

Fondren Fellows Project Opportunities 2019-2020

<http://library.rice.edu/fondren-fellows>

1) A Curated Resource for Open Science: Data Sharing, Publication, and Collaboration

Mentor: Fred Oswald, Psychological Sciences

Time Frame for Work: fall of 2019

Project Summary

The Fondren Fellows program explicitly welcomes projects that “study potential approaches to open science at Rice.” To that end, the end product for the current project would be a curated online resource containing a series of links to websites, and associated descriptions, that are organized around the following four general topic areas central to today’s “open science movement”: data sharing, publication, and community-building. **Data sharing** reflects websites for sharing materials, measures, experimental protocols, datasets (and statistical, tabular, and visual summaries of data sets); **publication** reflects websites for preregistration (i.e., specifying the nature of one’s study prior to data collection), preprints, and post-publication review; **collaboration** can be as narrow as websites that encourage coordination within a research team, and as broad as websites that bring together international researchers across disciplines who are committed to open science.

Key Tasks

The Fondren Fellow would search, review, and report on websites under the previously mentioned topic areas, and then meet and discuss with me on a weekly basis, at a minimum. I already have started on this project myself and thus can offer a very good sense of how to pursue this project.

Qualifications

It would be helpful for students to have had at least some exposure to social sciences research where they had to analyze and interpret data (e.g., through a statistics or research methods class, through research engagement in a lab, or both).

Learning Outcomes

Students will learn what I hope the benefactors of this project will also learn: The wide range of possibilities for pursuing open science activities. There is not just one resource, or one way, to engage in open science, and my argument is that a more systematic curation of the options that

are available would be very helpful, not only to Rice, but to social sciences researchers writ large.

2) Visualizing the Red Book of Houston

Mentors: Norie Guthrie, Amanda Focke and Melissa Kean (Woodson Research Center) and Fay Yarbrough (History)

Time Frame for Work: fall 2019

Project Summary

The Red Book of Houston, published in 1915, provides a detailed view of middle class Black life in Houston. It includes information pertaining to the fields of education, business, and religion, as well as brief personal histories and lists civic and social organizations. An amazing thing that the book does is provide physical addresses of churches, schools and teachers, businesses, social clubs, civic organizations, and the home addresses of ladies to call on. The book is teeming with information that can be mapped. Ultimately, we would love to see a GIS project focused on the book that can visualize this moment in time for this Black community.

For the first phase, we would like a group of students to create a larger vision, as well as a work plan for this project.

This is suitable as a Fondren Fellows project because it will use archival materials from the library and perhaps from other institutions in the city and marry that with ArcGIS software. It would be a multi-layered project that will be useful for the library, the university, and the Houston community, in addition to helping students work on a large scale digital humanities project. It also is a great way to show the library's outreach to the Black community and specifically how the project members can work with some of the Black churches listed in the book that still have congregations to this day.

Key Tasks

Phase 1: A small group of students would read the book, decide what should be mapped, and determine the plan going forward. Should there be one story map or four each focusing on education, religion, business, and social/society? They would help lay that groundwork. Students, as well, would work with faculty and the library mentor to create the metadata framework for the intended map or maps, with an overall high level outline of the narratives for each map, plus ideas for how other community members could contribute. With this in place, the next phase would have a clear road map for their work. They would also do some cursory research to determine if we could use items from other archival institutions in the city.

Qualifications

1 student must have experience working with ArcGIS and on Digital Humanities projects.

1 student must be a Humanities major, preferably from the History Department.

Learning Outcomes

Students would expand their project planning, research, and writing skills. Moreover, they would learn how to plan a large scale digital humanities project that would affect the university and the Houston community's understanding of its history.

3) Natural History of Harris Gully Natural Area

Mentors: Cassidy Johnson (BioSciences); Richard Johnson (Admin. Ctr for Sustainability & Energy Mgmt, Sociology, Civil and Environmental Engineering)

Time Frame for Work: Fall 2019 or Spring 2020

Project Summary

The Rice University campus was once part of the vast coastal prairie ecosystem that stretched from the South Texas coast to Louisiana. Most of this ecosystem has been lost to urbanization and other land use changes, and with it, the many natural benefits that the ecosystem provided, including the ability to absorb considerable amounts of stormwater. A movement is underway in Houston to restore pockets of coastal prairie, including on the Rice University campus. The Lynn R. Lowrey Arboretum Committee, in partnership with Rice University students, faculty, and staff, and with community non-profit organizations, have planted the first phase of an urban pocket prairie at Rice in a location known as the Harris Gully Natural Area. As part of expanding that project, the Arboretum Committee seeks a Fondren Fellows intern to help document the history of the site, drawing upon materials in Fondren's Woodson Research Center as well as other sources to tell the story of how the site was initially converted from coastal prairie, through various stages of impact from Rice's growth, and then back to a demonstration--scale urban pocket prairie. The Committee seeks a deliverable that can be posted as a temporary informative display at Fondren, as well as material that can be presented online, and ultimately incorporated into signage at the site itself.

