CALL FOR 2016-17 FELLOWS

NAYSAYING

Application Deadline: Friday, December 11, 2015 at 4:30 pm

Background: 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 the Center constitutes a group of about five UWM fellows 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.

Research Topic for 2016-17: “Naysaying”

The Center for 21st Century Studies invites scholars from the Humanities, the Arts, and the Sciences to address 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 seventy-five 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 I, 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 (who will be speaking at C21’s spring conference) 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/Eligibility of Faculty for Fellowships: UWM faculty in all departments who hold the rank of assistant, associate, or full professor may apply. Faculty fellows receive a reduction in their teaching responsibilities sufficient to bring their course load down to one course each semester, as well as being relieved from major committee work. The Center provides each fellow with access to office space on the ninth floor of Curtin Hall and with research assistance (library assistance, duplication, etc.) as resources permit. Each fellow is expected to participate in the Center fellows’ seminar 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. No one may hold a Center fellowship more than twice in a five-year period. Faculty involved in substantive projects outside of teaching, such as organizing conferences, which will require substantial time away from their research in 2016-2017 are eligible to apply, but must disclose such commitments on the application form.

Terms/Eligibility of Academic Staff for Fellowships: UWM academic staff in all departments may apply. C21 will work with academic staff on a case-by-case basis to provide compensation for participating in the seminar. The Center provides each fellow with access to office space on the ninth floor of Curtin Hall and with research assistance (library assistance, duplication, etc.) as resources permit. Each fellow is expected to participate in the Center fellows’ seminar 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. No one may hold a Center fellowship more than twice in a five-year period.
ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITY: Master of Liberal Studies (MLS) Fellowship: An additional fellowship may be awarded to a member of the UWM graduate faculty who would offer a seminar related to the Center research theme within the MLS program. This seminar would be scheduled in the spring semester as part of the fellow’s customary reduced teaching load. In addition to the standard Center fellowship application, interested faculty are asked to submit a one-page description of the proposed seminar. Submission of an MLS course proposal is not required as part of the standard application and will not necessarily increase a candidate’s chances of being selected as a fellow. Award of this fellowship is contingent upon acceptance by both the Center and the Master of Liberal Studies program. Applicants for the MLS Fellowship should submit a one-page description of a proposed seminar.

Procedures: Submit ONE SINGLE PDF including the following components, in this order, 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

You are responsible for informing the chair of your department (or appropriate supervisor) that you are applying for a 2016-17 Center fellowship to insure that your full participation as a C21 Fellow will be supported by your department.