

## NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the HUMANITIES



**Proposal Writing Workshop**

**GRANTS RESOURCE CENTER**  
February 26, 2010

*American History*  
*World History*  
*Economic History*  
*Political Science*  
*Philosophy*  
*Ethics*  
*History of Art*  
*History of Music*  
*Classical Studies*  
*Religious Studies*  
*Theology*  
*English Literature*  
*Foreign Language*  
*World Literature*  
*History of Science*  
*History of Mathematics*

## The Humanities

carry the voices of one generation to the next through the records of human civilization  
are the ideas that shape our world and define our roles as citizens  
ask big questions



## The NEH Mission

Because democracy demands wisdom, NEH serves and strengthens our Republic by promoting excellence in the humanities and conveying the lessons of human experience to all Americans.



## NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

[About NEH](#) [Apply for a Grant](#) [Grant Management](#) [News and Publications](#) [NEH Projects](#)

### GRANT INFORMATION

Find [grant guidelines](#).  
Learn more about the work of NEH [Divisions and Offices](#).  
Consult [grant deadline calendar](#).  
Search the online database of NEH-funded projects back to 1980.  
Review [recent awards](#).

### UPCOMING DEADLINES

2010 Seminars and Institutes (for participants)  
**MARCH 2**

### OF INTEREST...

Teachers and college faculty, apply now through March 2 to attend an NEH-sponsored 2010 summer study program.  
Teachers and librarians who have already received Picturing America images may apply now to attend an NEH-sponsored national conference.  
Spend time with EDSITEment and its year-long showcase of Picturing America resources for K-12 teachers.

### NEWS AND EVENTS



President requests \$161.315,000 for the National Endowment for the Humanities in FY 2011.  
Historian [Adrian Alexander](#) joins the National Council on the Humanities.  
Chairman [Leach](#) continues the [American City Tour](#) in Florida, South Carolina, and North Carolina.  
NEH announces \$20 million in awards and offers for 319 humanities projects.

### HUMANITIES MAGAZINE



The Spanish Ulcer: Napoleon, Britain, and the Siege of Cadiz.  
Kamak: Where the digital age meets ancient Egypt.  
Curio: Love and hate during wartime; Apocalypse not; and Vois! the valley.  
Statements: Nebraska hosts talks on a pioneer in abstract art; and on the reach of the Mexican muralists. A New York program discusses how Jewish settlers shaped the Wild West.  
More Humanities...

### WE THE PEOPLE: NEH'S AMERICAN HISTORY PROGRAM

NEH: At A Request, NEH awards We the People

## National Endowment for the humanities

[Divisions and Offices](#) [Challenge Grants](#) [Digital Humanities](#) [Education Programs](#) [Federal/State Partnerships](#) [Preservation and Access](#) [Public Programs](#) [Research Programs](#)

### Education Programs

#### What we do

The Division of Education Programs seeks to improve humanities education at schools and colleges. Through its programs devoted to teachers and their students, the division strives to cultivate intellectual curiosity, so that students can deepen their reflections on human experience, increase their understanding of different cultures and societies, past and present, and achieve the knowledge and wisdom necessary for democratic citizenship.

[Read more](#)

#### Featured Project

##### EDSITEment



EDSITEment offers a wealth of teaching and learning materials, including more than 600 lesson plans, articles, and resources by specialists in literature, history, and other fields, and links to more than five hundred humanities sites that have been awarded EDSITEment's highest design and value in the classroom.

[Read more](#)

Send E-mail to [Education Programs](#)

[Education Programs](#)

#### Grant Programs

Summer Seminars and Institutes for College and University Teachers  
[\(View sample awards; see grant guidelines\)](#)

Summer Seminars and Institutes for School Teachers  
[\(View sample awards; see grant guidelines\)](#)

Landmarks of American History and Culture: Workshops for School Teachers  
[\(View sample awards; see grant guidelines\)](#)

Landmarks of American History and Culture: Workshops for Community College Faculty  
[\(View sample awards; see grant guidelines\)](#)

Humanities Initiatives Grants at Historically Black Colleges and Universities  
[\(View sample awards; see grant guidelines\)](#)

Humanities Initiatives Grants for Institutions with High Hispanic Enrollment  
[\(View sample awards; see grant guidelines\)](#)

Humanities Initiatives Grants at Tribal Colleges and Universities  
[\(View sample awards; see grant guidelines\)](#)

## DO some homework

- Check out recent awards in the programs that interest you
- Ask for samples of successful proposals

## DO read the program guidelines carefully

- *The description lacks considerable detail (and the structure does not seem to conform to the grant guidelines).*
- *This project is worthwhile doing, but seems to fall outside the bounds of this competition.*

## DON'T go it alone

- Agency help -- speak to a program officer early in the process
- Other help --ask a colleague to read and criticize your work
- OUCH!
- Better yet, consult a committee of readers on your campus.

## Do submit a draft proposal

- Give the program officer ample time to review materials
- Remain calm as the program officer offers suggestions
- Have questions? Seize the moment.