Key Tasks

Task 1: The Fellow would research the environmental history of the Harris Gully Natural Area by reaching and compiling information about the site. This information may include photos, news articles, maps, building plans, and other relevant documents. The Fellow may also have an opportunity to conduct interview with Rice alumni or community members who may have knowledge concerning the history of the site.

Task 2: The Fellow will compile the historical information as both a written document (with the potential for publication) and as a visual display to be displayed at Fondren.

Task 3: The Fellow will also have the opportunity to present their research to the Arboretum Committee, as well as several local environmental and conservation organizations.

Qualifications

The Fellow should be comfortable working independently and be able to manage their time wisely. The Fellow will have assistance identifying individuals for interviews; however, the Fellow must be comfortable interacting with prospective interviewees, as well as willing to develop questions relevant to the project. We would also ask that the Fellow be comfortable with or willing to learn how to use basic graphic design programs for the final project.

Learning Outcomes

The Fellow would learn about the natural history of what is now the Rice campus and how the campus is evolving to restore a portion of the indigenous ecosystem. The Fellow would also learn how to compile historic data and present it in an informative, visual format suitable for a broad audience.

4) The Centennial of the Vote: Houston Community Activists exhibit

Mentors: Woodson Research Center staff

Time Frame for Work: Fall 2019

Project Summary

Women first organized and collectively fought for suffrage at the national level in 1848. 71 years later, on June 28, 1919, the Texas legislature voted to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment, the first southern state to do so. By August of 1920, 36 states (including Texas) approved the amendment and it became part of the United States Constitution. Houston has a long tradition of women from all walks of life who used their right to vote and took up the banner of community activism; this exhibit will help tell their stories.

The Billie Carr political papers, MS 373, document Carr's long career as a political organizer for the Democratic Party in Harris County. Beginning in the 1950's Carr fought for civil rights, protested the Vietnam War and fought for women's rights in the 1970s, and for gay rights in the 1980s. She helped organize the 1966 campaign leading to the election of Barbara Jordan, the first black woman elected to the Texas Senate, and was elected to the Democratic National Committee in 1972.

The Judge Clarease Yates papers, MS 123, document Clarease Yate's commitment to civic engagement as a judge with the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service in Houston, Texas, as well as a board member of the Sickle Cell Association of the Gulf Coast, member of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, the NAACP, and board member of the Houston Symphony.

The Glenda Joe / Houston Asian American community advocacy and festival arts records, MS 667, document the activities of Glenda Joe with the Houston Asian American Festival Association, as well as with community advocacy issues concerning the Asian American communities in Houston.

The Fellow might also review materials in the Sara Hickman collection (MS 718), one of the musicians in the Houston Folk Music Archive, and the Frankie Randolph Carter papers (MS 372), for additional information on women activists.

Scans of the materials would be used to create an online exhibit using the Omeka platform detailing the history of these women and their impact on the Houston community. Each of the first three women also completed an oral history which resides in the Digital Scholarship Archive and can be linked to the exhibit.

Key Tasks

- Review the collection to identify a narrative of the exhibit
- If possible, interview Houstonians that can offer context about the individuals profiled
- Train by WRC mentor in the Omeka platform
- Select items for the online exhibit that are visually compelling to scan (WRC mentor will help scan the items selected and create the appropriate metadata)
- Prepare the Omeka layout
- Write the text for the Omeka exhibit

Qualifications

- An interest in history/ a humanities background
- The ability to identify items in the collections that contribute to the narrative of the impact of Carr, Yates, and Joe's lives on the Houston community
- The ability to work with minimal supervision

Learning Outcomes

Using their research skills, students would learn how to analyze primary sources and develop a narrative based on these sources. Students would also learn aspects of digital humanities, including becoming familiar with the Omeka platform, scanning original materials, and learning how to prepare an online exhibit.

5) Researching the paradigm shift of Western Art to Global Art, to advise Rice University Art History Department on possible curriculum directions

Mentors: Amanda Focke, Woodson Research Center; Carroll Blue, Visiting Scholar; and Dr. Leo Costello, Associate Professor and Art History Department Chair, Dr. Maria Fabiola

López-Durán, Art History Associate Professor and Dr. Kerry Ward, Associate Professor of History and Museum Studies; Jet Prendeville, Art & Architecture Librarian

Time Frame for Work: Fall 2019

Project Summary

The project's goal is to conduct research and interviews tracing the recent paradigm shift of Western Art to Global Art, as demonstrated in the work of curator Okwui Enwezor and artist El Anatsui, resulting in interviews being added to the Carroll Blue archives at the Woodson Research Center, and a final report being submitted to the Art History Department for use in curriculum development. The project will involve a student in a stimulating research experience using Fondren resources, contributing to the academic direction of the Art History Department, and adding to the archival collections at the Woodson Research Center.

