

FOLGER INSTITUTE

at the Folger Shakespeare Library

January 2015

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, DC, this summer. The dates of the institute are **15 June through 1 July 2015**. Please note that the application deadline is **2 March 2015**.

Following on the success of the first “Early Modern Digital Agendas” institute—an intensive survey of the most current resources and methods in digital research to be found in July 2013—”Advanced Topics” will convene a technically advanced cohort of fifteen early modern digital humanists for scholarly assessment of the most effective tools by which data sets are gathered, curated, and analyzed. We will foreground experimentation with those tools, as often as is practical using data sets provided by participants.

Participants will reflect on the ways digital tools and methods expand the universe of possible questions that literary scholars can ask. We will also consider fundamental theoretical, practical, and philosophical questions: What is “data”? What transformations lie behind statistical analysis? How is corpus-wide variation being treated? What are the principles of visualization? Do digital methods change the nature of our subject? The aim is to enable participants not just to perform analysis, or curate data, but to understand the processes they engage in—where they enable, how they restrict, and how they might be improved. It remains the Folger’s goal to ensure that DH practitioners question not only what is possible with digital tools, but why one would put them to certain uses, and at what costs.

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 experience with digital methods. It is our hope that our participants will return to their digital projects with a greatly enhanced understanding of the practicalities and principles of digital methods. 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

Kathleen Lynch, *Executive Director*

Owen Williams, *Assistant Director for Scholarly Programs* Carol Brobeck, *Fellowships Manager*
201 East Capitol Street, SE Washington, DC 20003 202 675 0312 www.folger.edu/institute

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 “Early Modern Digital Agendas” application and eligibility [guidelines](#), which specifies 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. The essay 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; 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 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 three 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.

Sincerely,

[Jonathan Hope]
Early Modern Digital Agendas Institute Director

[Owen Williams]
Early Modern Digital Agendas Project Director

Kathleen Lynch, *Executive Director*

Owen Williams, *Assistant Director for Scholarly Programs* Carol Brobeck, *Fellowships Manager*
201 East Capitol Street, SE Washington, DC 20003 202 675 0312 www.folger.edu/institute