Postdoctoral Fellowship
2016-17 Call for Applications

The Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies will award one full-time Postdoctoral Fellowship for the 2016-2017 academic year. This fellowship is designed to provide recent University of Michigan history or joint history PhD's the opportunity to teach two undergraduate courses while pursuing revisions of their dissertations for publication. This fellow will form an integral part of the Institute community and is expected to participate regularly in Institute events. This award has been funded by a generous gift from Kenneth and Frances Aftel Eisenberg.

Eligibility: The Institute invites applications from 2015-16 University of Michigan history and joint history PhD graduates as well as candidates who have defended their dissertations or plan to do so by June 20, 2016 (with a degree conferred by August 19, 2016). Preference will be given to those who have already defended their dissertations at the time of application or who can confirm a scheduled defense date. Failure to complete all requirements for the PhD by June 20, 2016, will result in withdrawal of the fellowship offer. Fellows are expected to maintain Ann Arbor residency during the fall and winter terms of their award, with exceptions for short research, conference, or personal leaves of absence. Fellows may not combine this award with appointments or teaching obligations at other institutions.

Award: The Postdoctoral Fellowship consists of a $43,500 salary, full benefits, and a $2,000 research fund. The salary will be paid evenly throughout the 2016-17 academic year, September to August. This fellow is expected to teach two courses.

Application: The application consists of the following:

- A statement describing the dissertation project and timeline for completion, as well as plans for research and writing during the fellowship year (500-1000 words).
- A teaching proposal, including descriptions of two proposed courses that may be taught during the fellowship year. Include a course from the current history curriculum along with a new course. Proposals will be evaluated, in part, by their potential to attract both history and non-history students, along with the department’s curricular needs (500-1500 words). We are open to all fields with special interest in techniques in digital history.
- A brief statement indicating the applicant’s possible contributions to the Institute community during the fellowship year; also explain why affiliation with the Institute is particularly useful and interesting at this point in the applicant’s training; applicants may share how their work relates to the Institute’s 2015-17 theme, “Senses and Longings” (100-200 words).
- Two letters of recommendation, including at least one from the dissertation supervisor(s) and one from a faculty member who has supervised the applicant’s teaching. The advisor’s letter should address the timeline for dissertation completion. Since these will be sent separately, list the recommenders in the application.

Submit complete applications via email (eisenberginstitute@umich.edu) by April 4, 2016. Institute staff will confirm receipt.

Notification: The fellowship award will be made by the Institute Steering Committee and announced in late April or early May 2016. The Institute will contact each applicant regarding the outcome of his/her application. To ensure that this award strengthens the undergraduate history curriculum, the postdoctoral fellow must consult with the associate chair as soon as possible after accepting this fellowship offer.
2015-17 Theme:
Senses and Longings

The Eisenberg Institute proposes to explore perception and feeling in relation to the time-scapes of human experience. We aim to find a place in history for longings, i.e., yearnings for a state of affairs—perhaps lost to the past or beckoning as an imagined future—that differs from a given present.

The “affective turn” of the past twenty-odd years contends with a default assumption that human action is rational, the result of goal-oriented choices made by actors seeking the most effective means to their ends. Historians bring a rich perspective to this “turn.” We know that human action and decision arise in definite historical situations, brought to us by the senses; moreover, choices to act are frequently steeped in one or more emotions—hope, sorrow, love, resentment, desire, and more. Thus we see a complex of elements. The senses stir feeling; feelings can arouse or dull the senses. Both are contingent on time—through the education of the senses, for instance, and in the temporal dimensions of memory or anticipation that frequently constitute emotions. We propose to capture this complex of sense and feeling particularly in longings that imaginatively traverse long stretches of historical time.

Today the look forward is clouded by conditions of economic disorder, political violence, and environmental disaster, leading observers to recognize a “crisis of futurity” manifested in an inability to imagine better times to come, in mythic embroidery of old times, or in fear of bygone calamities returned to haunt the world. Such a crisis—a loss of fruitful longings—will be just one of the problems we hope to broach, as the Eisenberg Institute invites discussion of all these aspects of situations, from all periods and places: modes of perception (histories of the human senses), textures of emotional response, the profound temporality of experience, and the framing of long-range time-scapes looking toward past and future.