CALL FOR 2016-17 UW SYSTEM FELLOWS
Center for 21st Century Studies

Application Deadline: Friday, February 26, 2016 at 4:30 pm

Background: The Center for 21st Century Studies, (C21), one of the oldest humanities institutes in the US, 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 the Center constitutes a group of five UWM faculty fellows, as well as an external fellow, whose research interests relate to the theme and contribute to C21’s mission to imagine, define, and create the emergent field of 21st century studies.

Eligibility: 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.

Research Topic for 2016-17: Naysaying
For 2016-17, scholars from the humanities, arts and sciences will join the Center for 21st Century Studies (C21) in addressing the theme, Naysaying.

The force of saying “no” remains omnipresent and universally available, but misunderstood in the contemporary world. From two-year-old children to nation states, the interruptive immediacy of naysaying occurs at surprising and inconvenient times. The ability to refuse emerges early, and remains democratically available. In cultures of consumption and capitalism, “no” has the power to defend and upend assumptions of order and propriety. From Thoreau to Gandhi, the will to nothing has provided a source of individual and collective creation. Twice over the past 75 years, the Greeks have famously declared their own version of No, “OXI”: first, after many other European countries had capitulated to the Germans in World War one, and, recently, in response to demands of austerity.

Naysaying has similarly provoked recent scholarly attention. “No” claims authority, critiques supposition, and refigures subjectivity. Audra Simpson, one of this year’s C21 Landbody conference speakers, has suggested the category of “refusal” as the proper dynamic for understanding the relationship between Native activists and the settler colonial state, noting that the more commonly used “resistance” already gives too much legitimacy to the actions of a national government. François Laruelle’s conceptualizations of non-philosophy have encouraged multiple critical engagements with the priority of structuring dynamics within thought. And Peter Sloterdijk has popularized Thomas Macho’s understanding of “nobjects” as those which collapse the divide between externality and subjectivity, giving rise to theories of self and object as irreducible.
The power of no proves particularly important in the contemporary social and political climate of UWM and Milwaukee. Naysaying underpinned the 2011 Wisconsin protests, and as its formulations spread to Occupy, its insistence shaped that international protest’s refusal to provide a positive program. Naysaying is the language of protest and of overcoming. Its power operates across lines of disciplines and ideology, across modes of writing and of writing’s absence. The conservative “no” bleeds into the creative “no” with no clear lines of demarcation.

In choosing “Naysaying” as our theme for 2016-17, the Center for 21st Century Studies invites scholars from the humanities, the arts, and the sciences to take up the concept of “No” from a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives. We are especially interested in proposals that integrate theoretical and empirical perspectives in order to:

- differentiate and analyze the forces which continually attempt to transform naysaying into policies and programs, noting the varieties of indeterminability which they carry as a philosophical project.
- analyze the gendered nature of “no,” from the negation of the patriarchal denial of women as full beings to the “no means no” movement.
- investigate historically significant refusals in global and local contexts, noting the various forms and inspirations through which they travel.
- identify the hierarchical, distributive, and taxonomic systemizations which the saying of “no” disrupts, with special attention to the consequences and reactions which it provokes.
- consider literary and rhetorical cases of naysaying as creative activity, attending to its relationship to structures of meaning, power, and iterability.

Terms of the Fellowship: 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.

Procedures: Submit a single pdf including the following components as an email attachment to c21@uwm.edu

- an application cover sheet (available online at http://www4.uwm.edu/c21/pages/opportunities/forFaculty.html)
- a three- to four-page statement (maximum 1000 words) describing your research project and its relation to the Center’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

For more information, contact Ali Sperling, Deputy Director, Center for 21st Century Studies, at 414.229.4141 or sperlin5@uwm.edu. Please address questions on related UW System policy, funding or logistical issues to Carmen Faymonville at cfaymonville@uwsa.edu