The past year at the Oregon Humanities Center (OHC) has been an inspired and special one—the celebration of the center’s 40th anniversary. Since 1983, the OHC has been at the forefront of bolstering faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students so they can pursue research and discovery, publication and dissemination, and new course development. Outside of the academy, the center’s public programs act as a conduit between the campus and local communities, ensuring that the public has free and open access to the innovations and knowledge produced at the University of Oregon (UO).

During the 2023-24 academic year, the OHC highlighted the remarkable scholar-ship of UO faculty in our “Humanities Matter(s)” lecture series. Over the course of the year the center held five lectures and panel discussions focused on current topics of great social importance: artificial intelligence and the humanities, science and the humanities, and white supremacy and climate obstruction. The center also held a roundtable discussion with the current and previous directors who shared their perspectives on the history of the center, the state of the humanities, and the key role that the humanities play in solving our interconnected crises. Christopher Newfield, Director of Research at the Independent Social Research Foundation in London, also delivered a keynote lecture titled “Jobs and Universities: A Tale of Two Futures,” outlining the complex partnership between society and higher education institutions, and how to better position students to take on current global challenges.

The OHC was excited to bring back our signature Wine Chats after a hiatus during the pandemic. These popular events, held at Capitello Wines, provide an opportunity to share the fascinating work of UO scholars in the community. In January, Courtney Thorsson, professor of English, spoke about her highly acclaimed recent book, The Sisterhood: How a Network of Black Women Writers Changed American Culture, followed by a discussion with Faith Barter, assistant professor of English and scholar of African-American literature. In June, Diana Garvin, assistant professor of Italian and Mediterranean Studies, discussed “The Coffee Bean and the War Machine: Northern Italian Coffee Business between the World Wars.”

Collaboration is essential to the success of a research center and in this spirit the OHC has built several new pathways for supporting undergraduate humanities research and career readiness. The OHC has strong partnerships with the UO Special Collections and University Archives and the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program that provide undergraduate research fellowships during the school year. This year we developed an exciting collaboration with the Center for Undergraduate Research and Education that provides support for five humanities undergraduate students as they pursue research this summer (see page 4). These fellowships offer opportunities for students to conduct research and develop skills to be better prepared for the job market or graduate school.

In Fall 2023, the OHC set the goal of raising $40,000 in honor of the 40th anniversary of the center—a goal that we not only met, but substantially exceeded because of the generosity of our donors who understand that the humanities are critical to the flourishing of our world. To advance our fund- and friend-raising efforts, we are welcoming applications to join the community Board of Visitors (BOV)—a group of donors who help advise the center. If you are interested in helping with this important effort to foster the humanities, more information can be found at: ohc.uoregon.edu/people/board-of-visitors. And if you personally don’t have time to join, consider sponsoring a graduate student to join our board so they can gain vital professional experience and carry out a project for the OHC.

This June the OHC reached another important moment in the history of the center with the well-earned retirement of Paul Peppis, Professor of English, who was a steadfast supporter of the humanities and the center director for eleven years. While it is hard to say goodbye to Paul, we are all thrilled to have Leah Middlebrook, Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and Spanish, become the center’s newest director as of July 1, 2024. Leah is an accomplished scholar and leader who has served as department head for Comparative Literature, and on many continues on page 2
university and external committees and boards. Leah’s most recent book, *Amphion: Lyre, Poetry, and Politics in Modernity*, is forthcoming from the University of Chicago Press in 2024, and she received both the Ersted Award and the Herman Award for Distinguished Teaching during her career. Please join us in welcoming Leah as the new Director of the Oregon Humanities Center.

We are deeply humbled by your interest, encouragement, and enthusiasm for the center’s work, and for the financial support from dedicated donors. Have a wonderful summer. We look forward to seeing you in the fall!

