

Fondren Fellows Opportunities, Fall 2021

The Fondren Fellows program funds Rice undergraduate or graduate students to conduct research or teaching projects sponsored by Fondren Library that involve skills, collections, spaces, or services related to libraries and archives. For example, projects may involve working with archival collections, developing digital projects, or helping people learn how to find and use information more effectively. Rice faculty members or Fondren staff will serve as the mentors for projects.

Fondren Fellows receive \$17/hour for up to 250 hours of work. Work schedules are typically flexible. Most fellowships begin in the fall of 2021 and will extend into the spring, even summer of 2022.

See <https://library.rice.edu/fondren-fellows> for application instructions. The application deadline is September 8 at noon.

Fellows Projects

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1. Oral History Interviews and Archival Processing for the Task Force on Slavery, Segregation, and Racial Injustice

Sponsors: Task Force on Slavery, Segregation, and Racial Injustice (Task Force) & Woodson Research Center (WRC)

Mentors: Dr. Alex Byrd and Dr. Caleb McDaniel

Summary: This project will employ two students to conduct interviews for the Task Force, under the guidance of Dr. Alex Byrd and Dr. Caleb McDaniel. The students will

also work with WRC staff to finalize consent forms, gather interview elements, create accessible PDFs of polished transcripts, and index interviews for online access.

Project Description:

A key goal of the Task Force in 2021-2022, as noted in the progress report (pg. 4) of Summer 2021, is to engage in oral histories with faculty, students, and staff. The Task Force works intensively with archival materials to inform its recommendations, and now needs to also layer in the experiences of people as shared through interviews. This work is very time intensive and can yield very valuable insights, filling gaps in the archival record which often cannot be filled in any other way. As such, it is a very important year for doing this work, so that it may inform the Task Force's final analysis and recommendations the following year, 2022-2023.

Oral history work requires a team approach in order to successfully complete even a modest group of interviews. Dr. Byrd and Dr. McDaniel will guide the team in contacts for interviews, as well as questions to be explored. Rebecca Russell and Amanda Focke will guide the fellows in the very detailed logistics of archiving oral histories and making them available publicly, with proper interviewee approvals and consent forms. Fellows will present about their experience and some interview highlights on a Friday "Doc Talk" webinar hosted by the Task Force, in Spring 2022.

Two positions will be available.

Key Tasks:

One fellow will lead the interviewing process, although both will ideally attend all interviews. Leading the process will mean collaborating with Dr. Byrd and Dr. McDaniel to identify and approach possible interviewees, scheduling interviews, conducting basic research on each interviewee as preparation, communicating regarding consent forms, and conducting the actual interviews. The second fellow will lead the archival processing steps, including finalizing consent forms, gathering interview elements, creating accessible PDFs of polished transcripts, and indexing interviews for online access (using the OHMS platform).

Desired Qualifications:

Excellent written and verbal skills, willingness to learn interviewing techniques, attention to detail, ability to follow prepared guidelines and instructions. An interest in history or a related field would also be helpful.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will learn interviewing skills, gain insights into Rice University history as it relates to topics such as desegregation, recruitment, retention, social justice, and will gain an understanding of creating and preserving unique archival materials.

2. The Sugar Land 95: Mapping Convict Leasing in Fort Bend County, 1865- 2018: A Continuation of the 2020-2021 Project

Mentor: Dr. Portia Hopkins, Woodson Research Center Special Collections and Archives at Fondren Library & CERCL

Summary: This project will employ a student to continue in the development of a story map on the [Sugar Land 95](#) (95 African American people whose bodies were discovered at the site of a former prison farm) and the Imperial Prison Farm. The fellow will evaluate archival materials across various archives, and use ArcGIS to visualize the social, economic and cultural landscapes of Fort Bend County and the Imperial Prison Farm during the late 19th to mid-twentieth century.

