Monday, October 22, 2007

Director’s Letter

Dear Colleague,

Please join us for “Venice, the Jews, and Italian Culture: Historical Eras and Cultural Representations,” a multidisciplinary Faculty Institute scheduled to take place from June 16 to July 18, 2008, in Venice, Italy.

This five-week Institute is offered by the University of California, Santa Cruz. It is one of the Summer Institutes supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities to provide college and university faculty members and independent scholars with an opportunity to enrich and revitalize their understanding of significant ideas, texts, and topics of the humanities.

We will explore the history and culture of Jewish Venice in relation to Venetian and Italian culture and history. Lectures and discussions with visiting scholars — distinguished scholars of urban culture and architecture, art history, Italian and Jewish literature and history will help us study the ways in which Venice and its Jewish community, which had its organizational beginnings in the Ghetto, is a microcosm of Italian and European Jewish history. The Jewish community of Venice has generously provided meeting space for our conversation in the historic Ghetto. Distinguished members of the Jewish community may participate and thus provide an experiential context for our deliberations.

Our work will involve discussing and analyzing the cultural representations of Venetian Jewry as they engage Venetian, Jewish, and Italian history and culture from just before the inception of the Ghetto in 1516 to the present time. The built environment of the city and the Ghetto, which gave its name to all such subsequent enclosures, will be one of our texts. Memoirs, poetry, theatre, painting, music, architecture, history, film, and fiction will provide cultural and artistic counterpoints. And their general context will be sketched by commentary on Italian, Mediterranean, and European history. As we interrogate the master narrative of Venice we will have the opportunity to discuss the ways in which Jewish life and Jewish actions helped to shape that story and were shaped by it.

Institute Focus

This Institute — Venice, the Jews, and Italian Culture—invites us to inquire into how the story of the Jews of Venice emerges from the historical matrix of the early modern world. With the founding of the Ghetto in 1516, Venetians chose not to expel the Jews—the people who, they felt, threatened their ideals of Christian community. Unlike the English, French, Germans, Spanish, and Portuguese who had banished the Jews from their domains, the Venetians, in the words of the historian Brian Pullan, opted for “the segregation, though not the expulsion, of the Jewish community.” As non-Christians and non-Europeans were drawn into the European urban economic orbit, Venetians devised a different strategy. As Richard Sennett notes, “economic self-interest could not permit” the expulsion of the Jews. “In the words of a leading citizen, 'Jews are
even more necessary to a city than bankers are, and especially to this one.’ Even poor Jews were necessary to the city, for instance, the Jews who dealt in second-hand goods.” Venice had just “officially licensed nine such Jewish shops.” (Sennett 227)

A commercial city-state, Venice developed a shared understanding of economic self-interest that ameliorated the misery of the Christian teaching of contempt and Jewish exile in sixteenth century Europe. Early capitalism, and a history of willingness to have foreigners living in their midst within clearly defined spatial limits, led to changes in the situation of the Jews with manifold repercussions. There were unanticipated consequences: segregated in the Ghetto Jews from differing linguistic, cultural, and social classes and practices encountered each other and articulated and elaborated new communal institutions.

For much of the history of Jewish exile Jews had been isolated: those who practiced Judaism met in homes (as did the early Christians). As non-Christians, the Jews were not allowed to own land. But in Venice they were given permission to build synagogues, so long as these edifices did not open to the street. Thus while they “never truly possessed their synagogues . . . they occupied and made holy the places secured for them by favor of a city’s local ruler. The Venice ghetto offered the Jews the chance to make synagogues binding institutions within a closed community, protected by a Christian city-state.” (Sennett 242)

By the end of the sixteenth century, the Jews had built five synagogues in the Ghetto, serving the different confessional needs of diverse Jewish communities of origin now resident in the Ghetto. In their aesthetic power as remarkable baroque structures, these synagogues attest to the ability of this maligned people, living in fear of being uprooted and once more sent into the wandering of exile, to seize the opportunity of Venetian hegemony and make a diasporic home for itself. It is another irony of Venetian and Jewish history, that the alas dwindling numbers of the contemporary Jews of Venice and Italy are yet part of one of the oldest continuous Jewish communities in the world.