Currently, faculty at Rice University's Department of Art History is researching how African and African Diaspora Art History can be incorporated into their department's Art History program. The earlier Western Art World focus has shifted to a Global Art World focus where its new aesthetics thrive in contemporary Asian, Latin American, Caribbean and African Art.

“A new generation of curators and museum professionals with different fields of knowledge is emerging... I hope these people will give institutions the opportunity to think about how to complicate the narrative of societies with colonial affiliations, which necessarily are mixed societies. If we have an open mind, Western art doesn't have to be seen in opposition to art from elsewhere, but can be seen in a dialogue that helps protect the differences and decisions that present the material, circumstances and conditions of production in which artists fashion their view of what enlightenment could be.” – Okwui Enwezor

Dr. Leo Costello, Associate Professor and Art History Department Chair, Dr. Maria Fabiola Lopez Duran, Art History Associate Professor and Dr. Kerry Ward, Associate Professor of History and Museum Studies have agreed to advise and explore with Carroll Blue and the Fondren Fellow on using different research and writing approaches for this work. Carroll Blue will serve as the primary contact for the Fellow. Amanda Focke will provide access to Carroll Blue archives, assist in project management, provide technical support in recorded telephone interviews, create interview transcripts, and finally adding the results of this work to the Carroll Blue archives. Jet Prendeville, as Art & Architecture Librarian, will advise on library resources relevant to the research.

Key Tasks

- work under the direction of Carroll Blue, with the guidance of Dr. Kerry Ward and Amanda Focke
- conduct research on artist El Anatsui and curator Okwui Enwezor, as the lens through which the paradigm shift will be explored, using traditional art history techniques as well as art sales data collection, using Fondren Library resources (including published resources and Carroll Blue's archives in the Woodson Research Center)

- conduct basic background research on approximately 6 curators and architects who are related to this paradigm shift in different ways (Nana Oforiatta Ayi, Sabine Brantl, Dr. Damien Lentini, Dr. Nkiru Nzegwu, Dr. Chika Okeke-Agulu, David Adjaye)
- draft interview questions for these curators and architects, and co-interview them with Carroll Blue, via telephone (circa 1 hour each interview)
- edit the rough interview transcripts which will be provided by Fondren Library, via Amanda Focke
- collaborate with Carroll Blue to write final report (approximately 10 pages, with appendices of the interview transcripts) for the Art History Department, and to be added to Carroll Blue's archives at the Woodson Research Center.

Qualifications

- General experience using libraries
- Humanities background or interest
- Writing skills
- Attention to detail

Learning Outcomes

- Advanced research skills, including use of primary sources
- Interviewing skills
- Management of project scope and time

6) Mapping the Reservation: Houston's Red-Light District, 1908-1917

Mentor: Brian Riedel (Center for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality)

Time Frame for Work: Fall 2019

Project Summary

In 1908 Houston created a formal red-light district they called the Reservation. The land chosen was part of Freedmantown, the only place within the city limits where emancipated slaves had been allowed to buy property. When the city dissolved the Reservation in 1917, newspapers wondered who would use buildings formerly occupied by prostitutes. Most scholarship on the Reservation relies on newspapers and city records, documents privileging Anglo voices. This project complicates and questions that narrative. Using GIS to link census data, city directories, Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, and real estate records from 1900 to 1920, the project will provide a visual public history portal to explore the Reservation's economic and social impact on those who lived there.

As a digital publishing project, this work is well-suited for the Fondren Fellows program. It poses several complex research and design questions well-matched to the resources of Fondren's GIS/Data Center, with ample opportunities for student Fellows to engage creatively with historical material and digital humanities tools.

Key Tasks

The primary task is refining an existing prototype basemap in ARCGIS to be more aesthetically pleasing and intuitive as a user interface. Examples using that prototype map are available here:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=2262a3c6c67e4f1ebd2261ca8f82a267>

Given time and sufficient funding, subsequent tasks may also include a real-estate oriented map divided into lot and block numbers, potentially with outlines of buildings derived from Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.

Qualifications

Basic humanities research and computer skills are expected. Some experience with the ARCGIS platform is preferred.

Learning Outcomes

Students working on this project will deepen their skills in ARCGIS. They will also gain experience in several skills useful for digital humanities work: translating historical primary documents into functional metadata tables; managing multiple metadata sources; documenting research processes; collaborating in interdisciplinary teams.