The humanities bring meaning to complicated issues. They offer us context on the past, reflections on today, and solutions for the future. They help us express what we’re feeling. And they challenge us to think in new ways. Humanities work is an essential part of a healthy and thriving society, and the Oregon Humanities Center is a crucial partner in promoting just that. But we can’t do it alone. You can help elevate an already vibrant intellectual and research community and inspire the next generation of thinkers and creators by making a gift to the OHC.
Faculty reflect on the NHC podcasting institute

I feel incredibly grateful for the opportunity to participate in the National Humanities Center’s Virtual Podcasting Institute June 10–14. The combination of reflective sessions, technical training, and group work provided me with a strong foundation from which I hope to draw as I set out to produce a podcast in association with the journal Comparative Literature.

During the week, I worked with four scholars from Willamette University, UC Berkeley, and Portland State to produce a model podcast. In this hands-on process, we not only learned how to operate sound editing software and various audio technologies, we also learned constructive ways to collaborate to promote humanities research. Each of us took part in the sound editing of the podcast, allowing us to gain skills and experience that we will each take into our future projects.

The training will help me to develop a podcast for the journal of Comparative Literature. I will begin the first set of interviews this summer. Comparative Literature has been based at the University of Oregon since its founding in 1947, and it remains the key academic journal in our discipline, representing scholars from across the world in conversations ranging from pre-Islamic poetry to the contemporary South Asian novel to experimental theater in London. The podcast will provide a holistic introduction to the world of comparative literature. Each episode will feature a scholar reflecting on a specific passage or detail from their work, followed by a discussion of how this specific detail connects to their training as a scholar and their understanding of the discipline more broadly.

The podcasting institute was invaluable in giving me a basic skill set with which to proceed. I benefited from the pragmatic discussions of how to publish and circulate a podcast in the humanities, and I appreciated the immediate tech consultations that the institute staff provided.

Through this experience, I have gained heightened appreciation for academic work across different media—be it podcasting, website design, or video, and I feel more strongly equipped to embrace how these platforms are part of our broader goal as humanities scholars to think, connect, and translate the conversations we have in our subfields to audiences more widely. I hope to use this training to incorporate exercises and techniques for podcasting in the classes I teach here at the UO. I appreciate the pivotal role that the Oregon Humanities Center plays in supporting these initiatives, and I extend a very heartfelt thank you for having given me this remarkable opportunity.

—Michael Allan, associate professor, Comparative Literature

The podcast institute was both rewarding and challenging! I honestly had no idea how much went into producing a professional podcast. We learned the basics of recording, editing, and adding music in addition to workshops and presentations by successful academic podcasters. One of the speakers shared his experience in applying his academic podcast research to his tenure file. I am very excited about this possibility. I am overall very appreciative for the opportunity to attend and receive the equipment I need to start my own podcast. I still have much to learn but this gives me more confidence to get started!

I am planning to call my podcast “Grounded: A Plant-Based Podcast.” As a food historian teaching in Global and Food Studies, I want my episodes to explore the history of food in general with a focus on nutrition, global health, and longevity. I’m hoping one or both of my sisters will regularly record with me to add a fun, relatable (and hopefully interesting) dimension of growing up in a vegetarian household.

—Hannah Cutting-Jones, instructor Global Studies and Food Studies

Student organizes author’s archive

UO Libraries Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA) acquired the Vonda McIntyre papers in 2018 and 2019, adding a rich body of material to its already-strong collecting area of feminist science fiction and female authors. The collection, consisting of about 26 cartons, was organized by second-year undergraduate Alexa Rose during spring term under the guidance of SCUA’s Lead Processing Archivist Mahala Ruddell. Rose was the 2024 recipient of the Humanities Undergraduate Program in Archival Studies and Practice fellowship administered by the OHC and SCUA. She is majoring in History and also studying Linguistics and Cultural Management. She arranged and described McIntyre’s personal and professional papers, opening the collection to scholars across the country and around the world for the first time—all while gaining library science and digital humanities experience and developing project management, data collection, and analytical skills.