Cultural Representations of Venice and the Jews

This continuous story is constructed out of several cultural representations. In the collective imagination “Venice,” “the Ghetto,” and the “Jews” are powerful romanticized, exoticized, and stereotyped representations endowed with immense symbolic capital. Their portrayals oscillate between myth and reality. The fictions surrounding these concepts are often more famous than historical facts. The myth of Shakespeare’s Shylock, for example, like the Romantic vision of Venice, overshadows the rich social, economic, and artistic legacy of Venetian Jewry and its little-known yet signal contribution to Western culture. But the historical reality cannot be understood without the fiction, and the cultural representations lack traction without their historical contexts.

For a long time both Venetian and Jewish historians have treated their subjects separately, as if the Jews and non-Jewish Venetians were accidental companions in the historical journey. The former described the Jews as an example of the relative toleration of the Serenissima Republic; in complementary fashion, the latter recognized that the segregation of the Ghetto helped the
Jews to maintain their culture for centuries. Recent scholarship, by contrast, has acknowledged the reciprocal relationship of the Jewish community in Venice and Venetian politics and culture. The stories evoked by Venice, the Ghetto, and the Jews are conceptualizations of contested cultural accounts. As we examine them, they reveal the many levels of meaning of Jewish Venice; their multiple dimensions merit unpacking and elaboration. This Institute is directed to the exploration of the layers of this historical and symbolic palimpsest.

As we meet in the historic Ghetto we will explore how Venice and Italian Jewish culture articulate and enact the cultural amalgam of modern Jewish history in its exilic as well as diasporic cultural identity. After the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, the Jewish population of Venice increased exponentially. Since the Venetian authorities considered them economic resources, Jews and conversos came to Venice from Spain and Portugal, as well as other parts of Italy, France, Germany, and Turkey.

From a city of refuge, Venice quickly developed into a thriving Jewish settlement. The immigrant Jews brought with them the customs, ceremonies, and rituals of their communities of origin. Encountering each other in the Ghetto to which they were confined, the Jews of Venice gradually articulated a distinctive Jewish Venetian style that expressed itself in their liturgy, their music, and their relations with their neighbors. These diverse Jewish groups negotiated their new communal identity among themselves, always in relation to the hegemonic force of the Venetians. As they articulated who they were for themselves, the Jews of Venice made of the Ghetto—the very emblem of Jewish exile—a diasporic world, which empowered them.

La citta degli ebrei as it was called became an important intellectual center. With the development of Christian humanism in the Renaissance, cultural contacts increased significantly between the two communities. The poet Sara Copio Sullam hosted a salon that was attended by Jews and Christians; the rabbi Leone Modena preached in the synagogue with royalty in attendance; news of Jewish practices and customs interested Christian scholars, who came to the Ghetto to study Hebrew and discover the sources of their own tradition. And Hebrew publishing, which flourished in the Ghetto through the work of Daniel Bomberg, the Christian who owned the publishing house, printed and disseminated accurate editions of the central Jewish texts, including the Biblia Rabbinica, the Mahzor, and the Talmud, which became the fundamental materials for the critical study of western religious traditions.

The Counter-Reformation slowed these processes: the Venetian authorities periodically threatened expulsion, appeased only by ever-larger payments for the right of residence. They dictated the interest rates the Jews were to charge their borrowers, whittling away at profit margins. By the eighteenth century the Jewish community was all but bankrupt, something that became evident to the Venetian authorities even as carnival time was extended in the Christian city lasting at one point for six months.