Project Description:

This project emerged from the necessity to chronicle and document Convict Leasing in Texas. It utilizes selections from the Reginald Moore Sugar Land Convict Leasing System research collection (Woodson Research Center, call # MS 636) and Fort Bend County records such as historical maps to visualize the story of the Sugar Land 95. In 2018, during the ground scraping phase of construction at the new Fort Bend ISD James Reese Technical and Career Center, 95 bodies were uncovered in unmarked graves. Eyewitness testimony from the contractor indicated that once the bodies were found, construction ceased and the local authorities and the owner (in this case the school district) were notified. The discovery ignited a flurry of local and national media coverage, particularly because the remains were from incarcerated African Americans leased to local sugar companies to cultivate sugar cane. Using a combination of multimedia, photographs, documents, maps, newspapers clippings, press releases and deeds to tell their story, the project will provide an important layer to archiving convict leasing in Texas.

Key Tasks:

The project will focus primarily on the Imperial Prison Farm and surrounding area and the archaeological discovery of the Sugar Land 95. The fellow will organize materials across multiple archives that will contribute to the story map. Finally, the fellow will create a story map that will use ArcGIS (or another approved story mapping program) to visualize the social and cultural landscape of Fort Bend County and the economic landscape of the Imperial Prison Farm in Fort Bend County during the late 19th to mid-twentieth century.

- Phase 1:
 - The Fellow will collaborate with Rice staff and community members to draft the possible narrative and scope of the story map.
 - Fellow will use maps to relate original prison farm locations to current day Sugar Land and Fort Bend County, such as Fort Bend County maps [available in the UNT Portal](#), property records from Fort Bend

County Courthouse, Texas State Prison records such as this [biennial report of the superintendent of Texas State Penitentiaries](#) .

- Fellow will create several basic layers of data for use in the StoryMap's base map, possibly including known burial ground locations (Imperial Farm Cemetery, Sugar Land 95 site, and other known local cemeteries), and data drawn from existing agricultural, topographical, and socio economic data sets, and possibility archaeological study data (examples available in the Reginald Moore Convict Leasing papers).
- Phase 2:
 - Narrative of StoryMap will be refined and storyboarded based on knowledge gained in Phase 1.
 - Snapshot and interactive views of the base map will be created/selected for the StoryMap.
 - Fellow will incorporate multimedia, photographs, documents, newspaper clippings, press releases and deeds to illustrate the StoryMap.

Desired Qualifications:

Fondren Fellow should be a self-starter, have a working knowledge of ArcGIS or a willingness to learn new programs in digital humanities. This position can be virtual. History or Humanities majors encouraged to apply.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will learn collaborative research strategies, sharpen writing skills, and build valuable knowledge in the areas of digital humanities and public history. Students will improve their collaborative learning and community engagement skills through the completion of this project.

3. "Mapping the Reservation: Houston's Red-Light District, 1908-1917"

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

Summary:

This proposal builds on a successful prior Fondren Fellow's ARCGIS work in 2019-2020. The new scope of work will build the basic interface to visualize real estate data in the Reservation by race over time.

Project Description:

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 government 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 1865 to 1924, the project will provide a visual public history portal to explore the Reservation's economic and social impact on those who lived there.

Two positions will be available.

Key Tasks:

The primary task is refining the existing ARCGIS basemap of the Hardcastle and Burton Home Additions of Houston in collaboration with the Black Atlas team (a Humanities Research Center Creative Ventures funded project led by Farès el-Dahdah). The first stage of work divides the existing basemap into lot and block numbers, as well as known subdivided parcels. A second stage links that basemap to a database of real estate documents providing owner names for those lots and parcels. A third stage links the owner names to racial markers, which requires cross-referencing city directory and census data with owner names. A fourth and optional stage augments this map with outlines of buildings derived from Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (to be rendered by the Black Atlas team). The final product of the process is a temporal mapping of land ownership by race from 1865 to 1924.

Desired 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 and Excel. 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.

4. Changing the Subject at Fondren Library

Mentor: Jeanette Sewell, Cataloging & Metadata Services, Fondren Library

Summary: Changing the Subject at Fondren Library is a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) project to investigate updating the Library of Congress Subject Heading (LCSH) "Illegal aliens" in the Fondren Library catalog.

