



November 21, 2025

External Fellowship in AI and Knowledge within the Center for Humanistic Inquiry into AI and Uncertainty

**Call for Applications for 2026–2027
Deadline: Saturday, January 17, 2026**

Access application information and link to digital application on the IRH fellowships webpage: <https://irh.wisc.edu/irh-fellowships/> (scroll down to “external fellowships”).

The Center for Humanistic Inquiry into AI and Uncertainty, an autonomous research center administratively housed within the Institute for Research in the Humanities, is pleased to announce its **first annual competition for one external fellowship for a scholar who is working on a project that explores the theme of “AI and Knowledge” from a humanistic (or descriptive social-scientific) perspective**. Thanks to an NEH AI Humanities research grant, external fellows will be in residence for the full academic year and will be given a \$60,000 stipend, plus health benefits (if accepting the award through UW-Madison payroll), office space, and access to university libraries/databases). Fellows may extend their residency through the following summer on a non-stipendiary basis. Joining a team of three to four internal fellows studying AI and uncertainty at UW-Madison, the external fellow will undertake full-time research, participate in the Center’s intellectual community (including weekly meetings with the other fellows), collaborate on the publication and dissemination of the Center’s annual whitepaper, and contribute to the Center’s other activities.

Center’s mission statement: The Center for Humanistic Inquiry into AI and Uncertainty serves as a collaborative hub for gathering people, ideas, and resources from across the UW-Madison community in order to intervene in scholarly and public debates around the multifaceted dimensions of uncertainty foregrounded by emerging AI technologies. By fostering a broad-minded, yet focused, community of humanities scholars researching AI and providing them with the dedicated time, research support, and other resources they need to produce impactful academic publications and public-facing resources, the Center seeks to engage in urgent conversations with 1) researchers and technologists working on AI and related technologies, 2) scholars grappling with technological shifts more broadly, and 3) the broader public.

The theme for the Center’s inaugural year is “AI and Knowledge.” In keeping with its mission of supporting interdisciplinary cohorts of humanities researchers who are committed to probing current and future AI technologies and the multifarious uncertainties attendant to them, the Center invites applications from scholars working in all humanistic and descriptive social scientific disciplines. We are specifically interested in projects that problematize the concept of “knowledge” and that reflect on the ways AI tools challenge, support, threaten, and intersect with ways of knowing. Research questions may include (but are not limited to): How do AI tools “know” and how do users of these tools understand the “knowledge” they glean from interacting with AI? What are the limits of trusting AI outputs? How can the meaning of AI outputs be effectively communicated to and between human agents interacting with AI? What bodies of knowledge or ways of knowing are prioritized or marginalized in various AI tools? Can AI help ameliorate problems like fake news and echo chambers rather than amplifying them? How important (if at all) is it for AI to develop reasoning capabilities that approximate human capabilities? Overall, we are looking for fellows whose projects demonstrate a deliberate appreciation of uncertainty’s positive potential for productive critique and whose ideas on “AI and Knowledge” can highlight previously uncharted paths for innovative humanistic inquiry.

Thanks to the generous support of the National Endowment for the Humanities alongside robust institutional support from the College of Letters & Science, the IRH, the Office of the Vice-Chancellor for Research, the Graduate School, the Data Science Institute, the Center for Humanities, and the Vice-Provost for Teaching and Learning, fellowships in the Center for Humanistic Inquiry into AI and Uncertainty are prestigious appointments and represent one of the ways the University of Wisconsin–Madison seeks to strengthen opportunities for concentrated humanities research on the questions of AI and its uncertain future.

Please note all Center fellowships are residential. External fellows are *required* to live in Madison, Wisconsin, throughout the academic year to ensure their active participation in the intellectual and social life of the Center. The fellowship may not be deferred for any reason. The Center seeks the most exciting research projects from candidates who can contribute to and benefit from the Center’s mission.

Criteria for selection:

- The quality and potential impact of the applicant’s current and proposed research
- The clarity of the applicant’s research proposal
- The relevance of the applicant’s research and expertise to the theme “AI and Knowledge”
- The diversity of intellectual and disciplinary perspectives, professional experiences, and interests the applicant would bring to the Center’s research mission
- Evidence of interest in, and preparedness for, interdisciplinary collaboration

Eligibility

- The Center for Humanistic Inquiry into AI and Uncertainty encourages applications from senior scholars as well as junior scholars with research projects that are well advanced.
- Faculty members of the University of Wisconsin–Madison are *not* eligible for this fellowship.
- Independent scholars are eligible to apply.
- Applicants must be in possession of their doctorate **at the time of application (latest conferral date accepted: 01/17/26)**. We will not accept applications from graduate students who anticipate having a doctorate by the beginning of the 2026–2027 academic year or who have defended but not submitted their dissertations.
- Projects should be situated clearly within the humanities, which we define broadly to include disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship on history, literature, visual and performing art, visual and material culture, philosophy, religion, politics, and language. In addition to applications in the humanities, applications in the social and natural sciences will be considered only if they demonstrate a robust potential for comparative, theoretical, and/or interdisciplinary conversation with the humanities. Proposals in the performing and creative arts are not generally supported, but such projects with a substantive research component in the humanities will be considered.
- Proposals involving a revision of the doctoral dissertation should involve major expansion, extensive new research, and/or substantive reconceptualization.