When Napoleon burned the Ghetto gates in 1798 and emancipated the Jews, they began to enter into the general political, social, and cultural life of Venice. Though the Austro-Hungarian rulers, who took charge of Venice as part of the Congress of Vienna restructuring of Europe in 1815,
tried to cram the Jews back into the Ghetto they were only partly successful. Increasingly, Jews actively participated in Italian culture, as with the Risorgimento and unification Emancipation became a reality. By 1870 they were openly allowed to leave the Ghetto and join in secular Italian life, maintaining the functioning of their religious institutions but, like other Italians, often mostly ignoring them. They did not continue to define themselves by internalizing their Ghetto past though they did not abandon it. Unlike other European Jewish communities, the burden of traditional Jewish learning did not isolate Italian Jews from their non-Jewish neighbors. Rather, they devised ways to amalgamate and even to integrate their Jewish and Italian identities while acknowledging the disjunctions between them. They devised strategies to deal with the cognitive and emotional dissonances of their experience.

The racial laws of the 1930s first imposed by the Fascist government, and the 1943 invasions of Italy by the Nazis re-ghettoized the Jews. Some escaped into hiding and/or partisan activity. Many were sent to concentration and death camps, including the members of the Old Age Home in the Ghetto in Venice. The accounts by Italian Jews of the “gigantic biological and social experiment” of the Lager, especially that of Primo Levi, are among the most important testimony of that terrible era. In his words, “Resnyk . . . told me his story, and today I have forgotten it but it was certainly a sorrowful, cruel and moving story; because so are all our stories, hundreds of thousands of stories, all different and all full of a tragic, disturbing necessity. We tell them to each other in the evening, and they take place in Norway, Italy, Algeria, the Ukraine, and are simple and incomprehensible like the stories in the Bible. But are they not themselves stories of a new Bible? (Survival in Auschwitz, pp. 65 – 66.)

The experience of the Holocaust continues to mark Italian Jewry and the Jewish community of Venice. As one member commented, “Jews who were saved were rescued by Italian non-Jews, and Jews who were killed were betrayed and often killed by Italian fascists.” Given these experiences, the Jews of Venice and Italy experience in their daily lives the ironic difficulties of modern European life. They are aware of the ways in which Italy was a way-station for refugees from the Holocaust on their way to new lives in the land of Israel. Thus Italy and Venice re-enacted ancient travel routes of Jewish pilgrims. And in the 1970s Italy was also a way-station for emigrants from the Soviet Union seeking freedom.

The historic events and processes of Venetian Jewish life have left their mark on the Ghetto: to read the Ghetto is to encounter the experience of a major diasporic Jewish community, connected to and in some ways similar to the paradigmatic Jewish communities of Eastern Europe and Germany. Yet it was different enough from them to provide a unique perspective. Like all Jewish communities outside the land of Israel, it was a community in exile; as the first modern Jewish community, Venice has articulated ways of understanding how Jews could live a full Jewish life in a diasporic realm.

Work of the Institute

The Institute provides the opportunity to develop a new and fuller awareness of the importance of Venice, its Jewish community, and more generally, Italian culture; it articulates an alternative paradigm for the understanding of Jewish diasporic urban life. Part of our work will involve
constructing and assembling a website — the Venetian Jewish Anthology—a collection of the notable descriptions and responses to Jewish Venice by the great writers, as well as the historic documents of Jewish Venetian life, enriched by our commentary and analysis. Multidisciplinary in scope, examining materials from more than four centuries of Venetian Jewish life, the Venetian Jewish Anthology will benefit from our varied interests and disciplinary orientations. This collection of documents, a potentially publishable anthology and incipient journal, will serve to crystallize our conversation; it will be an ongoing resource for further study and reflection in fields ranging from Jewish studies, European history, Urban and Architectural studies, Visual and Film programs, Literary and Cultural studies. One of the objectives of this NEH Institute is to encourage the formation and development of an intellectual community among the participants. In addition to the formal structures of the Institute, we will provide informal opportunities for intellectual conversation that lead to collaborative work.

The Institute will be conducted in English, and materials from other languages, including Italian and Hebrew, will be available in English translation. We anticipate that the Institute discussions and ongoing conversation that will help us to develop the anthology will also stimulate participants to curricular innovation and the development of revised and new syllabi for our classrooms.

