

September 29, 2025

UW-Madison Faculty Fellowships in AI and Knowledge within the Center for Humanistic Inquiry into AI and Uncertainty

**Call for Applications for 2026
DEADLINE: Friday, October 17, 2025**

Access application information and link to digital application on the IRH fellowships webpage: <https://irh.wisc.edu/irh-fellowships/> (scroll down to “internal fellowships”).

The Center for Humanistic Inquiry into AI and Uncertainty, an autonomous research center administratively housed within the Institute for Research in the Humanities, is pleased to announce its **first annual competition for up to four two-semester Faculty Fellowships for UW–Madison faculty who are working on a project that explores the theme of “AI and Knowledge” from a humanistic (or descriptive social-scientific) perspective**. These fellowships will be granted for two semesters: in spring 2026 and fall 2026. Thanks to an NEH grant and the funding it provides toward buy-out of teaching, Faculty Fellows receive their regular salary and \$2000 in flexible research funding and are released from teaching duties for spring 2026 and, pending confirmation of UW-Madison’s teaching policies, fall 2026 so that they may undertake full-time research, participate in the Center’s intellectual community (including weekly meetings with the other fellows), collaborate on the publication and dissemination of the Center’s annual whitepaper, and contribute to the Center’s other activities.

Center’s mission statement: The Center for Humanistic Inquiry into AI and Uncertainty serves as a collaborative hub for gathering people, ideas, and resources from across the UW-Madison community in order to intervene in scholarly and public debates around the multifaceted dimensions of uncertainty foregrounded by emerging AI technologies. By fostering a broad-minded, yet focused, community of humanities scholars researching AI and providing them with the dedicated time, research support, and other resources they need to produce impactful academic publications and public-facing resources, the Center seeks to engage in urgent conversations with 1) researchers and technologists working on AI and related technologies, 2) scholars grappling with technological shifts more broadly, and 3) the broader public.

The theme for the Center’s inaugural year is “AI and Knowledge.” In keeping with its mission of supporting interdisciplinary cohorts of humanities researchers who are committed to probing current and future AI technologies and the multifarious uncertainties attendant to them, the Center invites applications from scholars working in all humanistic

and descriptive social scientific disciplines. We are specifically interested in projects that problematize the concept of “knowledge” and that reflect on the ways AI tools challenge, support, threaten, and intersect with ways of knowing. Research questions may include (but are not limited to): How do AI tools “know” and how do users of these tools understand the “knowledge” they glean from interacting with AI? What are the limits of trusting AI outputs? How can the meaning of AI outputs be effectively communicated to and between human agents interacting with AI? What bodies of knowledge or ways of knowing are prioritized or marginalized in various AI tools? Can AI help ameliorate problems like fake news and echo chambers rather than amplifying them? How important (if at all) is it for AI to develop reasoning capabilities that approximate human capabilities? Overall, we are looking for fellows whose projects demonstrate a deliberate appreciation of uncertainty’s positive potential for productive critique and whose ideas on “AI and Knowledge” can highlight previously uncharted paths for innovative humanistic inquiry.

Thanks to the generous support of the National Endowment for the Humanities alongside robust institutional support from the College of Letters & Science, the IRH, the Office of the Vice-Chancellor for Research, the Graduate School, the Data Science Institute, the Center for Humanities, and the Vice-Provost for Teaching and Learning, these fellowships are prestigious appointments and represent one of the ways the University of Wisconsin–Madison seeks to strengthen opportunities for concentrated humanities research on the questions of AI and its uncertain future.

Individual faculty members who are on the tenure track or tenured at UW–Madison are encouraged to apply. UW–Madison faculty budgeted outside the College of L&S are welcome to apply for a Faculty Fellowship, contingent upon written agreement from their Dean and Department Chair to release them from teaching and to continue their salary during the duration of the fellowship. (Note: The home departments of Faculty Fellows will receive \$10,000 in faculty salary support for each semester of the recipient’s fellowship, for a total of \$20,000.) Please note that the fellowship may not be deferred for any reason. The Center seeks the most exciting research projects from candidates who can contribute to and benefit from the Center’s mission.