Application Materials to Prepare

- Project Proposal. Up to 1,500 words (about 5 double-spaced pages of 12-point font). The proposal, written to be accessible to readers outside your discipline and free of jargon, should address the significance of the project. Clearly state the intended product of your research, whether it is a book or an article (or a series of articles). For book projects, an outline of chapters is highly recommended. The proposal should also state how the project will be accomplished, and the specific work plan for the period of the fellowship. Projects to revise doctoral dissertations should involve substantial expansion, new research, and/or new conceptual frameworks—the proposal should clearly explain how the project relates to the submitted dissertation yet will be a different book.
- Project Bibliography. Publications (not your own) relevant to the project, up to 2 pages.
- Brief Statement of Interest in interdisciplinary and collaborative research and the envisioned benefits that this mode of research will bring to your work and that of others (up to 300 words).
- Curriculum Vitae. Including work forthcoming and in progress.
- Two letters of recommendation. Each must address the significance and feasibility of the proposed research, quality of the proposal, qualifications for the project, and past work. Letters must be submitted online via Interfolio; the IRH will not accept letters emailed to staff members. Letters from current departmental colleagues

are strongly discouraged. Successful applications from more senior scholars tend not to have letters from the applicant's degree-granting institution (e.g., dissertation advisor).

- Completed AI and Knowledge Fellowship Interfolio Questionnaire.

Application Submission

- Applicants must access the online application through Interfolio. The Interfolio application link is found in the AI and Knowledge Fellowship section of the IRH fellowships webpage: <https://irh.wisc.edu/irh-fellowships/> (scroll down to the expandable "external fellowships" menu).
- You must complete your online application and upload all required materials to Interfolio by **11:59 pm Eastern Time on Saturday, January 17, 2026** (recommendation letters must also be uploaded by your recommenders by 11:59 pm ET 02/01/25). Note that Interfolio operates out of Washington, D.C. and deadlines are set at Eastern Time, **NOT** Madison's Central Time. Please check the time zone of the computer you are using if submitting last-minute.
- You do not need to complete your application in a single session. You may start it, save changes, log out, and return to it later. (To see your saved applications, go to the Interfolio dashboard and click the "Deliveries" button; un-submitted applications will appear as "in-progress.")
- You *can* submit your application early while letters of recommendation are still pending (in fact, we encourage you to do so). Letters of recommendation can be submitted even after you submit your portion, but your recommenders must upload their letters to Interfolio by the deadline (11:59 pm ET) or they will not be attached to your application packet.
- Please press the "**submit**" button on your portion of the application as soon as possible. Even after submission, you may return to an application repeatedly to make edits and changes until 11:59 pm ET on **January 17**. (Again, to see an application you have already submitted, go to the Interfolio dashboard and click the "Deliveries" button; submitted applications will appear as "sent deliveries.")
- **The selection committee will not see, review, or read any submitted materials until January 17th.**

Letters of Recommendation

- Applications require **two** letters of recommendation.
- To identify your letter writers and request letters of recommendation from them within the Interfolio system: Open the application page. Find the category "*Confidential Letter of Recommendation or Evaluation*" and click the "Add File" button on the far right. On the next screen, select the tab labeled "**Request a Recommendation**," then click the "**Request**" button. On the following screen, enter the first and last name of the recommender along with their email address. Click the "Send Request" button to complete the process.
- Interfolio will then contact the two recommenders directly with instructions on

how to submit your letters. Please do this early so that Interfolio has time to contact your letter writers and so that your letter writers have time to review Interfolio's submission instructions. Letters must be submitted through Interfolio; **letters emailed directly to the IRH will not be accepted.**

- The deadline for letter writers to submit letters is also **11:59 pm ET** on Saturday, **January 17, 2026**. Letters submitted after midnight will not be attached to your application. The IRH does not send reminder emails to letter writers and does not check for missing letters close to the application deadline. Check Interfolio early and often to make sure your letters are submitted ahead of the deadline.

Deadlines

- Application materials submitted through Interfolio (by applicant): 11:59 pm ET, **Saturday, January 17, 2026.**
- Letters of recommendation uploaded to Interfolio (by recommenders): 11:59 pm ET, **Saturday, January 17, 2026.**
- Notifications from the IRH: No later than mid-March, 2026.

Inquiries

- For substantive questions about projects and proposals, contact Jeremy Morris, Center for Humanistic Inquiry into AI and Uncertainty (jwmorris2@wisc.edu) and Grant Nelsestuen, Associate Dean for the Arts and Humanities, College of Letters & Science (nelsestuen@wisc.edu).
- For help using Interfolio, please contact Interfolio's help desk (help@interfolio.com; 877-997-8807).