Who We Are
The George Mason University Center for Humanities Research (CHR) is one of Mason’s five transdisciplinary research centers for advanced study. It was created in 2020 with support from the Provost’s Office and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS).

Mission
We support Mason faculty and students across the university who are pursuing innovative and consequential research in the humanities and humanities-related disciplines, enhance the visibility and impact of this work, and advance Mason’s reputation for humanities research.

Philosophy
We aim to demonstrate and promote the value of the humanities as a public good. Humanities research grapples with complex issues, encourages informed critical dialogue, facilitates cross-cultural and inter-generational understanding, promotes engaged citizenship and inclusive public discourse, and feeds the public imagination.

More About Mason
Mason is Virginia’s largest public research university and is designated as an R-1 institution. The campus, on 677 wooded acres within 25 minutes of downtown Washington, D.C., offers academic programs in nine colleges and schools.

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Reading Groups
The CHR fosters, supports, and provides space for topical and thematic reading groups and working groups for faculty, graduate students, and staff.

CHR Queer Studies Reading Group
Led by Jessica Hurley and Samuel Hunke

CHR Capitalism Reading Group
Led by Manjusha Nair and Deepika Hooda

CHR Film and Media Studies
Led by Jessica Scarlata, Hatim El-Hibri, and May Santiago

CHR Space and Place Reading Group
Led by Rashmi Sadana

CHR Environmental Justice Reading Group
Led by Levi Van Sant and Richard Todd Stafford

Early Americas Workshop
Led by Joan Bristol, Tamara Harvey, and George Oberle

CHR Critical Race Theory Group
Led by Christy Pichichero

CHR Postcolonial/Decolonization Reading Group
Led by Shauna Rigaud

CHR Memory and Difficult Pasts Reading Group
Led by Mark Peterson and Alison Landsberg

CHR Technology and Society Reading Group
Led by Matt Scherer, Steve Pearlstein, and Bassam Haddad

Find out more at chr.gmu.edu/reading-groups-and-working-groups/

Summer Research Funding Recipients 2021
Tawnya Azar, Term Assistant Professor of English, “Digital Literary Culture”

Charles L. Chavis, Jr., Assistant Professor of Conflict Resolution and History, Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution, “The Silent Shore: The Lynching of Matthew Williams and the Politics of Racism in the Free State”

Kevin M. Flanagan, Term Assistant Professor of English, “Taste, Paternalism, and London Bohemianism: The Party’s Over (1965) through Censorship and Cultural History”

Huwy-min Lucia Liu, Assistant Professor of Sociology and Anthropology, “Governing Death, Making Persons: The New Chinese Way of Death”

CHR’s Commitment to Intellectual Collaboration
The CHR aims to promote a version of intellectual collaboration premised on the idea that lively exchange and debate, across disciplinary boundaries, is crucial for knowledge production and that these collective exchanges fertilize and enrich individual research projects.

The Center’s intellectual life is built around the semester-long residential fellowship program during which fellows are released from their teaching. By supporting faculty and doctoral students pursuing their own independent research projects while in regular, intellectual discussion and debate with others working on thematically related projects, the Center positions itself as a site of transdisciplinary collaboration.
Since March of 2020 we have been living in what political theorist Elizabeth Povinelli might call a “durative present.” In some ways the past, or pre-times, feels irretrievably lost, and the future unimaginable. But it is equally true that this durative present has revealed that much of what we thought to be past, over and done with, lives on in the present. The Black Lives Matter protests, for instance, have made publicly visible how past racial violence infuses the present, what Saidiya Hartman has called the “afterlives of slavery.” Temporality permeates humanistic studies across periods, disciplines, genres and geopolitical regions. In 2021-22 we will host faculty and advanced PhD candidates whose research takes up temporal encounters between pasts, presents, and futures in the broadest possible sense.

### CHR Theme 2021-22: Pasts/Presents/Futures

#### Fall 2021 Residential Fellows

- **Yasemin İpek**, Assistant Professor (Global Affairs)
  “Crisiswork: Everyday Activism, Ethics, and Class Mobility in Lebanon”

- **Michael Malouf**, Associate Professor (English)
  “Oil and Cultures of Transition”

- **Brian Platt**, Associate Professor (History and Art History)
  “Wind, Worms, and Weeds: Rescuing the Past in Early Modern Japan”

- **Christina Riley**, PhD Candidate (Cultural Studies)
  “Women on the Web: A Study in Online Solidarity Struggles and the Emergence of the Feminist Digital Collective”

- **Eric W. Ross**, PhD Candidate (Cultural Studies)
  “Remembering Democracy: Activist Museums and the Politics of Memory”

- **Vanessa Schulman**, Associate Professor (History and Art History)

#### Spring 2022 Residential Fellows

- **Emily Brennan-Moran**, Assistant Professor (Communication)
  “Naming the Dead: Performing Memory Beyond Monumentality”

- **Jacqueline Burek**, Assistant Professor (English)
  “Memory and History in Medieval Britain, c.800 - c. 1400”

- **Samaine Lockwood**, Associate Professor (English)
  “Queer Routes: Sexuality, Feminism, and Racialized History in American Culture, 1865-1950”

- **Yevette Richards**, Associate Professor (History and Art History)
  “The Intimacy of Racial Violence in Northern Louisiana: Tracing Terror through Family Networks”

- **Matthew Scherer**, Associate Professor (Schar School)
  “Past, Presents, and Futures of ‘Religion’ and ‘Democracy’”

- **Greta Swain**, PhD Candidate (History and Art History)
  “Potomac Bound: A Spatial Analysis of Enslavers and Networkers (1780–1825)”
Partnerships and Impact
We aim to provide a welcoming, intellectual environment for scholarly and social encounters, thereby fostering research partnerships and collaborations with various departments, programs, and colleges at Mason. We also welcome partnerships with the many publicly supported cultural, policy, and educational institutions in the DMV and beyond. We hope to demonstrate that research in the humanities is, by definition, “engaged scholarship” playing a crucial role in addressing society’s most pressing social, civic, political, and ethical challenges, including immigration and nationalism, the ethics of science and technology, and the persistence of inequalities rooted in class, race, gender and ability.

The Mason community is welcome not only to join these discussions, but also to participate in Reading and Working Groups, suggest ideas for programming, and attend all CHR events.

Governance

Director:
Alison Landsberg (History and Art History; Cultural Studies)

Associate Director:
Catherine Olien, PhD

Steering Committee:
Denise Albanese (Cultural Studies; English)
Maria Dakake (Religious Studies)
Nathaniel Greenberg (Modern and Classical Languages)
Rachel Jones (Philosophy)
Matthew Karush (History and Art History)
Rachel A. Lewis (Women and Gender Studies)
Alok Yadav (English)