THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION

Mellon Graduate Program in the Digital Humanities
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Digital Humanities Fellowships

at the University of Rochester, 2022-2024

Deadline for Application: **Tuesday, February 15, 2022**

A general information and interest meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 25, at 12:30 pm Eastern Time via Zoom (Meeting ID: 946 3663 0344, or click here).

The University of Rochester's graduate fellowship program in digital humanities—now entering its eighth very successful year—is designed to develop fellows' familiarity with digital technology in service of the humanities through intersecting approaches:

- Fellows learn both about and through technology in the context of their own and others' research
- They learn through **theory** (coursework, seminars, speakers), **practice** (technology training, project building, mentoring), and **combinations of the two** (workshops, critical making).
- Fellows in the program serve simultaneously as humanities apprentices and mentors, both within their cohort of graduate students and in communities of undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty members

The fellowship at a glance

Stipend: $20,000 annually (9 months) for 2 years

Additional support: $5,000 annually for offsite professional development; $2,000 annually for domestic conference travel; $3,000 for one fellow per year to attend an international conference

Eligibility: PhD student in good standing in English, History, Philosophy, or Visual and Cultural Studies

Requirements: DMST 501, "Seminar in Digital Humanities;" training in digital skills and concepts; participation in a range of digital humanities projects

Fellows in the program will:

- Participate in Digital Media Studies 501, "Seminar in Digital Humanities," designed especially for the Mellon Graduate Digital Humanities Program
- Train in various technologies related to digital research in the humanities
- Collaborate with other fellows in organizing digital humanities events at UR
- Collaborate in digital humanities groups focusing on matters central to the digital humanities; and on the fellows' individual research concerns
- Serve as research assistants in projects and mentors and co-teachers in digital humanities courses
- Produce a digital portfolio that suits their professional aims
- Conclude their fellowship term by presenting their research

PhD students in any of the humanities programs within Arts and Sciences are eligible to apply. Ideally, to make the most intellectually productive use of their time and effort as fellows, they would have completed PhD coursework before undertaking a fellowship (although, depending on prior experience and background, students might be accepted as fellows earlier or later in their graduate career).

*Note that extensive previous experience with the digital humanities is **not** required to apply for this program.*

The application process is simple and straightforward. The following information should be submitted to humanities@rochester.edu:

1) A detailed letter of application indicating

    (a) the relevance of the Mellon program to the applicant's interests
    (b) the relationship the applicant intends to cultivate between his or her area of humanities interest/expertise and technology in research or teaching or both
    (c) the potential significance of the intersection of humanities and technology for the applicant's research agenda, both short and long term
    (d) any previous experience (*not necessary for admission to the program*)

2) A writing sample, not necessarily related to digital humanities

3) A confidential letter from the applicant's advisor or other professor familiar with his/her work, indicating the quality of the work, progress to degree, and outlook for future research (the letter should go directly **from the advisor to Morris Eaves** (see above); it should **not** be included with the other material)

4) An up-to-date CV

For further information, see the FAQ below.

Other questions should be addressed to Morris Eaves (morris.eaves@rochester.edu), Director, Mellon Graduate Program in the Digital Humanities.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Andrew W. Mellon Digital Humanities Fellowships at the University of Rochester, 2022-2024

Why should I be interested in the Mellon fellowships?
There are many good reasons. You may want to explore how digital tools can enrich your primary program of research. You may want to participate with others in the creation of important scholarly resources. You may want to mentor others through university programs that feature outreach to the community at large. You may want to attend offsite summer workshops at the Rare Book School at the University of Virginia, the Digital Humanities Summer Institute at the University of Victoria (or any of its associated workshops elsewhere). You may want to improve your professional qualifications for the academic job market and/or for alternative jobs that (frequently) call for digital skills in addition to the background you're acquiring in your academic specialty.

Who can apply?
Any PhD student in good standing in English, History, Philosophy, or Visual and Cultural Studies is eligible. Students may apply during any year of their tenure as PhD students, and they may submit applications while they are working on any major milestone of their graduate careers (exam preparation, dissertation prospectus, dissertation writing). Different departments have different requirements for students in the various years of their studies; the Mellon fellowship program is flexible enough to take these differences into account.

