

September 14, 2026

External Fellowship in AI and Creativity within the Center for Humanistic Inquiry into AI and Uncertainty (AI&U)

Call for Proposals for 2027–2028

Deadline: Friday, November 13, 2026 @ 11:59pm CST

Access application information on the AI&U webpage:

<https://aiuncertainty.wisc.edu/people/about-the-fellowship-program/>

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 **second annual competition for one external fellowship for a scholar who is working on a project that explores the theme of “AI and Creativity” from a humanistic (or descriptive social-scientific) perspective**. Thanks to an NEH “Humanities Research Centers on AI” research grant, external fellows will be in residence for the full academic year and will be given a \$60,000 stipend, plus health benefits (if accepting the award through UW-Madison payroll), office space, and access to university libraries. Fellows may extend their residency through the following summer on a non-stipendiary basis. Joining a team of four UW-Madison fellows and a graduate RA studying AI, the external fellow will undertake full-time research, participate in the Center’s intellectual community (including weekly meetings with other fellows), collaborate on the publication and dissemination of an 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 debates about the many 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 dedicated time, research support, and other resources to produce impactful academic publications and public-facing resources, the Center engages 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 second year is “AI and Creativity.” In keeping with its mission of supporting interdisciplinary cohorts of humanities researchers who are committed to probing current and future AI technologies and the multidimensional 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 take up the issue of “creativity” and how AI tools call into question traditional understandings of authorship, art, authenticity and expression. Research questions may include (but are not limited to): How do we define authorship in an era of artistic outputs generated by AI? Is AI creative, or is creativity a distinctively human capability inaccessible to artificial agents? How does the inclusion of AI-generated content in various artworks alter their aesthetic (and economic) value? What ethical frames should we apply to AI (is it like plagiarism in writing or more akin to sampling in music)? What does it mean for something to be “made with AI”? 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 Creativity” 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 UW–Madison seeks to strengthen opportunities for focused humanities research on AI and its uncertain future.

Please note all Center fellowships are residential. External fellows are *required* to live in Madison, Wisconsin, throughout the academic year to ensure their active participation in the intellectual and social life of the Center. 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 Creativity”
- The diversity of intellectual and disciplinary perspectives, professional experiences, and interests the applicant brings to the Center’s research mission
- Evidence of interest in, and preparedness for, interdisciplinary collaboration

Eligibility

- The Center for Humanistic Inquiry into AI and Uncertainty encourages applications from senior scholars as well as junior scholars expecting to complete their PhD before the start of the fellowship period.
- Faculty members of the University of Wisconsin–Madison are *not* eligible
- Independent scholars are eligible to apply
- Applicants must be in possession of their doctorate **before the start of the fellowship period (latest conferral date accepted: 08/22/27)**. Current graduate students who have not yet graduated but who anticipate having a doctorate by the above deadline should also include a letter from their supervisor, which attests to the details noted below in the “application materials” section.

- By the time of the fellowship's start date, applicants must hold a Ph.D. or relevant terminal degree (MFA, JD, etc.)
- 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 only if they demonstrate a robust potential for comparative, theoretical, and/or interdisciplinary conversation with the humanities. Applications in the performing and creative arts should involve a substantive humanistic research component.
- Proposals involving a revision of the doctoral dissertation should involve major expansion, extensive new research, and/or substantive reconceptualization.

Application Materials to Prepare

- AI&U General Questionnaire. [Download the application form here.](#)
- 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 a series of articles), and how it connects to the annual theme. For book projects, an outline of chapters is highly recommended. The proposal should also state how the project will be accomplished, and the specific work plan for the period of the fellowship. Projects to revise doctoral dissertations should involve substantial expansion, new research, and/or new conceptual frameworks— the proposal should clearly explain how the project relates to the submitted dissertation yet will be a different book.
- Bibliography. Publications (not your own) relevant to the project, up to 2 pages.
- Statement of Interest in interdisciplinary and collaborative research and the envisioned benefits this will bring to your work and that of others (up to 300 words).
- Curriculum Vitae. Including work forthcoming and in progress.
- Two letters of recommendation. Each must address the significance and feasibility of the proposed research, quality of the proposal, qualifications for the project, and past work. Letters should be submitted directly to the Center's main email: ai.uncertainty@wisc.edu. Letters from colleagues in the discipline are preferred over letters from departmental colleagues. **For graduate students** who have yet to earn their doctorate, **one of these letters** must be from the student's supervisor and must clearly attest to 1) the number of full chapters the student has already completed and submitted to the supervisor and 2) the expected defense and conferral date and the feasibility of achieving these deadlines given current and past progress.

Application Submission and Deadline

- Applicants should submit their applications by email to the Center at: ai.uncertainty@wisc.edu. Please create a single PDF and title the file APPLICANTLASTNAME_APPLICANTFIRSTNAME_AIUEXTERNALFELLOW27.pdf. Include the following items, in the following order:

- AI&U General Questionnaire [[DOWNLOAD HERE](#)]
 - Project Proposal/Project Bibliography
 - Statement of Interest
 - Curriculum Vitae
- Separately, applicants should arrange to have **two** letters of recommendation sent to the same email address above. Please have referees title their file:
APPLICANTLASTNAME_APPLICANTFIRSTNAME_AIUEXTERNALREFERENCE
- The deadline for **ALL** materials is **11:59 pm CST Friday, November 13, 2026**

Inquiries

- For general questions about the application process, please email:
ai.uncertainty@wisc.edu
- For substantive questions about projects and proposals, contact Jeremy Morris, Faculty Director for the Center for Humanistic Inquiry into AI and Uncertainty (jwmorris2@wisc.edu).
- **Notification of the award will be emailed no later than December, 2026.**