

“The Humanities Respond to Global Challenges” 2025 Seed Program
at the Institute for Research in the Humanities
CALL FOR APPLICATIONS (Released December 2, 2024)
Deadline: March 7, 2025, 5:00 pm CST

In its second year, “The Humanities Respond to Global Challenges” is a seed program to support up to two teams of five (5) UW-Madison faculty to develop new humanistic and descriptive social scientific projects that take a collaborative, multiple-PI, and cross-disciplinary approach to global challenges, both enduring and emerging. Potential topics may include peace and social justice; climate change, environmental justice, and sustainability; migration, immigration, and translation; democracy and authoritarianism; the history, culture, and politics of sport; the role of the humanities and artistic and creative practices in health and well-being; and security, privacy, and surveillance. Funded by the College of Letters & Science (L&S) – including the Arts and Humanities division and the Collective for Research Impact and Social Partnerships (CRISP) – and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education (OVRGE), this seed program will provide each team of researchers with support for developing their collaborative project. Awardees will be determined through an internal competition. Preference may be given to UW-Madison humanities-based projects that include at least one researcher in the social, natural, or computer sciences or in the creative arts; show a concrete plan for demonstrating impact (incl. collaborating with community partners and other external stakeholders as well as producing both scholarly and public-facing publications); and identify concrete and viable sources for funding the research (esp. the NEH, NSF, NIH, Mellon Foundation, Henry Luce Foundation, and other major funding agencies).

Support through this seed program will take the form of a course release for each member of the research team to advance this project; flexible research funds for supporting the research; an office in the IRH (in the University Club) for the duration of the summer; access to various College and University research support services; and funding to support bringing scholars, community partners, and other external stakeholders to campus for workshops devoted to the project proposal and mock grant proposal reviews.*

Over the course of Summer 2025 and continuing into the 2025-2026 academic year, the seed program will take the following form:

1. Eight (8) weekly meetings of the project’s research team members during Summer 2025 facilitated by the IRH Director or another senior scholar, to discuss progress on the proposed research project, expected outputs, funding sources to be pursued, and timeline for advancing the project in the Fall and beyond (including e.g. when course releases might be taken to support the research). As part of the timeline, it is expected that researchers will formulate a plan for regular meetings in the Fall and beyond.

2. During the summer, researchers will have the opportunity to develop ideas and workshop writing samples related to the project, including grant proposals for submission to funding sources as well as drafts of academic writing for both scholarly and public-facing venues and other research outputs.
3. During the summer and beyond, researchers will have access to research services provided by the College of L&S and the OVCRGE.
4. During Summer 2025, Fall 2025, and Spring 2026, each team will have the opportunity to use up to \$5,000 to hire an hourly graduate PA and \$5000 to bring to campus scholars, community partners, and other potential external stakeholders for the purpose of strengthening the research project. Such uses of the latter funds might include a workshop or workshops devoted to discussing and soliciting feedback on the concept(s) and logistics of the proposed research project or a mock grant proposal review.*
5. Each researcher will receive \$2500 in flexible research funds for supporting the research project. These funds will be transferred to the home departments of each researcher.*
6. Each researcher will receive a course release in the form of lecturer backfill transferred to each team member's home unit to be used in AY 25-26 in accordance with the needs of the research project.*

*Note: Only L&S faculty are eligible for the flexible research funds and the backfill for the course release. Participants are expected generally to be in residence during the summer and to attend the weekly meeting of the workshop. They will be provided with an office in the IRH (in the University Club) for the duration of the summer if they desire.

Applications for this seed program are welcome from teams composed of five researchers drawn from tenured and tenure-track faculty as well as academic staff. At least two members of each research team must be at the rank of Associate Professor or higher and up to one member of each research team may be Academic Staff. UW-Madison faculty from other schools and colleges are eligible to serve as members on the team, but not for the flexible research funds or backfill funding (unless their respective Dean is willing to provide such funding).

To Apply for “The Humanities Respond to Global Challenges” 2025 Seed Program:

Applications for the “The Humanities Respond to Global Challenges” 2025 seed program must include the following documents compiled into a single pdf document:

1. A concept paper of the research team’s proposed project, not to exceed 1500 words. Successful concept papers will articulate the global challenge to be addressed by the project; how the project relates to previous research; how and why a collaborative, cross-disciplinary, and humanistic (incl. descriptive social scientific) approach will be especially fruitful for this project; what role each research team member will play in the project; what community and other partners the project will engage in the research project; what research outputs, both scholarly and public-facing, the project envisions producing; a list of potential funders (federal, public, and private) for supporting the research; the project’s tentative timeline for both pursuing funding and publishing its research; and the overall impact of the research project.
2. For each team member, a 200-word statement explaining how this collaborative project fits into their overall research program (e.g., how it relates to previous research, or how it represents a new direction, etc.).
3. A curriculum vitae for each member of the research team.
4. A statement from each research team member’s chair or director, indicating support for the course release to be taken in AY 2025-26.

Applications for the “The Humanities Respond to Global Challenges” Seed Program (HRGCSP) are due by March 7, 2025, at 5:00 pm CT, and should be submitted in electronic form to IRH Administrator Katie Apsey (apsey@wisc.edu). The four items above should be compiled in the order listed and saved as a single pdf titled “2025_ HRGCSP_ProjectName.” The project title should also be the subject line of your email. Applicants will be notified of the results of the internal competition by March 29.

For questions related to the 2025 seed program, please contact IRH Director Steve Nadler (smnadler@wisc.edu) and Associate Dean for Arts and Humanities Grant Nelsestuen (nelsestuen@wisc.edu).