## DO proofread carefully

- minor errors chip away at the confidence your application should inspire

*The proposal rambles a bit and is poorly proofread (somewhat troubling for a proposal to study literature).*

*This elegantly-written proposal to explore an intrinsically interesting episode has a preliminary feel and lacks cohesion.*

## DON'T wait until the last minute to prepare and submit your proposal

- **Grants.gov**

The screenshot shows the 'NEH on GRANTS.GOV' website. The main heading is 'Resources and instructions for applying for an NEH grant'. Below this, there is a 'RESOURCE LIST' box containing links for 'Go to GRANTS.GOV Registration Checklist', 'Go to NEH Home', 'NEH grant resources', 'NEH grant webinars', 'Grant program deadlines', and 'CONTRIBUTING DOCUMENTS.LISTE'. The page also includes sections for 'WHAT IS GRANTS.GOV?' and 'REGISTER OR VERIFY REGISTRATION WITH GRANTS.GOV'.

### **DON't forget to explain the significance of your project and its scholarly content**

- *The intellectual rationale for this seminar is very clear and persuasive. The issue of globalization, and in particular the cross-border movement of people, is one of the most important of this century, and this proposal provides an excellent multidisciplinary humanities perspective on this phenomenon.*

### **. . . more**

- *The proposal is very impressive for both its substance and clarity: the narrative situates the project within historical and theoretical contexts, and the bibliography features a reasonable number of representative texts from the ancients to the present day.*
- *While I find this project rather captivating in itself, I am having some difficulty seeing in what way it would enhance research, teaching and learning.*

### **DO attend to details**

- *With no supporting reference letters, it is impossible to gauge the department and institutional support behind this project.*
- *While the potential is strong, the proposal indicates that it has not been as thoroughly thought out as one would like. More detail on the plan for the sessions should have been provided. The lack of a tentative reading list is one indication of this. Also, the case for the field trips and the role they would play was not sufficiently worked out.*

### **DO include a work plan or schedule of activities**

- *I wish there was a more detailed outline of the proposed research.*
- *The goals are very worthwhile, but the project is not clearly developed. The work load is fairly weak. The section of the application that reviews project content is too general. This application needs a detailed schedule.*

### **DON'T irritate your readers**

- Use care in making claims
- Avoid jargon and "terms of art"

*Reality check. I take strong issue with the comment that (fill in the blank) studies teachers are among the more reflective in the academy. I find them, generally, to be among the most dogmatic and least reflective.*

### **and more . . . .**

- Avoid advocacy and "special pleading"

*It seems that the motivations for this project may be separated into two categories: pedagogical and political. Both are noble, in my opinion, but the political goal of publicizing the plight of the oppressed in [XXX] seems to outweigh the pedagogical concerns.*

### **DON'T** forget to describe likely benefits

- *I think the impact of this program on participants will be significant. As described, it will offer insights into the dynamics of immigration that are not readily found in textbooks.*
- *This appears to be an extremely worthy application that will impact directly—and with powerful implications both in the classroom and beyond—undergraduate students particularly in need of such creative approaches to the subject matter.*

### **DO** find out how your proposal will be evaluated

#### Generic Criteria:

- Intellectual Quality
- Feasibility
- Impact

#### Program Specific Criteria



### NEH REVIEW PROCESS

- Competitive
- Peer Reviewers
- National Council on the Humanities
- Chairman

### GETTING TO “YES”

#### REVIEW OF SAMPLE PROPOSAL

### GETTING TO “YES”

- *I see no reason to doubt that the goals of this institute are realistic. The infrastructure is in place, and a considerable amount of fairly detailed and thoughtful planning seems to have taken place already.*
- *This proposal is wonderfully conceived and organized. The focus is perfectly pitched — the institute provides an opportunity to master the contexts and writings of one important 20th century master.*

### **DON'T** give up if your application isn't funded

- Request the panelists' written comments
- Contact the Program Officer who chaired the panel if you have questions or want to discuss your prospects going forward
- Revise accordingly and reapply – Congratulations, you've just increased your odds of winning a grant!

## An Invitation . . .

### To be a panelist

- Send CV
- PRISM electronic system
- <https://securegrants.neh.gov/PrismNew/>

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES  
PANELIST AND REVIEWER INFORMATION SYSTEM  
**PRISM**

Registered PRISM users

Enter your username and password in the spaces below, then click the "Log In" button.

Username  Password

The Panelist/Reviewer Information System (PRISM) is a database of prospective reviewers used by the staff of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The NEH peer review system relies on the advice of humanities scholars and experts in other relevant fields. The information you provide will be used only by the NEH for the purpose of identifying and selecting panelists and reviewers. If you have questions, see the [Instructions](#) or the [FAQ](#). [Request a User's Questions](#)

If you have not registered...  
you must register in order to enter your information into the PRISM database. If you do not have an account on the PRISM system, click the "Register" button below to create one. If you have registered but have forgotten your username and/or password, click the "Send Username/Password" button. Do not create more than one PRISM account for yourself!

## NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the HUMANITIES

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THANK YOU!