

National Humanities Conference

2018

New Orleans, Louisiana

Thursday, November 8, 2018 – Sunday, November 11, 2018

Call for Proposals

THE FEDERATION OF STATE HUMANITIES COUNCILS AND THE NATIONAL HUMANITIES ALLIANCE are pleased to announce the 2018 National Humanities Conference, which will take place in New Orleans in conjunction with the city's tricentennial celebration. The National Humanities Conference brings together the public humanities and academia to explore local and national opportunities and challenges, discover new ideas and research, learn about collaborations and best practices, and strengthen America's humanities network.

We will gather in New Orleans to draw attention to the remarkable ways local communities are integrating the humanities into public life. The city's 300th anniversary celebration will serve as an ideal backdrop for these conversations. Emerging from a mixture of Native American, French, Spanish, and African influences, New Orleans boasts a dynamic creole culture that endures in the "post-Katrina" era. Residents continue to wrestle with the legacy of slavery, confront coastal land loss, adjust to a changing educational landscape, and reimagine their neighborhoods while continuing to celebrate their city's renowned traditions. The humanities find fertile ground in a city where street parades, shotgun houses, and iconic cemeteries are living parts of communities and where preservation plays a central role in the local economy.

While aspects of this culture are unique to New Orleans, the challenges faced by the city offer touchpoints for other American communities. New Orleans promises to be a thought-provoking setting for renewed conversations about the centrality of the humanities in our diverse worlds.

Deadline for submitting proposals: Friday, March 16, 2018

THE 2018 CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE ENCOURAGES PROPOSALS that examine how public and academic humanities practitioners can work together with their local communities to:

- Contextualize our past and present relationships with the environment and use the tools of the humanities to understand threats to our natural environment
- Position moments of historical commemoration as opportunities to foster new partnerships that emphasize our shared heritage
- Expand access to humanities-based teaching and learning approaches via programming and partnerships



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- Confront the legacy of slavery, racism, and exclusion to better understand contemporary divisions
- Make robust, respectful inquiries into the changing composition of communities
- Deepen understanding of cultural landscapes and the cultural diversity that underpins them
- Preserve cultural heritage and widen access to it within and beyond the local community
- Build partnerships to enhance the power of the humanities to achieve these goals

WE ALSO WELCOME PROPOSALS THAT SHARE BEST PRACTICES OF HUMANITIES ORGANIZATIONS and examine ways to build capacity, including:

- Fundraising and development: how to cultivate support from private and public entities including grant writing, annual appeals, individual planned giving, and crowdfunding campaigns
- Communication strategies: how to enhance digital capacity and offerings and communicate through diverse media outlets to reach increasingly fragmented audiences
- Advocacy and case-making: how to develop strategies at the local, state, and national levels
- Audience cultivation: how to broaden audiences (socio-economically, politically, geographically, etc.) for public humanities work

WE ESPECIALLY ENCOURAGE SESSIONS THAT KNIT TOGETHER THE PERSPECTIVES OF ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC HUMANITIES PRACTITIONERS AND APPEAL TO BOTH AUDIENCES. See examples from the 2017 conference [here](#).

FORMATS

THE NATIONAL HUMANITIES CONFERENCE is an opportunity for lively, thoughtful, and action-oriented discussion to strengthen the network of humanities practitioners working in both the public and academic fields. To that end, we strongly encourage:

- Sessions that model great public humanities program design: dynamic, inclusive and, where possible, participatory or hands-on.
- Presentations that are concise and employ accessible language. We encourage moderators to ensure that presentations conform to the predetermined limits: at least half of each session should involve audience participation.
- Actionable takeaways that others can apply to their own practice and organization.
- Sessions built around a problem, tension or challenge in our work, with time for reflection and solutions-oriented discussion.

SESSION FORMATS

EXPERIENTIAL HUMANITIES PROGRAM: These sessions engage conference attendees in actual humanities programming, modeled on successful programs carried out throughout the year. Sessions that draw on the city or surrounding area and/or convey a sense of place are especially encouraged. Examples from the 2017 program can be found [here](#).

ROUNDTABLE: Roundtables consist of a group of experts discussing a topic in front of an audience, rather than each presenting discrete remarks. A moderator leads the discussion and poses questions, but all participants speak equally about the topic. These sessions will be limited to four discussants and one moderator.

FACILITATED DISCUSSION: One to two facilitators drive a conversation on a topic with a group of conference participants. Conversations can broach themes of common interest, common challenges, or points of tension within the humanities community. Topics for facilitated discussions should appeal to a wide range of conference participants so as to bring diverse voices to the conversation.

INTERVIEW: These sessions feature free-form dialogues between a humanities professional and an interviewer.

TRADITIONAL PANEL PRESENTATION: This traditional format includes a moderator and no more than three presenters. Presentations are limited to five minutes each, followed by moderator questions and audience discussion.

WORKSHOP: A hands-on session that teaches a particular skill set associated with program development, communications, cross-sector collaboration, assessment, digital engagement, grant-writing, cultivating new audiences, or any aspect of humanities programming. Participants will leave with take-home resources.

WORKING GROUPS

The National Humanities Conference provides meeting space for working groups to meet and continue an ongoing conversation. Conference working groups are seminar-like conversations of at least eight people that explore, in-depth, a subject of shared interest. Working groups will be accepted even if they do not yet have eight participants, but additional participants will need to be recruited after the session is accepted. The working group convenes for a session at the conference, but also converses before the conference and develops a product after. Each working group will have a facilitator, responsible for organizing the pre- and post-conference exchanges and facilitating the conversation at the conference itself. Working groups can open up for audience observers or confine participation to the members of the group. More detailed guidelines for working groups can be found [here](#).

INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS

For those interested in submitting an individual presentation, we welcome proposals for lightning talks, or 2-3 minute presentations with up to three slides. The planning committee will group accepted proposals into thematic sessions, which will include time for questions and answers.

TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL

Please submit a session or working group proposal via the online form [here](#). Please submit an individual proposal via the online form [here](#). The deadline for proposal submission is Friday, March 16, 2018. If you have questions regarding the online submission form please contact Shannon Loburk, FSHC Meetings and Events Manager, at sloburk@statehumanities.org.

THE FEDERATION OF STATE HUMANITIES COUNCILS, founded in 1977, is the membership association of 56 state and territorial councils. Through its conferences, collaborative projects, information services, and communications to members, legislators and others on issues of public interest, the Federation supports the state humanities councils and creates greater awareness of the humanities in public and private life.

State humanities councils are independent, nonprofit organizations that support grassroots humanities programs and community-based activities in each state and US territory. Created by Congress in the early 1970s, councils receive an annual Congressional appropriation through the National Endowment for the Humanities, which for most councils is supplemented by state and private funding. Councils are run by small staffs and governed by volunteer boards drawn from academia and the public.

THE NATIONAL HUMANITIES ALLIANCE (NHA), founded in 1981, is an advocacy coalition dedicated to the advancement of humanities education, research, preservation, and public programs. NHA is supported by more than 190 national, state, and local member organizations and institutions, including scholarly and professional associations; higher education associations; organizations of museums, libraries, historical societies, and state humanities councils; university-based and independent humanities research centers; and colleges and universities. It is the only organization that brings together the US humanities community as a whole.

NHA cultivates support for humanities funding in the executive and legislative branches of the federal government; advocates for policies that advance humanities research, programming, preservation, and teaching; convenes its members, government officials, and policy experts to develop policy initiatives; and promotes engagement with and appreciation for the humanities among the general public.



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