Criteria for selection:

- The quality and potential impact of the applicant’s current and proposed research
- The clarity of the applicant’s research proposal
- The relevance of the applicant’s research and expertise to the theme “AI and Knowledge”
- The diversity of intellectual and disciplinary perspectives, professional experiences, and interests the applicant would bring to the Center’s research mission
- Evidence of interest in, and preparedness for, interdisciplinary collaboration

Eligibility

- Faculty Fellowship applicants for the Center for the Humanistic Study of AI and Uncertainty must be tenured or tenure-track members of the UW–Madison faculty, must be engaged in scholarship in the humanities (or descriptive social sciences), and must be prepared to commit themselves to full participation in

- the Center's activities for the period of the appointment.
- UW–Madison faculty budgeted outside the College of Letters & Science are welcome to apply for the Center's Faculty Fellowships, and, if selected, will need to provide evidence that their Dean and Department Chair has agreed to release them from teaching for the fellowship's duration.
- All applicants must have completed two years on the tenure track or as tenured faculty at UW–Madison before applying.
- Projects should be situated clearly within the humanities, which we define broadly to include disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship on history, literature, visual and performing art, visual and material culture, philosophy, religion, politics, and language. In addition to applications in the humanities, applications in the social and natural sciences will be considered if they demonstrate potential for comparative, theoretical, and/or interdisciplinary conversation with the humanities. Proposals in the performing and creative arts are not generally supported, but such projects with a substantive research component in the humanities will be considered.
- Proposals involving a revision of the doctoral dissertation should involve major expansion, extensive new research, and/or substantive reconceptualization.

Application Materials

- Project Proposal. Up to 1,500 words (about 5 double-spaced pages of 12-point font). The proposal, written to be accessible to readers outside your discipline and free of jargon, should address the significance of the project. Clearly state the intended product of your research, whether it is a book or an article (or series of articles). For book projects, an outline of chapters is highly recommended. For revisions of dissertations, substantive change is expected; explain how the book will differ from the dissertation. The proposal should also state how the project will be accomplished, and the specific work plan for the period of the fellowship.
- Project Bibliography. Publications (not your own) relevant to the project, up to 2 pages.
- Brief Statement of Interest in interdisciplinary and collaborative research and the envisioned benefits that this mode of research will bring to your work and that of others (up to 300 words).
- Curriculum Vitae. Including work forthcoming and in progress.
- Completed UW-Madison Faculty Fellowship in AI and Knowledge Interfolio questionnaire.

Application Submission

- Applicants must access the online application through Interfolio. The Interfolio application link is found in the UW–Madison Faculty Fellowship in AI and Knowledge section of the IRH fellowships webpage: <https://irh.wisc.edu/irh-fellowships/> (scroll down to the expandable “internal fellowships” menu).
- You must complete your online application and upload all required materials to Interfolio by 11:59 pm Eastern Time (**10:59 pm Central Time**) on Friday, **October 17, 2025**. Interfolio operates out of Washington, D.C. and deadlines are set at Eastern Time, NOT Central Time. The deadline is **10:59 pm** if you are in Madison.

- You do not need to complete your application in a single session. You may start it, save changes, log out, and return to it later. (To see your saved applications, go to the Interfolio dashboard and click the “*Deliveries*” button; un-submitted applications will appear as “*in-progress*.”)
- Please press the “**submit**” button on your portion of the application as soon as possible. Even after submission, you may return to an application repeatedly to make edits and changes until 10:59 pm CT/11:59 pm ET on October 17th. (Again, to see an application you have already submitted, go to the Interfolio dashboard and click the “*Deliveries*” button; submitted applications will appear as “*sent deliveries*.”) **The selection committee will not review or read any of your submitted materials until October 17th.**

Inquiries

- For substantive questions about projects and proposals, contact Steven Nadler, IRH Director (smnadler@wisc.edu; 608-262-8151) and Grant Nelsestuen, Associate Dean for the Arts and Humanities, College of Letters & Science (nelsestuen@wisc.edu)
- For help using Interfolio, please contact Interfolio’s help desk (help@interfolio.com; 877-997-8807).
- **Notifications of awards will be emailed no later than November 1, 2026.**