The Center for 21st Century Studies (C21), one of the oldest humanities institutes in the United States, leads the way in imagining, defining, and creating the multidisciplinary field of 21st century studies. A UW System Center of Excellence, C21 focuses on the intersection of the humanities, arts, and sciences (social and natural) with issues of compelling concern, organizing its research and public programs around themes that change periodically. Nationally and internationally known scholars are brought to campus to address the topic of the year’s research in seminars, lectures, and conferences. Each year C21 constitutes a group of six to eight UWM faculty fellows, as well as two or three external fellows, whose research interests relate to the theme and contribute to its mission to imagine, define, and create the emergent field of 21st century studies.

**ELIGIBILITY**

DUE: Monday, February 20, 2012, 5:00 p.m.

This call is directed to **UW System faculty** in all departments who hold the rank of assistant, associate, or full professor. Applicants must inform the chairs of their departments and seek approval from their home institutions. UW System faculty may be appointed fellows of the Center no more than twice in a five-year period.

In 2012-13 the Center will invite scholars from the humanities, arts, and sciences to join it in answering the question “What should 21st century studies do?” Here are some initial answers.

**21st century studies should study the present and very recent past.** Already scholars and artists have set out many issues of pressing concern for the current century. These concerns have emerged from the late 20th century and take particular transdisciplinary forms when placed in relation to our 21st century future. Examples of such concerns include, but are in no way limited to, issues like urbanization, mobility, migration, or transportation; risk, security, terrorism, or finance; climate change, sustainability, or water; public health, aging, nutrition, or sexuality; genetic engineering, neuroscience, or nanotechnology; intellectual property, social media, or digital culture.

**21st century studies should foster contemporary, cutting-edge interdisciplinary work in the humanities, arts, and sciences.** Such work raises new questions, extends disciplinary and interdisciplinary boundaries, or reflects upon the current state of knowledge production. This commitment to the contemporary, however, does not mean that 21st century studies should only concern itself with the present moment. It is often only the past that can effectively illuminate the present moment in its specificity. For example, contemporary concerns with questions of gender and sexuality have prompted historical scholars to investigate earlier formations of queer, straight, and other sexualities, which in turn provided new insights on our own gendered and sexual formations. Critical race studies has both provided new perspectives on and been strengthened by historical study of racial science and the history of racial relations around the world. Ecocriticism and environmental studies have unearthed a marginalized prehistory of ecological and nature-oriented writing and thinking that helps to shape our current ecological practices. And recent interest in new forms of digital media has helped to accentuate study of earlier media formations like photography, print, architectural drawing, or linear perspective, which reminds us that what was most new about new media was how they remediated prior media forms and practices. Such scholarly and artistic recursivity will help to transform our received understandings of the humanities, arts, and social sciences, and these new understandings help to transform our futures.

**21st century studies should deploy digital modes of research, analysis, and representation brought about by the explosion of digital culture at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries.** Examples of such new modes of research include the formation of new digital archives in support of scholarship in the humanities, arts, and sciences; the creation of new public digital spaces and common formats (such as blogs or wikis or other forms of social media) for the sharing of academic scholarship, arts and letters, and public discourse; the use of new digital technologies in designing, constructing, and decorating the built environment; and the creation of new forms for studying and creating native digital media like electronic literature, games and gaming, or any forms of art created, circulated, and interacted with primarily through digital technologies. Scholars and artists should continue to develop and to interrogate the use of high-speed computing and data mining techniques in analyzing cultural texts, images, and data as well as to devise new forms of graphical presentation of complex quantitative, qualitative, or creative information.

**Over . . .**
21st century studies should develop new scholarly methods for examining the most urgent and significant concerns of the present time. In the 21st century university, disciplinary boundaries have been becoming increasingly more difficult to draw. Questions of genetic engineering, for example, have turned into questions of law, culture, and ethics. Questions of film, music, and literature are now inseparable from questions of sampling technologies and intellectual property. War and counterterrorism have increasingly become questions of computer programming, hacking, or coding, of the design of video games or the mapping of transnational geographies.

21st century studies should take up the pressing political and economic challenges facing the university, the nation-state, and the world at large. As those of us in Wisconsin know only too well, higher education—particularly in the liberal arts—is coming increasingly under attack in times of economic and political crisis. Scholars in the arts, humanities, and social sciences must lead the way in imagining alternative institutional formations for the 21st century university, taking into account the proliferation of non-traditional forms of knowledge production and dissemination made available by socially networked media. Furthermore, in the face of historical increase in social and political activism across the globe, it is incumbent upon 21st century studies to find ways to collaborate with and to analyze these new forms of collectivity at the state, national, and global levels.

C21 offers one matching grant of $3,000 for fellows to receive a one-course or two-course reduction in their teaching responsibilities each semester. This includes relief from committee work, bringing a fellow’s course load down to one course each semester. C21 provides each fellow with work space on the ninth floor of Curtin Hall and with research and library assistance as resources permit. Each fellow, whatever the terms of his or her teaching release, is expected to participate in the Center fellows seminars and public programs throughout the year, and to give a public presentation on his or her research no later than the academic year following the fellowship.

Submit the following components, preferably as pdf files, as e-mail attachments to c21@uwm.edu:

- a three- to four-page statement (maximum 1000 words) describing your research project and its relation to C21’s current theme. Explain how it fits into your past research (if applicable) and future plans for research.
- a curriculum vitae
- a recent offprint, manuscript (article length), or example of artwork.

(If examples don’t exist in electronic form, or if you prefer to submit work on a CD, you may send two physical copies to us at Center for 21st Century Studies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, PO Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201. Or you may drop them off at our offices, Curtin Hall 929, 3243 N Downer Ave., Milwaukee.)

For more information, contact John Blum, Associate Director, Center for 21st Century Studies, at 414.229.4141 or blumj@uwm.edu. Please address questions on related UW System policy, funding or logistical issues to Dr. Rebecca Karoff at 608-263-2728 or rkaroff@uwsa.edu.

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