FOLGER INSTITUTE

at the Folger Shakespeare Library

November 2016

Dear Colleague,

It is a pleasure to announce the NEH Institute, "Early Modern Digital Agendas: Advanced Topics," which is funded by an Institutes for Advanced Topics in the Digital Humanities grant from the NEH's Office of Digital Humanities. It will take place at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. The dates of the institute are **17 through 28 July 2017**. Please note that the application deadline is **1 March 2017**.

Following on the success of the first two "Early Modern Digital Agendas" institutes—intensive surveys and practical explorations of the most current resources and methods in digital research to be found— "Advanced Topics: Network Analysis" will convene a technically engaged cohort of fifteen early modern digital humanists. Under the co-direction of returning EMDA director **Jonathan Hope** and EMDA2015 distinguished faculty member **Ruth Ahnert**, EMDA2017 will bring together experts from the field of network analysis to examine one of the most "quantitative turns" in early modern digital humanities.

As before, participants will investigate tools developed by visiting faculty to manage, analyze, and visualize data in new ways. In this more focused exploration, however, dedicated "build sessions" will be interspersed to guide the participants' experiential learning of the most advanced techniques available. These "build sessions" will guide participants through the process of selecting their source material, extracting data for network analysis, building and structuring their database, cleaning their data, visualizing and analyzing their data with off-the-shelf tools. This will precede teaching them how to write their own code to perform tailored network analysis. The two weeks will culminate in presentations by participants (either individually or in groups) in which they demonstrate the data sets and analyses they have built during the Institute, or respond to the ideas they have encountered in relation to their own future plans.

EMDA2017 has the potential not only to shape the ways people are using Network Analysis methods and developing new network tools and projects, but also to determine the future trajectory of a field that we might term "cultural network analysis." The application of computational methods from the fields of network science with aesthetic principles from the field of design technology gives us new ways to engage with some of the thorniest questions at the

heart of early modern studies; they also allow us to pose questions impossible to even imagine before the age of digitization.

This, however, is a field in its infancy: one that has yet to establish protocols, best practices, and even the language by which we invoke technical processes and methods. We have the opportunity during this institute to begin to reach some consensus on these issues. It promises, then, to be an important intervention within the discourses of both digital humanities and early modern scholars, not only for the participants and faculty, but for the whole scholarly community.

We are particularly excited about the range and expertise of the [faculty](#) who have agreed to take part. They are a truly international and interdisciplinary group of scholars, each one a world recognized leader in their field. We anticipate attracting a similarly excellent group of college and university teacher-participants, who (as past experience tells us) will quickly establish a community of intellectual interests. Our aim is to assemble a group which may be mixed in terms of academic seniority, but all of whom have some experience with network analysis. It is our hope that our participants will return to their digital projects with a greatly enhanced understanding of the practicalities and principles of this field. They will also have a network of contacts and potential collaborators for future work.

The discussions we envisage will require the intensive and collaborative scholarship that is the hallmark of NEH programs at the Folger Shakespeare Library. The Folger has a well earned reputation as a gathering place for a dynamic intellectual community, where advanced scholarly conversation is shared around seminar tables and at daily tea breaks, in presentations of works-in-progress, and in informal after-hours events. The sense of belonging to a select group within a larger intellectual community is the key to one recent assessment of a Folger NEH institute: "After more than 25 years of teaching, I'd say simply that this institute was one of the very best intellectual experiences of my career," and, "I believe all of us felt as if we had made many new, very good friends and colleagues with whom we could share ideas and collaborate for years to come."

Please review carefully the [application and eligibility guidelines](#), which specify the components of an application and the criteria for review. You should know that the application review committee will be especially interested in your essay. It should address your reasons for applying to the institute; your qualifications to make a contribution to the institute, especially your ongoing research interests and digital projects involving network analysis; an outline of what you hope to accomplish; and an indication of the relation of digital humanities to your teaching, your current research, or your envisioned project(s). We will be looking to select a

varied group of a dozen scholars ready to engage in a demanding, intellectually taxing, but we hope hugely enjoyable, Institute.

We hope that many of your questions are answered in the accompanying materials. You may direct your questions to the Folger Institute's Program Assistant, Elyse Martin, at institute@folger.edu or 202 675 0333. Please do not hesitate to ask for clarification on any issues.

We look forward to a provocative and stimulating two weeks that will draw upon the full range of our visiting faculty's expertise, as well as that of participants. Our hope is that the Institute will set the agenda, and establish good practice, for investigating, interpreting, and presenting early modern English literature with this new means and methodology. We hope you will find this a compelling reason to give over part of your summer.

We look forward to reading your application.

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Sincerely,
[Jonathan Hope] Early Modern Digital
Agendas Institute Co-Director

[Ruth Ahnert] Early Modern Digital
Agendas Institute Co-Director

[Owen Williams] Early Modern Digital
Agendas Administrative Project Director

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