Project Description:

No human being is illegal, but "illegal aliens" is the authorized LCSH used to describe works about undocumented immigrants and non-citizens in library catalogs, including at Fondren. Continued use of this term reflects "the ways that systemic racism pervades the institution of the library, particularly in its controlled vocabularies." Efforts by the Library of Congress to officially change the heading were stymied by Congress in 2017,

but libraries are working to make the change on their own. In 2019, Dartmouth College Library released the documentary *Change the Subject* that follows a group of students as they gained national attention for their efforts to update this instance of dehumanizing language. As a result, other academic libraries such as the Robert E. Kennedy Library at California Polytechnic State University have since implemented more inclusive language in their local catalogs. This project would bring Fondren Library in line with peer institutions, improve Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in our catalog, and ultimately help to make Fondren a more welcoming place on campus for students and researchers.

Key Tasks:

- Researching the background of the “Illegal aliens” subject heading
 - Investigate other libraries that have updated the subject heading in their catalogs
 - Research authority control and other library science principles and tasks
 - Work with Cataloging & Metadata Services to gain introductory knowledge of ALMA, Fondren’s library service platform
 - Interface with IT and other departments as needed to find out how changing the subject can be accomplished in the catalog
 - Connect with campus groups and organizations such as the Task Force on Slavery, Segregation and Racial Injustice and OpenStax DEI Instruction staff
 - Develop a proposal for changing the “Illegal aliens” subject heading in the Fondren catalog

Desired Qualifications:

Experience searching library catalogs with an interest in analyzing data and organizing information along with a demonstrated interest in DEI projects.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will learn how a library DEI project can have a direct impact on the community it serves and the importance of making a visible change in library resources that will have a lasting impact.

5. Enhancing the Fondren Fellows Program

Mentor: Lisa Spiro, Fondren Library

Summary:

In this meta-project, the Fellow will focus on the Fondren Fellows program itself, examining how to enhance its communications, assessment methods, and support for fellows and mentors. Based on that analysis, the Fellow will develop events, communication templates, guides, and other resources. The Fellow will also write a report synthesizing recommendations.

Project Description:

Since its inception, the Fondren Fellows program has enabled Rice students to hone their research, communication, and project management skills and project mentors to advance their projects through Fellows' expertise and efforts. As the program grows, it faces challenges of scale, especially as program administrators try to keep track of projects and offer appropriate support. This project offers the unique opportunity to shape the Fellows program itself. Linking together research and implementation, this project engages the Fellow in identifying challenges faced by the Fondren Fellows program as it grows and implementing strategies to address those challenges. The Fellow's work on improving communication, devising more comprehensive assessment strategies, creating stronger workflow, and building community will lead to a better experience for students, mentors, and program administrators.

Key Tasks:

The Fellow will work with the Fondren Fellows coordinator to enhance the program, including by:

- researching best practices for supporting interns and their mentors
- developing plans and policies drawing on that research
- creating communication templates
- planning and running events to highlight the work of the Fellows and build community (initially virtual events, in person when possible)
- assessing the program
- writing a brief report recommending how to improve the Fellows program

Desired Qualifications:

- Excellent project management skills and experience
- Strong research skills
- Good communication skills
- Experience conducting assessments

Learning Outcomes:

The Fellow will learn how to develop and run a successful educational program. For example, they will learn about benchmarking, effective communication, assessment strategies, and strategies for building community, knowledge and skills that will be of use in many professions.

6. Making Sense of Government Education Resources

Mentors: Anna Xiong (Kelley Center for Government Information, Fondren Library) and Dr. Erin Baumgartner (Houston Education Research Consortium)

Summary:

This project demonstrates how to utilize education statistics, reports, regulations, and other legislative materials and policies from free official U.S. federal and state

government and international databases, and related Fondren Library subscribed commercial databases for searching government documents. Education professionals and the scholarly community will be able to efficiently obtain the necessary data for their research, program management, teaching, and decision-making.

Project Description:

This project will critically enable school district department leaders, campus administrators (e.g. principals, assistant principals, etc.), leaders of education-based community organizations or non-profits, students, and community members to utilize rich education statistics, reports, regulations and other legislative materials and policies from official U.S. federal and state government resources and international government organizations' databases, and other reputable databases and resources. Users will be able to search, access, and use the necessary education data for decision making and grant writing, for teaching, and for faculty and student research more efficiently. The Kelley Center will investigate community partnership opportunities and on campus partnerships with organizations like the Houston Education Research Consortium and Rice University's K-12 Initiatives. The prospective outcome would include a free education-based resource guide, free training program and/or workshop shared with a wide variety of professional education organizations and users.