The application calls for a writing sample. What should it be? How long should it be?
The writing sample should be whatever writing you think represents the quality of your best work. It can be on any topic at any length (although ideally something 15–30 pages in length).

The instructions say I need a letter from my advisor. I don't have an advisor yet.
You should ask a faculty member familiar with your work to write a confidential letter of support. Ask the faculty member to send the letter directly to Morris Eaves (meaves@ur.rochester.edu).

.What will Mellon fellows be doing?
The ~$20,000 fellowship lasts for two years, and it includes additional support for attending workshops, conferences, etc., that are relevant to your Mellon work: $3,000 per year for offsite training at workshops in the summer, for instance, and $2,000 per year for travel to conferences. Fellows will spend roughly 10 hours/week engaged in fellowship activities (analogous to other fellowships in which students are engaged in academic service). Here is a very rough breakdown of fellowship activities:

- Participation in Digital Media Studies (DMST) 501, the official Mellon seminar, which meets weekly for a mix of planning, reading and discussion, presentations, and brief training sessions. The fellows conceive and execute a very successful series of Digital Lunches; visits by scholars known for their work in the digital humanities; and, every other year, a national colloquium of some sort. Decisions are made as a group—by you in collaboration with the other fellows.

- Year 1 and Year 2 include some combination of

    1. Research assistantships in collaborative digital projects at UR

    2. Participation in collaborative projects and initiatives that may or may not be based at UR but which face outward toward the larger community (academic and otherwise)

What if my principal area of research—the topic of my dissertation—is not digital? What if the digital humanities are a secondary interest for me?
If you are interested in learning broadly about technology in the humanities, then you should apply to the Mellon fellowship program. You will need to articulate in your application the potential relationship between your humanities research and expertise in technology that you would like to cultivate, and you should also indicate ways in which you think technology might inform your future thinking. You do *not* need to describe a digital project for yourself. And prior digital skills aren't required.

Is DMST 501, "Seminar in Digital Humanities," a 4-credit course?
No. It is a 1-credit discussion course co-directed by faculty and students. In this as in all other respects, the Mellon program encourages both a high degree of autonomy and an equally high degree of collaboration among the fellows.

Is there any special reason why the Mellon fellowship program is based in the Humanities Center and the Rush Rhees Library? Is there a special relationship?
We're glad you noticed. There are several reasons, so here's a long answer. From the start, Mellon fellows have participated in the development of new curricula and training programs. As opportunities for digital work at UR have increased, so have interdisciplinary partnerships

across (and beyond) the university. The River Campus Libraries, though, have been a key to the Mellon program's success. The Humanities Center in Rush Rhees Library provides a home for the fellows' training and research, generously providing carrels, meeting spaces, and administrative support. The Library itself provides the Digital Scholarship Lab (DSL), without which the Mellon program could not exist. The DSL provides vital support for the fellows' training and research through the generous ongoing technical consultation that has consistently supported our Mellon fellows at all stages of training, project design, and execution. Conversely, Mellon fellows have been involved in many of the Lab's projects. More broadly, UR's River Campus Libraries, including their impressive range of staff with skills directly relevant to the digital humanities and a strong desire to serve the academic community, have further benefited our projects. The fellows have on multiple occasions used the VISTA Collaboratory, for instance, an advanced imaging facility in the Carlson Science & Engineering Library (Studio X, one of the three new teaching/learning programs in prospect, will be located in Carlson). Altogether, these additions have contributed to a highly creative and supportive context for our Mellon fellows and their work, and vice versa. Indeed, the Mellon program's openness and extreme interdisciplinarity fit well with the Library's progressive orientation and its commitment to (and long history of) academic partnership and innovation. Past fellows have worked with every member of the staff of the Library's Digital Scholarship Lab, led by Emily Sherwood, PhD, director of the lab and a close collaborator in the expansion of DH at UR. Fellows have also contributed to projects coordinated/sponsored by other Library staff, such as the venerable, highly respected Medieval English Texts project (Robbins Library, directed by Anna Siebach-Larsen, PhD). The latest developments in the Library's plans, which stand to provide significant new opportunities for the Mellon fellows, are Library Carpentries, a collaborative digital skills-sharing program with Colgate, Cornell, and Syracuse Universities; Tinkerspace, an entry level training program for all UR students; and Studio X, a program devoted to augmented and virtual reality. Each of these programs will provide a new range of opportunities for the Mellon fellows.