Vonda McIntyre (1948–2019) was an award-winning author most known for her work in the science/speculative fiction genre. When she began reading science fiction as a young girl, male writers dominated the genre. By her 30s, she was one of the category’s leading women, following a path established by Ursula K. Le Guin, Kate Wilhelm and Anne McCaffrey. Throughout her career, she wrote novels, short stories, and media tie-in books, and edited a groundbreaking anthology of feminist science fiction. She became known as a mentor through her founding in the 1970s of the Clarion West Writers’ Workshop in Seattle (where her friendship with Le Guin flowered). She encouraged many writers, mostly women, over the decades. She was winner of multiple Nebula, Hugo, and Locus awards, particularly for her novels, Dreamscape and The Moon and the Sun.
Five students selected for Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships

In 2024 the Oregon Humanities Center (OHC) launched a new partnership to support undergraduate research and creative work in the humanities and arts. The Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship in Humanities (SURF-H) will support the now, the yesterday, the tomorrow.

Five students were selected to participate this summer.

Caitlin Lloyd, History and Architecture, is working on “Chinese Mythological Creatures in Qing Dynasty Embroidered Badges” with faculty mentor Chiara Gasparini, assistant professor of the History of Art and Architecture.

Jesse Murphy, English, is working on “Patchwork Narratives: The Importance of Form on Reading Hypertext Literature in the Classroom and Beyond” with faculty mentor Mattie Burkert, associate professor of English and Digital Humanities.

Charlie Petrlik, Geography, is working on “Socioterritorial Movements From a Comparative Perspective” with faculty mentor David Meek, associate professor of Global Studies.

Micah Primack, Folklore and Public Culture and Psychology is working on “Exploring Musical Families: Cluster and Regression Analyses to Determine Associations between Musical Preferences, Depression, and Anxiety” with faculty mentor Zachary Wallmark, associate professor of Musicology and Music Cognition.

Danielle Richard, Cinema Studies and English is working on “Black Womanhood and Fugibility in Jordan Peele’s Us” with faculty mentor Faith Barter, assistant professor of English.

Where are they now?

Marc Carpenter (PhD History), 2019–20 Dissertation Fellow, is an assistant professor of History and Political Science at the University of Jamestown.

Elio Garcia (PhD English), 2020–21 Dissertation Fellow, is an assistant professor of Literature and Film and associate editor of Kinaadman, an annual, peer-reviewed journal published at Xavier University.

Raye Hendrix (PhD English), 2023–24 Dissertation Fellow, has a poetry collection, What Good is Heaven, forthcoming from Texas A&M University Press in September.

Shuangting Xiong (PhD East Asian Literatures and Languages), 2020–21 Dissertation Fellow, is an assistant professor of Chinese at Bard College.

Watch UO Today interviews and past lectures at YouTube.com/c/OregonHumanitiesCenter

2024–25 lectures focus on the theme “Reimagine”

The Oregon Humanities Center’s (OHC) 2024–25 endowed lectureship series will focus on the theme of “Reimagine.” This series will highlight the original human superpower: our mind’s capacity to transform the world around us via imaginative thought.

To reimagine is to reconceive. Starting from the most basic, established principles and distinctions, reimaginers set their intelligence, their experiences, their histories, and the fruits of their research free to play, turning dilemmas and situations we think we know over and around, probing their crevices, their sticky points, and their soft spots, tugging at their loose ends. The mindset of reimagine opens alternatives, options, and possibilities that may have been overlooked. It prompts new questions and spawns new approaches to the now, the yesterday, the tomorrow.

The speakers in this series will represent a range of disciplines, perspectives, and backgrounds, but what they will have in common is a commitment to engaging problems, challenges, and obstacles as generative prompts to creativity: to re-envisioning and reimagining.

At this crucial moment in our history, we need to ask: How might we use the power of human imagination—and reimagining—to engage creatively and critically with the circumstances of our lives? What new insights or research will be uncovered in the reimagining process? And, what new, more equitable and nourishing pathways can be forged?
Recent books published with OHC support


Many thanks to our supporters

It is largely due to the generous support of our friends and donors that the OHC is able to offer free public programs, UO Today, faculty and graduate fellowships, and undergraduate research opportunities. We invite you to learn more about OHC giving opportunities by visiting ohc.uoregon.edu or calling 541-346-1001. We would like to thank the following individuals and foundations for their support during the 2023–24 fiscal year (July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024):

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*in memory of former OHC Board of Visitors member Ken Kodama, who passed away in 2022.