Key Tasks:

The following tasks are critical to the success of this project and include:

- Applying a design approach (e.g. an iterative approach) to collect community input to shape the training
- Researching and promoting the efficient use of available essential free government resources and related library subscribed databases for searching government documents.
- Collecting education resources and databases for research guide, testing and describing each, selecting resources and using them to design and deliver training program and teaching materials
- Identifying potential organizations, professionals and departments that would benefit from this education research project and resources
- Creating presentation slides to introduce and demonstrate the features of key resources
- Writing and proofreading correspondence, research, training materials, and promotional documents for accuracy and thoroughness
- Testing the education resources, troubleshooting possible problems with the resources and offering tips
- Designing promotional materials and promoting the education resource guide and the training program and/or training workshop
- Identifying and comparing possible advantages and disadvantages of the resources for users

- Designing practice material to check users' understanding throughout the training workshop presentation
- Creating a Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) guide for using the education resources
- Increasing the visibility and free usage of the Kelley Center's government collections and unique services for Rice community and the general public users
- Increasing the awareness of Fondren Library membership, some for fee services, such as accessing and using library subscribed databases, and more comprehensive data services for non-Rice community users.

Desired Qualifications:

The following qualifications are necessary for the Fondren Fellow to work on this project.

- Demonstrated strong interest, knowledge, and work experience with a wide range of government and Fondren Library resources and databases, especially education related
- Demonstrated ability to work well with on and off campus diverse groups of academic and nonacademic professionals, organizations, and government entities
- Be able to conduct independent research with minimal supervision
- Be able to develop teaching and promotional materials in various formats, e.g. word, PDF, video, and LibGuide
- Demonstrated virtual and on-site teaching experience
- Be able to collect and evaluate feedback on training programs and teaching materials, and make improvements
- Strong written skills and oral communication skills
- Excellent work ethics
- Be able to work under time pressure and meet the deadlines
- Outreach skills and experience highly desirable
- Experience with organizing, promoting, and managing training sessions highly desirable

Learning Outcomes:

It is anticipated that this Fondren Fellow project will enhance the Fellow's multiple professional knowledge and skills:

- to expand and deepen the Fellow's previous knowledge and firsthand work experience with a wide range of working with government and relevant Fondren Library subscribed education related resources
- to further develop the Fellow's ability to access, research, and present education data that is relevant, timely, and useful to education professionals and organizations so that the professionals and organizations can be accountable to education trends and student performance measurements in their community and profession
- to advance communication and collaboration skills with on and off campus diverse groups of academic and nonacademic education professionals, organizations, and government entities
- to advance professional project management skills with setting long term project goals and steps to reach the goals; conducting independent research and developing

appropriate professional training programs, accompanying teaching and assessment templates and customized materials; conducting independent community research and designing templates and customized promotional materials for the outreach; coordinating meetings, scheduling training sessions, and delivering teaching activities for diverse participants; collecting and implementing feedback from e.g. the Fellow's mentors, Fondren Library's UX Office, and training participants.

7. Translational Humanities for Public Health

Mentor: Kirsten Ostherr, Medical Humanities Program (and English Department)

Summary:

[Translational Humanities for Public Health](#) is a database that highlights a broad range of humanities-based responses to the COVID-19 pandemic from around the world, and enables scholars and students to explore and visualize the pathways from humanities classrooms and research to applied interventions in response to human health crises. A Fondren Fellow will help to interview researchers from around the world for the website; help design new pathways for exploring the data; and help identify new contacts who can contribute to the project worldwide.