Definitions and Explanations

Project-based courses are those in which students engage in hands-on work in addition to studying traditional humanities materials. Graduate students co-teaching with faculty in these courses will learn the relevant technologies and assist undergraduates in developing their skills and applying them to the humanities materials. They will also help students understand how digital forms of materials they may already be familiar with inflect those materials with new kinds of meaning. A number of such courses have been offered in the past, and indications are that the number and diversity are increasing. Mellon fellows will not be serving as TAs—they are expected to be co-teachers, mentors, and research associates.

A *Faculty Humanities Lab* is an ongoing faculty-led research project, generally one that is complex and that benefits from the participation of several people. FHLs typically consist of a faculty Principal Investigator (sometimes two or more PIs); at least one graduate student working with that faculty member; and, often, undergraduates to whom the graduate student

serves as mentor. In this scenario, graduate students serve as both apprentices and mentors, learning as much as possible from the faculty PI(s) about the project, and then (a) doing his or her own work on the project and (b) mentoring undergraduates who work on the project. Some Faculty Humanities Labs are occasionally associated with academic courses; others are not. (See list of projects below.)

Examples of ongoing FHL's have included Morris Eaves's William Blake Archive; Thomas Slaughter's Seward Family Papers project; Michael Jarvis's Virtual St. George's [Bermuda]; Joel Burges's Visualizing Televisual Time; Joanne Bernardi's Reenvisioning Japan; Peter Christensen's Architectural Biometrics; the Robbins Library's Middle English Texts Series; and Gregory Heyworth's Lazarus and R-Chive projects—among others. Interest, activity, and resources in the digital humanities at UR have increased sharply since the program began in 2013-14. Mellon fellows at UR have a remarkable track record of participation and accomplishment in a very diverse array of initiatives across the university and region, including those in the Warner School of Education and Human Development, the Eastman School of Music, and the Mellon-funded Central New York Humanities Corridor (where Mellon fellows helped to found the Global Digital Humanities group).

Further questions should be directed to Morris Eaves (meaves@ur.rochester.edu).

The Mellon Fellows' website is http://humanities.lib.rochester.edu/mellondh/

Note: The new fellows selected for 2022-2024 will redesign and update the site to suit their aims and aspirations.

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Appendix (Major Collaborative Digital Humanities Projects at the University of Rochester)

Note: Mellon fellows will participate as research assistants and mentors—not as TAs—in these DH projects, among others that we anticipate will arise during the grant period. All the projects are also independent of classes and ongoing. The offerings have expanded to include artificial intelligence, multispectral imaging, community engagement, and social activism. And there are other projects, of course, beyond this durable core.

Precious Bedell, Joel Burges, Joshua Dubler, and others: The Rochester Decarceration Research Initiative

The collaborators describe this new community-based initiative as follows: "This project has two goals. The short-term goal is to catalogue and analyze the many ways that Rochester is, in fact, a prison town, which is to say a town tied politically, economically, and culturally to the many jails and prisons around it, and a town governed by carceral logics that center punishment at the expense of public health. Because of mass incarceration's many tentacles, these logics must be approached from a variety of vantage points and methodologies. Our cross-disciplinary research team includes humanist scholars, social scientists, healthcare researchers, and formerly incarcerated researchers. If our short-term goal is to make sense of Rochester's carceral culture, our long-term goal is to change it: to eliminate jails and prisons, and to transform the culture of punishment into a culture of collective care. This project is tailored to Rochester's unique carceral geography, but with success, our collaborative, interdisciplinary approach could well provide a model for others around the country who are working to decarcerate their own communities." There are several digitally intensive sub-projects that Mellon fellows can assist with: Prof. Burges, for example, is studying the types of data that emerge from the history of incarceration; a website is under development; etc.