As co-directors of the Institute, Shaul Bassi, Professor of European and Post-Colonial Literature at the University of Venice, and myself, will lead discussions on particular texts and coordinate our ongoing conversation. Shaul and I will bring differing perspectives to our conversations. His work on Shakespeare, especially Othello and The Merchant of Venice, reinforces his experience as a student of the history of Venetian Jewry and a member of its Jewish community. As a scholar of post-colonial literature, Shaul is alert to the ways in which philosemitism, for example, is often connected to antisemitism—a subject he has written about in several important essays. My recent work as the director of the UCSC program in Jewish Studies has focused on curricular development. As a scholar I have concentrated on urban literature and Jewish roles in shaping the modern city. My study of modern Jewish writing as an urban genre, in City Scriptures: Modern Jewish Writing, is paralleled by many literary and cultural essays on Dickens and Victorian thought. Growing up in Panama as a refugee from Nazism, I experienced what it means to be an exile.

Distinguished visiting scholars of Jewish, Venetian, and Italian culture will share their knowledge with us. The scholarly accomplishments of these scholars are evident in their scholarly resumes which are included on our web site. In approximate order of their presentations, they include:

Professor Donatella Calabi, on the architecture and built environment of the Ghetto

Professor Deanna Shemek, on Italian and Jewish women writers of the Renaissance, with special reference to Sara Copio Sullam

Professor Joshua Holo, on the architecture of the Scuola Grande Tedesca and Byzantine culture
Professor Dana Katz, on the Ghetto and the Jewish Gaze

Professor Marina del Negro Karem, on visual representations of Jews and Jewish customs in Renaissance art

Professor Ariella Lang on Simone Luzzatto and his Discorso as an account of Jewish contributions to Venetian life and culture and the Jewish apologia for La Serenissima

Dr Gadi Luzzatto Voghera, on the benefits and costs of Italian Jewish Emancipation

Dr Simon Levis Sullam, on the construction of the myth of Venice and the Risorgimento

Professor Margaret Brose, on modern Italian literature, with special reference to The Garden of the Finzi Continis

Enrico Fink, performer and musicologist, on the musical heritage of Venetian Jewry and the contemporary Italian Jewish musical scene

Our visiting lecturers will help us attend to important cultural texts, including the Ghetto as text; some of them may join us on walking tours and cultural events; their lectures will enrich our thinking, discussions, and conversation. As opportunity offers, we will also engage members of the Venetian Jewish community in discussing the experiential context of these cultural representations.

Institute participants will meet together four times a week: Monday afternoons and Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings. Once a week our formal sessions will conclude with a working lunch. Another day will usually involve fieldwork in various places including the Ghetto and the environs of what was once the Venetian Empire. By holding some of our sessions in different venues, we’ll encourage participants to familiarize themselves with several Venice neighborhoods, and thus take note of how its history has crystallized in its built environment. We will also arrange for optional weekly art and architecture tours of major Venetian sites.

Core reading will consist of the following:

Riccardo Calamani, *The Ghetto of Venice*, and/or Umberto Fortis, *Ghetto by the Lagoon*

Leone Modena, *Hayye Yehuda: The Autobiography of a Seventeenth Century Rabbi*

Giorgio Bassani, *The Garden of the Finzi Continis*

Israel Zangwill, *Dreamers of the Ghetto*

Chapter on the ghetto, in W. D. Howells, *Venetian Life*. 
Rilke, R. M. “The ghetto,” in *Stories of God*

Caryl Philipps, *The Nature of Blood*

Richard Sennett, “Fear of Touching: The Jewish Ghetto in Renaissance Venice,” Chapter 7 of *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization*

Primo Levi, *The Periodic Table*

Background reading. As preparation for the Institute, we recommend a general history of Italy, especially Christopher Duggan, *A Concise Account of Italian History*; and for Jewish history of the era, Yosef Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*. The recent collection, *The Jews of Early Modern Venice*, edited by Robert C. Davis and Benjamin Ravid, has fine essays on various topics of relevance to the work of the Institute.

The reading list will also include additional reference and recommended material. These will be supplemented by documents and literary excerpts that will form the core of our Venetian Jewish Anthology. We expect to add other works we encounter and discover in the course of our conversation, research, and personal commentary.

Participants will take turns serving as recorders of our sessions, and we anticipate that this activity may lead to the development of related projects including course syllabi, which we will include in the Venetian Jewish Anthology.

