at the University of Oxford.

Humanities at Work

Joanne Bernardi, an associate professor of Japanese, sheds light on pre-World War II Japanese culture by examining and digitizing hundreds of 20th-century postcards, films, brochures, advertisements, and other objects.

In his book *Down in the Chapel: Religious Life in an American Prison*, Joshua Dubler, an assistant professor of religion, explores how changes in the religious landscape in America have contributed to the significant growth in the U.S. prison system over the last 40 years.

Joan Saab, an associate professor of art and art history and of visual and cultural studies, is contributing to a new model for humanities research. Her “born digital” project, *Searching*

for Siqueiros?, on Mexican muralist, David Alfred Siqueiros, used new media to tell richly layered stories, ones that could not have been expressed in a traditional format.

“When we recognize in someone else the passion for grappling with the questions that have animated our own research and writing, the connection we feel is gratifying and rewarding. The Humanities Center will soon abound with such connections.”

—**Joan Shelley Rubin**, the Dexter Perkins Professor in History, interim director of the center, and the history department’s director of graduate studies

Department, School, and Program Connections

- American Studies
- Anthropology
- Architecture, Technology and Historical Structures
- Art and Art History
- Digital Media Studies
- Eastman School of Music’s Department of Humanities
- English
- Film and Media Studies
- Frederick Douglass Institute for African and African-American Studies
- History
- Modern Languages and Cultures
- Music
- Philosophy
- Religion and Classics
- School of Medicine and Dentistry’s Medical Humanities Program
- Susan B. Anthony Institute for Gender and Women’s Studies

Stephen Schottenfeld, an associate professor of English, is a novelist who approaches his world of characters like a journalist who develops his characters and storylines through immersion and deep research, as he did in his recent book about the Southern white working class, *Bluff City Pawn*.

Thomas Slaughter, the Arthur R. Miller Professor of History, works on a number of digital humanities projects, including the William Henry Seward Archive, a free public website that provides access to photographs, diaries, letters, and other papers from this former governor of New York State and secretary of state under presidents Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson.

Fellowships

Fellowships will play a key role within the center and provide opportunities for the most talented scholars to join and interact with our community. These include the following:

- **Humanities Center Fellowships:** The center currently offers four fellowships (two external and two internal) and aims to add more in the future. These tenure-track, junior-faculty fellows will participate in workshops,

conferences, and seminars and engage in research. They will receive funding to support travel and research.

- **Mellon Fellowships in the Digital Humanities:** In 2013, the University received a \$1 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to promote the development of the digital humanities. The grant funds a graduate fellowship program that trains humanities students to integrate digital technologies into innovative research programs.

How You Can Help

Gifts to the Humanities Center will support engagement in literature, history, the arts, and philosophies past and present. Please consider any of these giving opportunities:

- provide internal and external fellowship support
- offer funds for undergraduate and graduate student awards and scholarships
- provide funds for faculty and student research and travel grants
- support lecture, workshop, and community engagement programs
- contribute to the capital improvement project that will establish the center within Rush Rhees Library.



A Transformational Gift

Recognizing that leadership is key to the Humanities Center's success and prominence, University Trustee Anni Gabrellian '84 and her husband, Mark Gabrellian '79, recently established the Anni and Mark Gabrellian Humanities Center Directorship. Their generous support helps ensure that the University can recruit a director of the highest quality to lead the center.

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www.rochester.edu/college/humanities