Joanne Bernardi: Re-Envisioning Japan/ Japan as Destination in 20th Century Visual and Material Culture
https://rej.lib.rochester.edu

Prof. Bernardi describes REJ as an "open-ended and hybrid digital humanities project" and comments further: "In March I gave the plenary address at the Council on East Asian Libraries annual conference that draws on and consolidates the history of collaboration that Nora Dimmock and I outlined in Jentery Sayers's DH volume [*Making Things and Drawing*

Boundaries: Experiments in the Digital Humanities, Debates in the Digital Humanities, U of Minnesota P, 2017], describes current developments, and mentions future plans." She adds: "Over the past six years, I have collaborated on Re-Envisioning Japan with six undergraduates and ten graduate students (including several Mellon DH fellows) from a wide range of departments and disciplines. Such collaboration benefits students, the project, and my own professional development in equal measure."

Joel Burges: *Mediate* & Visualizing Televisual Time
http://humanities.lib.rochester.edu/mediate/

The Mediate project, which has developed a "collaborative video annotation tool" that "allows for groups of researchers to collaboratively annotate, query, and visualize temporal media," is currently in its first alpha version, offering a variety of applications; further testing, development, and distribution are underway.
http://www.teachingmedia.org/collective-reading-shot-analysis-and-data-visualization-in-the-digital-humanities/
A coauthored article about Mediate:
http://tracystuber.com/dh/televisual-time/
An account of a former Mellon fellow's work on Burges's Televisual Time/*TV Guide*project, in progress:
http://humanities.lib.rochester.edu/mellondh/tv-guide/

Peter Christensen: Architectural Biometrics (and others)
https://architecturalbiometrics.com

Prof. Christensen's project originated in a complex effort to understand, by conventional predigital means—site visits, photographs, architectural drawings, etc.—the architectural history of the Ottoman railway system designed in Germany in the nineteenth century and executed at numerous sites, producing both architectural "likeness" and "difference" in the process. After a number of experiments with 3D imaging and facial recognition algorithms (usually involving Mellon fellows) at various Canadian and US sites, Christensen and his partners began to envision a host of general applications centering on the creation of a digital platform that analyzes 3D recordings of like objects to identify their dissimilarities and consider the authorial meaning of those dissimilarities. This open-source platform will extend the technology built around a historical research question in the *Architectural Biometrics* project through a multi-institutional pilot project with museum partnerships, including the Rochester Museum and Science Center, the New York State Museum, and the Museum of Modern Art. This platform will serve as a new tool to help anyone who studies objects of any kind to comparatively analyze them. Conceptually, the platform is inspired by a desire to subvert the hegemonic applications of biometric recognition technology, which it employs as a guiding analogical reference, for applications within the domain of the humanities. The platform will significantly expand the capacity to analyze spatial data across the digital humanities.

As the description indicates, the circle of collaboration on Architectural Biometrics has expanded with the project's ambitions to include several institutions and individuals.

Morris Eaves: The William Blake Archive
http://www.blakearchive.org

The Blake Archive (1993-present) is among the most widely recognized of all digital humanities projects, with numerous awards for its achievements in establishing what Katherine Hayles labeled the "gold standard" of digital editing. In 2008, at the urging of a small cadre of PhD students, the University of Rochester established a Blake Archive team to complement its counterparts at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and in Los Angeles. Rochester's distinctive specialty would be the editing and imaging of manuscripts and typographical works (vs. illuminated books, engravings, paintings, etc.). The graduate students had little if any prior experience with editing of any sort, much less online editing. So the Rochester team of graduate students started from scratch, using a method that remains the pedagogical backbone of the Rochester group: peer learning.

We scheduled weekly meetings to discuss problems that couldn't be solved by other means. All the students assigned themselves regular office hours when they work together in teams. The original group quickly attracted attention from other UR graduate students and expanded. The major difference between the way we work and the way the other Archive assistants have worked at the University of Virginia (where the Archive began in the early 90s) and UNC/CH is our emphasis on intensive collaboration and self-guidance. Assistants are never assigned, from above, jobs to do. They work together to determine priorities and make decisions together—and they discuss their work in inclusive weekly meetings. For especially challenging works, such as Blake's *Four Zoas* manuscript and his working notebook, small cohorts of three or so students form to create multiple digital prototypes in collaboration with the Digital Scholarship Lab. (The Archive is currently collaborating with the British Library and the Lazarus Project on experiments with multispectral and hyperspectral imaging to determine their value in deciphering illegible passages in Blake's *Four Zoas* manuscript.) Our local digital hub is a set of Google tools, which we use for storage and collaboration in combination with work-in-progress servers at UNC. Our local system was designed by members of our team for their own use. The Rochester group, currently about ten students (mostly PhD students, with a mix of MA students and undergraduates) is headed by a student Project Coordinator—currently Eric Loy, a former Mellon fellow now completing his dissertation.