We’ll arrange for working lunches, potluck gatherings, and festive opening and closing sessions. In addition, we plan to organize a public conference for the presentation of research and curricular interests, as work-in-progress, toward the end of our fourth and/or the beginning of the fifth week of our Institute. This will be an opportunity for us to meet colleagues from the University of Venice, as well as other visitors with an interest in the subject of our work. The addition of this public conference may make it possible for participants to request additional support from their home institutions.

**Academic Resources**

The Renate Maestro Library, located in the Ghetto, has a rich collection of reference works on the Jews of Venice, as well as modern and ancient books. An academic resource that can provide Institute participants with important supplementary research materials, it specializes in Venetian and Italian Jewish history and includes standard Judaic reference works in Italian, English, and Hebrew. The library houses the archives of the Venetian Jewish community, and also contains exemplars of the more than 1,200 Hebrew books printed in Venice in the sixteenth century. They comprise more than a third of all Hebrew printing in the era after Gutenberg’s invention of movable type. Among them is the Venice Talmud, the first printed edition, which was also the first critical edition of the Talmud and the Biblia Rabbinica. Participants will be entitled to use the Renate Maestro Library on a daily basis. The various libraries of the University of Venice are also available for our work; they are to be found in different locations all around town. And the
resources of the Venice Municipal Archives contain central documents pertinent to our inquiries.

Internet Access

Both the Ghetto and the University of Venice may have public Internet access available to NEH participants, and there are Internet cafes scattered throughout Venice. (There is some talk that wifi Internet access, throughout Venice, will be completed this year by the municipality, but it is not clear when or if this possibility will be realized.) While most short-term housing in Venice does not include telephone or Internet lines, inexpensive cell phones that work throughout Italy and Europe are available for purchase or rental.

Participant Stipends

NEH awards each participant a stipend of $3,600. The Santa Cruz campus of the University of California will be handling the disbursement of funds. As with other international Institutes, the stipend is paid in advance in order to help with travel and other costs related to your participation. You will need to communicate with our financial officers as to how best to receive this stipend. We suggest that you arrange for the stipend to be deposited directly into your home bank account, and that you use ATMs and credit cards to cover your expenses during your stay in Venice.

Venice is an expensive city. You should anticipate that the stipend you receive may not cover all your expenses.

Note that NEH stipends are taxable as income. You will be responsible for tracking your expenses and collecting receipts that you may need for income tax purposes. Accepting the stipend, participants agree to participate in all the activities of the Institute, for its entire duration

Housing

Housing in Venice is expensive if plentiful; people who come for extended stays like the Institute often share housing or find rooms in private homes. University dormitory–style housing is not available. We will endeavor to assist participants in finding appropriate housing. Participants are also encouraged to seek housing through their own resources and connections.

Apartment sharing with other NEH Institute participants may be the most economical options. Apartment living will also make cooking meals easier and facilitate the sociability that cements an intellectual community. Some participants, especially those accompanied by family members or partners, may not want to share but to rent apartments for themselves.

We have identified several options and continue to make preliminary inquiries to locate them. These include rooms and suites at religious institutions, rooms in private houses, shared apartments, and bed-and-breakfast inns. There is a Jewish Community Lodge in the main square of the Ghetto. Currently being renovated, its residential suites may be ready for occupancy by the
time of the Institute.

Since participants will be notified of their selection by April 1, 2008 (see application information below), which is late in the year for summer housing, we will seek to rent several apartments for the Institute early in the winter, before prices rise. These apartments will then be available for participants. Venice is humid and hot in the summer and few apartments are air conditioned. But the beaches of the Lido are a short vaporetto ride away and the city cools off in the evening.

Venice has many restaurants of varying price-ranges in different neighborhoods of the city—we will compile a list of favorites. Kosher food, including meals for weekdays and the Sabbath, is available in the Ghetto in connection with the Jewish Community Lodge and a Chabad-run restaurant. And some supermarkets have packaged kosher food.