7) Cataloging Archives of the Impossible collections

Mentor: Amanda Focke & Anna Shparberg (Fondren Library)

Time Frame for Work: Spring 2020

Project Summary

The Fellows would be assisting the staff of the Woodson Research Center with the processing and description of the recently acquired archival materials relating to new religious movements and the paranormal. At present, this "Archives of the Impossible" collection encompasses the Project Star Gate materials donated by Edwin May, the papers of Jacques Vallee, the Whitley and Anne Strieber collection, the Brenda Denzler archive, the publications of Prof. Stanley Krippner, the NARCAP (National Aviation Reporting Center on Anomalous Phenomena) papers donated by Richard Haines, and the papers of Rice professor Jeffrey Kripal. Since the WRC is still receiving materials from some of these donors, several of the collections are incomplete. A number of additional acquisitions, such as the papers of Larry Bryant and Paola Harris, are pending.

A number of events centered around these materials are coming up in the fall of 2020. The Religion department is planning a conference on October 29-November 1, titled "Opening the Archives of the Impossible: Writing the History of Religion and Science After the Normal". A large exhibit in Fondren Library highlighting these archives will run from October 1, 2020 through the rest of the year. In addition, the archive is to be the focus of a graduate seminar that Jeffrey Kripal of the Religion department will be teaching in the fall semester, 2020 (this seminar was already taught once, in the spring of 2019).

This project benefits a number of Rice stakeholders, specifically the Woodson Research Center, the department of Religion, individual graduate students and undergraduate majors in the department, and also the broader scholarly community.

The WRC is working to process a large number of diverse collections and lacks sufficient staff to prioritize the materials in question, especially since acquisition is ongoing and is expected to continue over the next several years.

The project would also benefit the participating graduate/undergraduate students by allowing them to broaden their archival research skills and familiarity with the collections in question.

The timely completion of the project and creation of finding aids would enable both Rice and outside scholars to conduct research in the archive. It would also serve to demonstrate our commitment to current and potential donors (many of whom will be attending the conference) to hopefully spur more acquisition in this growing field.

Key Tasks

Arrange and describe the Jacques Vallee (30 linear feet, with some initial work already done), NARCAP / Haines (10 linear feet) and Brenda Denzler materials (10 linear feet) in The Archive of the Paranormal collections. Students would collaborate with Director of Special Collections and (to a lesser extent) library subject specialist to identify any original order; determine arrangement through series and subseries; provide archival descriptions at the folder level; rebox and refolder; identify duplicate materials; and handle preservation concerns within the assigned collections, including identifying and listing needs regarding digital capture of legacy formats; create a narrative description of each collection and a folder-level inventory for each, which will become accessible by researchers through Fondren's ArchivesSpace and TARO (Texas Archival Resources Online). Students will also flag materials as possible items to include in the Fall 2020 exhibit at Fondren Library.

Qualifications

The minimum qualifications are: a major in a Humanities discipline (such as Religion), detailed oriented, organized, and familiarity with archival work. Prior experience with the Archives of the Impossible collections is preferred. Both undergraduate and graduate students are welcome to apply.

Learning Outcomes

Students would deepen their familiarity with these collections, which would be very helpful to comparing and contrasting existing similar collections that exist in a small number of repositories nationally. A number of graduate students in the Religion department already expect to rely on these archives for their dissertation research and would welcome the opportunity to examine and explore content. Students would gain valuable experience in organizing and documenting a research collection, and would participate in the preparation of a physical exhibit featuring the materials.

8) Toward a more environmentally sustainable vendor/publisher packaging global practice.

Time Frame for Work

As the end point of the acquisition of library materials (print journals, newspapers, books, etc.), libraries are increasingly becoming a repository of a large amount of packaging on a daily basis, some of it recyclable, and some not. This ongoing influx of packaging materials represents an opportunity and invitation for further investigation and research into what current regulations, and best practices exist with regard to their actual recyclability and/or disposal within the community of stakeholders, both locally and across various regions nationally and internationally, as well as an examination of the effectiveness of their efforts. The findings and recommendations of this research project may lead to a more informed understanding of the complexity of issues with which to mediate a more substantive response in dealing with this problem. The workflow will be divided into thirds: Exploration/Discovery, Research, Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations over the project schedule, with strong emphasis placed upon research.

Key Tasks

- Define and identify packaging waste problems both locally and globally among stakeholders
- Research current practices and policies/laws/regulations governing its use and disposal.
- Synthesize solution including determining the best strategy for reducing packaging.
- Author and submit a written report to the committee on project findings/recommendations.
- Give a presentation and share final report with community stakeholders and the public at the conclusion of the project.

Qualifications

- A demonstrated ability to conduct attributable research, formulate workable solutions and prepare written papers with regards to findings/recommendations in a timely manner.
- A demonstrated interest in working to create a more environmentally sustainable ecology (ie: Rice Environmental Club).

Learning Outcomes

-Gain first-hand insight into the methodology necessary for conducting accurate, effective research and analysis and its applications to strategic problem-solving.