



## DEMOCRACY: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

How do the Humanities help us examine and understand Democracy? In a time of intensified political unrest across the globe our theme invites research projects that interrogate the shifting contours of democracy and struggles surrounding democratic values and rights in societies past, present, and future.

In the U.S. 2024 marks the one-hundred-year anniversary of 1924 Indian Citizenship Act and Immigration Act, the sixty-year anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, and a presidential election. Around the world debates around the future of democracy and the rise of fascism abound. How can humanistic inquiry help us critically examine these pressing questions?

Democracy is measured, on one hand, by the state of political institutions and governance practices: policies, elections, legal apparatus, and judicial mechanisms. At the same time, art, education, and public cultures provide spaces where democratic belonging and freedom are actively and creatively shaped by people through debate, dissent, representation, and dialogue. Humanities research and creative works also play a critical role in analyzing and advancing democratic ideals and institutions.

We invite scholars whose research interests are resonant with such a panoramic view of democracy as shaped and transformed by a variety of forces. We especially welcome projects investigating the theme across international contexts and/or through interdisciplinary approaches spanning the humanities and humanistic social sciences and employing a range of methodologies and approaches including public and digital humanities.

We envision that fellows may pursue research on a range of historical, contemporary, social, cultural, literary, and philosophical questions about democracy, including but not limited to:

- **What issues and crises** have recent populist movements and authoritarian leadership sparked for rethinking liberal democracy?
- **How do we think about** the fundamental inclusions and exclusions of liberal democratic regimes?
- **How are the interests of** and issues faced by minority communities addressed within contemporary democratic discourses?
- **What are the racialized,** gendered and sexual imaginaries that govern both dominant and counter-hegemonic cultural productions that subtend democratic politics?
- **What forms does political resistance take** under eroding conditions of democracy?
- **How do literary works** reconfigure our sense of life and agency under conditions of political violence?
- **How do we analyze** the psycho-social imperatives of totalitarian regimes, and how is collective memory, trauma, affect and identity deployed within such political formations?
- **In the age of transnational capital flows,** how do the global migration crises call into question the state-centered understandings of democratic citizenship?
- **In what ways** have new networks of information and technologies such as AI and social media transformed democratic processes?

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