Transportation

Venice is above all a walking city: comfortable walking shoes are essential. The entire city can be traversed on foot in less than an hour. The Ghetto is a 5-minute walk from the train station, 10 minutes from the car terminal, 20 minutes from the Rialto Bridge, and 25 minutes from Piazzo San Marco. The main bridges and some vaporettos have wheelchair access, but in general, Venice is not an easy place for people with walking difficulties.

Venice is a small city, easy to explore, with efficient public transport. The vaporetto lines—municipally run waterbuses—operate throughout the day and night on regular schedules. Everyone uses them. Tickets are comparatively expensive, but monthly passes are an economical option, (a one-way vaporetto fare costs 3.50 euros--to see today’s current exchange rate, simply type “USD to Euro” into any search engine.)

Cultural and Recreational Resources in Venice

Venice is home to some of the world’s most important art and architecture: it is hard to overestimate its cultural resources. The Commedia del’Arte had its beginnings in Venice and the many street performers attest to its contemporary viability. The Goldoni Theatre presents the classics of modern theatre, and La Feniciche is a splendid theatrical, musical, and operatic venue. We may arrange for a tour of the building and even take in a performance or concert. Musical performances are regular features of Venice, including Vivaldi festivals that honor this composer who lived and worked here. In 2008, Venice will host the architectural biennale.

From the time of their settlement in Venice, Jews participated in its theatrical and musical activities. There are records of curfew regulations being relaxed to enable Jewish dancers, actors, and musicians to perform for their Christian hosts in the sixteenth century. They would return late at night to the Ghetto, which was patrolled and policed by guards who were paid by the Jewish community.

But the major cultural treasures of Venice are its art and architecture, paintings and frescoes that adorn its churches and palazzos. We will arrange for tours of major sites. We expect that
colleagues will supplement these either with further tours, which we will help them organize, or individual visits. Most afternoons will be free to make urban exploration possible. A list of reliable and useful guidebooks and other touring resources will be available through the Institute. In addition, the Institute Coordinator will provide information and help obtain tickets for notable performing arts events, special exhibitions, and opportunities to visit art in private venues. Several museums in Venice feature modern and contemporary art: the Peggy Guggenheim museum and the Querini are the most important. We will also be visiting the Correr Museum in the Piazza San Marco to see its rich collection of images and objects connected with the history of Venice. There will be several excursions outside of the city to visit sites in the Veneto—the Venetian Empire—relevant to our discussions. These include the historic university of Padua, the first in Europe to accept Jews into its medical school.

We will also visit the Spanish Synagogue in the Ghetto one Sabbath morning for the prayer-service, celebrating Shabbat with community members in the Ghetto. The Institute will sponsor a kiddush after Shabbat morning services on June 24 to introduce NEH participants to the Venetian Jewish community.
Application Procedure and Deadline

Application information is appended to this letter and at the program website: http://jewishstudies.ucsc.edu/NEH.

Please submit your application in triplicate, as per the following instructions. The email address for queries is jvenice@ucsc.edu.

Your completed application should be postmarked no later than March 3, 2006, and should be addressed as follows:

NEH Institute: Venice, the Jews, and Italian Culture
Attn. Prof. Murray Baumgarten
Humanities Academic Services
UC Santa Cruz
1156 High St.
Santa Cruz, CA 95064

Please send an email to jvenice@ucsc.edu you mail your completed application.

Perhaps the most important part of the application is the essay that must be submitted as part of the completed application. This essay should include any personal and academic information that is relevant; reasons for applying to the particular project; your interest, both intellectual and personal, in the topic; qualifications to do the work of the project and make a contribution to it; what you hope to accomplish by participation, including any individual research and writing projects; and the relation of the study to your teaching. We urge all applicants to consider submitting a placeholder on Venice to their department in order to be able to add it to their teaching in the coming academic year.

Participants who are selected to participate in the Summer 2006 Institute, “Venice, the Jews, and Italian Culture: Historical Eras and Cultural Representations,” will be notified on or about April 1, 2008.