The group emerges from the recognition that the students best suited to do our kind of work—which requires self-discipline, fearless learning, energy, and cooperation—are often *looking* for things to *add* to their normal load of academic work in order to enrich it. The undergraduates work closely with the graduate students, doing the same work at the same level. The work requires significant high-level scholarship and the rapid acquisition of digital skills on a steep

learning curve. It is often highly experimental, tackling problems of complex analysis, display, and interaction that have never been satisfactorily solved by digital means.

Gregory Heyworth: The Lazarus Project & R-CHIVE
http://www.lazarusprojectimaging.com
https://r-chive.com

Prof. Heyworth is a medievalist with appointments in English and Data Science at the University of Rochester. Both the Lazarus Project and the more recently created R-CHIVE collaboration between the University of Rochester and the Rochester Institute of Technology concentrate on the recovery of illegible documents by means of multispectral and hyperspectral imaging techniques informed by what Heyworth terms "textual science." The homepage of R-CHIVE provides a useful overview of the primary concerns of both projects, on which undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and nonacademic experts and institutions collaborate:

Rochester Cultural Heritage Imaging, Visualization, and Education is a collaboration of university researchers and students with the goal of extending the corpus of humankind's cultural heritage. Most participants are based at the University of Rochester and the Rochester Institute of Technology in western New York State, but the group also includes colleagues in Washington DC, Colorado, and Hawaii. R-CHIVE is leveraging the long history of innovation in imaging and of excellence in the humanities in Rochester to recover inscriptions from manuscripts and maps that had been erased or otherwise damaged. R-CHIVE has the potential to make Rochester the foremost location in the world for the scientific study of cultural heritage. R-CHIVE's task is both urgent and difficult due to the loss of artifacts by climate change and deliberate destruction.

R-CHIVE members have participated over the last two decades in a large number of projects that successfully recovered writings formerly thought lost, including Archimedes Palimpsest (the oldest known copies of the writings of Archimedes from the 10th century that were erased and overwritten in 1229 CE), the Temple Scroll (from the caves in Qumran), the erased and overwritten palimpsests at St. Catherine's Monastery in Sinai, *Les Échéz d'Amours*– a manuscript damaged by the Allied bombing raids upon Dresden in 1945—and the c. 1491 world map by Henricus Martellus Germanus.

Michael Jarvis: The Smiths Island Archeology Project—Bermuda; and the Cape Coast, Ghana, Project
http://smithsislandarchaeology.blogspot.com/

Jarvis is the current director of the Digital Media Studies undergraduate program at the University of Rochester. The archeology projects involve laser scanning, photogrammetry, 3-D simulations, and fundamental ethnographic work associated with former colonial and slave-trading sites in the Bermudas and Africa. The associated Virtual St. George's project, in

development, is an interactive 3D model of St. George's, Bermuda—the oldest living town in English America and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Cary [Adams] Peppermint: The EcoArtTech Studio
http://www.ecoarttech.net

EcoArtTech is an art, environment, and critical theory collaborative co-founded in 2005 by Cary [Adams] Peppermint, Associate Professor of New Media and Expanded Practice, Art and Art History, and Leila Nadir, Assistant Professor and Director of Environmental Humanities. Nadir and Peppermint use digital media technologies to explore the 21st-century environments in which we dwell, intertwining environments that include nature, built places, mobile landscapes, and networked spaces. Their projects include public art interventions, workshops, performances, lectures, scholarly articles, and reviews of media art and environmental art exhibitions.