Project Description:

Translational Humanities for Public Health (THPH) is the continuation of a project funded by the Rice COVID-19 Research Fund that launched in summer 2020, and we were very fortunate to receive a Fondren Fellow during AY 2020-21. That student's work was instrumental in enabling the project to move from site development to public launch. During the first year of THPH, we developed a survey and disseminated it to hundreds of respondents. We now have over 280 responses, and the Fellow helped to incorporate 129 of them into the THPH database. The Fellow worked on all phases of the project, including editing survey responses within the Drupal site to ensure accuracy and completion, she also developed artwork that is incorporated into the site, and has taken the lead on social media publicity for the project, to generate interest in the project and additional contributions to the site.

The next phase of the project for AY 2021-22 will involve a team including the PI (Ostherr), 2-3 grad students, a medical student, and potentially several undergrads in the continued development of the project. (Now that the project site is launched, it has received enough publicity that students and others from outside of Rice, even outside the United States, have contacted me to join the project team as research assistants.) This team will continue to hold weekly meetings, including the Fondren Fellow, to share updates and discuss ongoing work.

A Fondren Fellow will help with several phases of the project. First, the Fellow will participate in the review, analysis, and interpretation of the database. On the basis of the

results, the Fellow will conduct follow-up interviews with a sampling of respondents whose work represents a distinct form of applied medical humanities pandemic response. These interviews will be recorded on zoom then edited as videos to post on the project website. In addition, a Fellow will help to develop visual and narrative pathways through the site, starting with a focus on highlighting projects informed by social justice principles.

Key Tasks:

The project will entail participation in multiple phases of qualitative research: identifying and adding respondents to an existing database of over 300 potential research participants; disseminating the survey through Qualtrics; reviewing survey responses; conducting follow-up interviews by zoom; analysis and interpretation of interview results; editing of interview video. In addition, the fellow will work on the thematic pathways through the site described above. A search of the site shows that 52 out of 129 projects include the phrase “social justice” in the unstructured text of the project description. Along with our Fondren Fellow, we will work with a data science student and faculty team (based in the D2K lab) during fall semester to use NLP to discover other prevalent themes in the unstructured data, and develop visualization tools to reveal these themes. The Fondren Fellow (and other team members) will develop new narrative text to frame the D2K visualizations, illuminate the emphasis on social justice among the projects, and allow users to trace this thematic focus throughout the site, to see interconnections between fields of study, types of projects, and research methods. This will allow students and other site users to ask new questions, such as, “What does a social justice focus look like for an Art History (or other Humanities) major?” By experimenting with different approaches to representing how social justice and other themes appear throughout the site, we hope to gain a deeper understanding of how translational humanities methods are being defined through specific use cases, and how these projects are transforming the societal impact of the humanities. Once this initial thematic thread is fully developed, we will identify and build out additional themes. The pathways projects may involve collaboration with software developers to create new site features that facilitate different uses of the site, depending on the user’s field of interest.

Desired Qualifications:

At a minimum, the students would have some humanities training/background and interest in the medical/health humanities, strong written and oral communication skills, detailed note-taking abilities to document research process and interviews, and would feel confident in their ability to learn new digital platforms and troubleshoot on them. Ideally, students would also have more advanced technical skills, including familiarity with Excel and basic database management, basic website development (Drupal), survey management software (Qualtrics), and experience working on collaborative teams. Experience or interest in developing skills in video editing would be a plus. The advanced technical skills are not strictly required as long as students are tech-savvy enough to learn quickly.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will learn how to translate their humanities training into methods, perspectives, and tools that can be useful for a wide range of settings that are dealing with the pandemic response. They will develop research and analysis skills by working on identifying important research questions that the database can help answer, and they will practice and refine these skills by helping to develop new pathways for exploring the site, based on the specific research questions being asked. Students will develop some technical skills in web editing and video editing. More broadly, this will help those students learn how to translate humanities methods for future jobs within and beyond the academy, and it will also provide a blueprint for how to do the same for other crises, such as the climate crisis. Overall, the students will develop technical, communicative, analytical, design, and collaborative skills, and they will also contribute to valuable work that benefits society as a whole. This digital project will expose students to a wide range of cutting-edge, innovative humanities methods for engaging publicly with current events, while also enabling them to develop independent research, analytical, and collaborative skills. The project will benefit the scholarly communities at Rice, across the U.S., and internationally, as we draw on and bring together approaches from around the world.