NEH SUMMER SEMINARS & INSTITUTES FOR COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY TEACHERS: APPLICATION INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

Summer Institutes for College and University Teachers are offered by the National Endowment for the Humanities to provide college and university faculty members and independent scholars with an opportunity to enrich and revitalize their understanding of significant humanities ideas, texts, and topics. These study opportunities are especially designed for this program and are not intended to duplicate courses normally offered by graduate programs, nor will graduate credit be given for them. Prior to completing an application, please review the enclosed letter from the project director (or letter downloaded from the director’s website, if available) and consider carefully what is expected in terms of residence and attendance, reading and writing requirements, and general participation in the work of the project.
Institutes provide intensive collaborative study of texts, topics, and ideas central to undergraduate teaching in the humanities under the guidance of faculties distinguished in their fields of scholarship. Institutes aim to prepare participants to return to their classrooms with a deeper knowledge of current scholarship in key fields of the humanities. Please note: The use of the words “seminar” or “institute” in this document is precise and is intended to convey differences between the two project types.

ELIGIBILITY

These projects are designed primarily for teachers of American undergraduate students. Qualified independent scholars and those employed by museums, libraries, historical societies, and other organizations may be eligible to compete provided they can effectively advance the teaching and research goals of the seminar or institute. Applicants must be United States citizens, residents of U.S. jurisdictions, or foreign nationals who have been residing in the United States or its territories for at least the three years immediately preceding the application deadline. Foreign nationals teaching outside the U.S. are not eligible to apply.

Applicants must complete the NEH application cover sheet and provide all of the information requested below to be considered eligible. Candidates for degrees are only eligible to apply if they are employed by an institution other than the one at which they are degree candidates and if their participation is intended to enhance their teaching of American undergraduates. Degree candidates can never use their participation in an NEH seminar or institute to meet a degree requirement, including work on masters’ theses or doctoral dissertations. An applicant need not have an advanced degree in order to qualify. Adjunct and part-time lecturers are eligible to apply. Individuals may not apply to study with a director of a seminar or institute who is a current colleague or a family member. Individuals must not apply to seminars directed by scholars with whom they have previously studied. Institute selection committees are advised that only under the most compelling and exceptional circumstances may an individual participate in an institute with a director or a lead faculty member who has previously guided that individual’s research or in whose previous institute or seminar he or she has participated. An individual may apply to no more than two projects in any one year.

SELECTION CRITERIA

A selection committee reads and evaluates all properly completed applications in order to select the most promising applicants and to identify a small number of alternates. (Seminar selection committees consist of the project director and two colleagues. Institute selection committees consist of three to five members, usually drawn from the institute faculty and staff members.) While recent participants are eligible to apply, selection committees are charged to give first consideration to applicants who have not participated in an NEH-supported seminar or institute in the last three years. Recent participation in NEH’s Landmarks of American History Program does not negatively affect eligibility or competitiveness.

The most important consideration in the selection of participants is the likelihood that an applicant will benefit professionally. This is determined by committee members from the
conjunction of several factors, each of which should be addressed in the application essay. These factors include:

- quality and commitment as a teacher, scholar, and interpreter of the humanities;
- intellectual interests, both generally and as they relate to the work of the institute;
- special perspectives, skills, or experiences that would contribute to the institute;
- commitment to participate fully in the formal and informal collegial life of the institute;
- the likelihood that the experience will enhance the applicant's teaching and scholarship;

When choices must be made among equally qualified candidates, several additional factors are considered: Preference is given to applicants who have not previously participated in an NEH seminar or institute, or who would significantly contribute to the diversity of the seminar or institute.

STIPEND, TENURE, AND CONDITIONS OF AWARD

Individuals selected to participate in this five-week Institute will receive a stipend of $3,600. Stipends are intended to help cover travel expenses to and from the project location, books and other research expenses, and living expenses for the duration of the period spent in residence. Stipends are taxable. Adjustments in cases where the stipend is insufficient to cover all expenses are not possible.

Since the Institute will take place in the historic Ghetto in Venice, participants must have valid, up-to-date passports.