EcoArtTech studio assistants are chosen from undergraduates, fifth-year students from UR's Take Five program, and graduate students who demonstrate the following skills: (1) thinking critically about environments and the artistic uses of digital media to affect perceptions and encourage new social and cultural understandings of anthropogenic climate change, (2) employing creative decision making toward critical artistic works that enhance their own areas of study, and (3) demonstrating experience with a programming language, such as Java, Python, and Processing for screen-based and physical computing projects. The merger of technical and conceptual skills is necessary for working in the EAT Studio can be acquired from working with Nadir or Peppermint for at least one semester either as a TA, research assistant, studio assistant, or a combination.

The process of selecting and training studio assistants is regenerative: During the second semester TAs lead technical workshops and critical theory labs that give them independent teaching experience while simultaneously training the next generation of potential research/studio assistants.

Nadir and Peppermint communicate the conceptual core of each EcoArtTech work in as much detail as possible at the onset of each project. This involves: (1) how they envision a work might appear or function in, for example, the aesthetics of interface and design, including participatory qualities; (2) a rationale mixed with intuition that drives the creative inquiry as demonstrated by previous EcoArtTech research and the works of others, including critics, artists, theorists, hackers, philosophers, scientists, etc.; and (3) above all, trusting the process by working and thinking through ideas as discoveries and issues arise.

Once the structure for creative inquiry is established along with a production schedule, Nadir and Peppermint then meet regularly with the assistant, cultivating a free and open exchange during all development phases. In order to facilitate an environment of collaboration, they

encourage assistants to suggest alternative methods or even new strategies for executing, realizing, and building upon the initial concept of the project. These are not sessions that will radically change the direction of the project; the original concept remains the blueprint and fundamental structure on which they improvise. It is part of EcoArtTech's open-source philosophy to remain open to any methods and ideas that could make the process more efficient or contribute to the success of the finished work. Of course, in creative production and inquiry, high efficiency and quality do not always work in tandem.

Anna Siebach-Larsen, Ph.D. (Director, Rossell Hope Robbins Library and Koller-Collins Center for English Studies)
http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams

The Middle English Text Series (METS) is dedicated to publishing critical editions of medieval vernacular texts--including English, French, Scots, and Italian—in formats that are affordable and accessible to students, researchers, and instructors from the secondary to postgraduate level. METS was an early adapter of open access scholarship and began offering freely available online versions of its editions in 1995. METS has arrived at a new stage: it is now evaluating and reshaping its digital editions to align with best practices and new technologies in digital critical editions to allow for improved access and use, as well as long-term digital sustainability. The re-envisioned METS editions will include full TEI-XML markup, improved and freely available metadata, support for large scale data projects involving its textual corpus, and options for annotation and multimedia presentation. Mellon fellows would assist in the development of METS' new critical editions, helping to: design and implement improved workflow; work with the editorial team to create full TEI-XML markup of editions; assess user needs through UX best practices; updating the 90+ previously published texts to the standards and format established in this new stage. Fellows will have the opportunity to explore and implement the most recent tools and developments in digital editions and will be fundamental to the preservation and advancement of one of the most important publishing series in medieval studies.

Thomas Slaughter: The Seward Family Digital Archive
https://sewardproject.org

Since its inception five years ago, the Seward project—stemming from the family papers of William Henry Seward (Governor of New York, US Senator, and Secretary of State under Presidents Lincoln and Johnson) has developed increasingly into a highly collaborative enterprise as its ambitions have grown. This is partly due to successful grants (now over $1 million) that have supported the inclusion of community volunteers along with faculty, graduate and undergraduate students.

Although Prof. Slaughter is the project's PI, the overall flow is controlled by graduate student managers. Planning, communicating with the staff of Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation in the UR library, transcription, editing, digitizing, TEI markup, and publication are

processes overseen by graduate students. More broadly, the project is a collaboration between the University's Department of History, the River Campus Libraries' department of Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation, and the Digital Scholarship Lab. It brings together students in the humanities and computer science, residents of retirement communities, and retired volunteers ("citizen archivists") from the greater Rochester area to help transcribe the thousands of Seward family letters, all written in Victorian-era cursive handwriting**.** Besides continuing the collaborating with volunteers from the Highlands at Pittsford (a retirement community), the Penfield Recreation's DEAR program, and retired University staff and librarians, the effort will soon include another off-campus site for volunteers in Brockport who will be working alongside Slaughter's students. In addition, a student videographer will be trained to make short films about how to collaborate on public history projects.