Andrew W. Mellon Digital Humanities Fellowships at the University of Rochester

Who can apply?
Any PhD student in good standing in English, History, Philosophy, or Visual and Cultural Studies is eligible. Students may apply at any time, and they may submit applications while they are working on any major milestone of their graduate careers (i.e., exam preparation, dissertation prospectus, dissertation writing). Different programs have different requirements for students in the various years of their studies; the Mellon Fellowship program is flexible enough to take into account these differences.

The application calls for a writing sample. What should it be? How long should it be?
The writing sample should be whatever writing you have done that you think (a) represents the kind of work you are doing and would like to continue doing; and (b) is some of the best work you have done to date. It can be on any topic and any length (although ideally something in the 15–30 page range).

The instructions say I need a letter from my advisor. I don’t have an advisor yet.
You should ask a faculty member familiar with your work to write in your support.

What will Mellon fellows be doing?
The $24,000 fellowship lasts for two years, and includes summer support and attendant activities. Fellows, who will participate in teaching, research, and other activities, will spend roughly 10 hours/week engaged in fellowship activities (analogous to other fellowships in which students are engaged in academic service). A rough breakdown of the fellowship activities:

Summer immediately before first fellowship year:
Students train in technologies that they will work with in year 1
They will meet periodically to read/discuss how technology and humanities research intersect

Year 1
(A) Teaching assistantships in a project-based humanities class
(B) Teaching or research assistantships in a Faculty Humanities Lab

Summer preceding Year 2
Technology training for second-year academic assignments

Year 2
Teaching assistantships in (a) project-based humanities classes; (b) Digital Media Studies core courses or capstone course

What if my principal area of research — the topic of my dissertation — is not digital?
What if the digital humanities are a secondary interest for me?
If you are interested in learning a significant amount about technology and the humanities, then you can and should apply to the fellowship program. You will need to articulate in your application the relationship between your humanities research and expertise in technology that you would like to cultivate, and you should also indicate ways in which you think technology might inform your future thinking. But it’s

---

1 See definitions of terms at the end of this document.
important to remember that, like a dissertation prospectus, your application is a framework for thinking and a future work plan. Performing the actual work in both cases will significantly nuance and enrich the original plan.

**Is DMS 501, “Seminar in Digital Humanities,” a 4-credit course?**
No. It is a 1-credit discussion course co-led by faculty and students.

**Definitions and Explanations.**

*Project-based courses* are those in which students engage in hands-on work in addition to studying traditional humanities materials. Graduate students working with faculty in teaching these courses will learn the relevant technologies and assist undergraduates in developing their skills and applying them to the humanities materials. They will also help students understand how digital forms of materials they may already be familiar with inflect those materials with new kinds of meaning. During the academic year 2013–2014, for example, the following project-based courses were on offer: ENG 263, “Clocks and Computers: Visualizing Cultural Time” (J. Burges); ENG 283, “Media ABC: The Digital Page” (M. Eaves); GER 275, “Digital Cityscapes” (J. Hwang); IT 245, “Visualizing Dante” (D. Stocchi-Perucchio); HIS 278, “Seward Family’s Civil War” (T. Slaughter); JAP 214A, “Tourist Japan” (J. Bernardi); AH 320, “The Politics of Space” (J. Saab). Other project-based courses have been offered in previous semesters.

*A Faculty Humanities Lab* is an ongoing research project of considerable scale, generally one that is complex and that will benefit from the participation of a number of people. FHL’s typically consist of a faculty Principal Investigator (or sometimes two); at least one graduate student working under that faculty member; and, often, a number of undergraduates, whom the graduate student supervises. In this scenario, graduate students serve as both apprentices and mentors, learning as much as possible from the faculty PI(s) about the project, and then (a) doing his or her own work on the project and (b) mentoring undergraduates who engage in lower-level work on the project. Examples of ongoing FHL’s are Morris Eaves’s William Blake Archive; Thomas Slaughter’s Seward Family Papers project; Michael Jarvis’s Virtual St. George’s [Bermuda]; Joan Rubin and Joan Saab’s Claude Bragdon project; and Joel Burges’s Visualizing Televirtual Time.

The *Digital Media Studies Core courses* are: DMS 101, “Introduction to Media”; DMS 102, “Introduction to Computing in Multimedia”; and DMS 103, “The Essential DMS Toolkit.” The Digital Media Studies capstone course is a two and one-half course sequence. Beginning in the spring of the junior year, students enroll in DMS 371 (2 credits) to learn principles of design, creative thinking, and entrepreneurship. They review proposals for digital media projects, and they build small projects in anticipation of the work they will do in DMS 372 and 373 (both 4-credit courses, offered fall and spring of the senior year). In the senior year, the students continue work on project design, analysis, prototyping and implementation in small groups. Graduate student teaching assistants will help students conceptualize the relationships among the analytic, historical, theoretical, and technological components of their projects. [Note: the DMS curriculum is changing. More to come.]

Further questions should be directed to Morris Eaves (morris.eaves@rochester.edu).

The Mellon Fellows’ website is [http://humanities.lib.rochester.edu/mellondh/](http://humanities.lib.rochester.edu/mellondh/)