Institute participants are required to attend all meetings and to engage fully in the work of the project. During the project's tenure, they may not undertake teaching assignments or any other professional activities unrelated to their participation in the project. Participants who, for any reason, do not complete the full tenure of the project must refund a pro-rata portion of the stipend.

At the end of the project's residential period, participants will be asked to submit evaluations in which they review their work during the summer and assess its value to their personal and professional development. Special forms for this report will be distributed by each project director. Completed forms should be returned directly to the Endowment. They will become part of the project's grant file and may become part of an application to repeat the seminar or institute.
APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

This application packet should accompany a letter from the project director that contains detailed information about the topic under study; project requirements and expectations of the participants; the academic and institutional setting; and specific provisions for lodging, subsistence, and extracurricular activities. If you do not have such a letter, please request one from the director of the project in which you are interested before you attempt to compete and submit an application. In some cases, directors have websites for their projects and the information letter may be downloaded from their website. All application materials should be sent to project director:

NEH Institute: Venice, the Jews, and Italian Culture
Attn. Prof. Murray Baumgarten
Humanities Academic Services
UC Santa Cruz
1156 High St.
Santa Cruz, CA 95064

Sending application materials and reference letters to the Endowment will result in delay.

CHECKLIST OF APPLICATION MATERIALS

The following items constitute a completed application to a summer seminar or institute:

___ three copies of the completed application cover sheet,
___ three copies of a detailed résumé,
___ three copies of an application essay as outlined below, and
___ two letters of recommendation (sent separately).

The application cover sheet must be filled out on line at this address: <http://www.neh.gov/online/education/participants/> Please fill it out on line as directed by the prompts. When you are finished, be sure to click on the “submit” button. Print out the cover sheet and add it to your application package. At this point you will be asked if you want to apply to another project. If you do, follow the prompts and select another project and then print out the cover sheet for that project. Note that filling out a cover sheet is not the same as applying, so there is no penalty for changing your mind and filling out cover sheets for several projects. A full application consists of the items listed above, as sent to a project director.

Résumé

Please include a detailed résumé (not to exceed five pages).

The Application Essay

The application essay should be no more than four double spaced pages. This essay should
include any relevant personal and academic information. It should address reasons for applying; the applicant's interest, both academic and personal, in the subject to be studied; qualifications and experiences that equip the applicant to do the work of the seminar or institute and to make a contribution to a learning community; a statement of what the applicant wants to accomplish by participating; and the relation of the project to the applicant's professional responsibilities. Applicants to seminars should be sure to discuss any independent study project that is proposed beyond the common work of the seminar. Applicants to institutes may need to elaborate on the relationship between institute activities and their responsibilities for teaching and curricular development.

Reference Letters

The two referees should be chosen carefully. They should be familiar with the applicant's professional accomplishments or promise, interests, and ability to contribute to and benefit from participation in this institute, “Venice, the Jews, and Italian Culture: Historical Eras and Cultural Representations.” They should specifically address these issues in their recommendations. Letters from colleagues who know the applicant's teaching and from those outside the applicant's institution who know his or her scholarship are often more useful than letters from college or university administrators. Referees should be provided with copies of the director's description of the seminar or institute and the applicant's essay. If an applicant has previously participated in an NEH summer seminar or institute, a recommendation from the director or lead scholar of that program would be useful. It is the applicant's responsibility to ask the referees to send their letters directly to the project director,

NEH Institute: Venice, the Jews, and Italian Culture
Attn. Prof. Murray Baumgarten
Humanities Academic Services
UC Santa Cruz
1156 High St.
Santa Cruz, CA 95064

Letters of reference will only be accepted one week past the March 3 deadline.

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS AND NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

Completed applications should be submitted to project director (address above) and should be postmarked no later than March 3, 2008.

Successful applicants will be notified of their selection by April 1, 2008, and they will have until April 15 to accept or decline the offer. Applicants who will not be home during the notification period are advised to provide an address and phone number where they can be reached. No information on the status of applications will be available prior to the official notification period.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT
Endowment programs do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age. For further information, write to the Equal Opportunity Officer, National Endowment for the Humanities, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20506. TDD: 202/606-8282 (this is a special telephone device for the Deaf).