

Call for Participants:

Eleventh Annual Undergraduate Research Workshop Sponsored by the McNeil Center for Early American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania

Application Deadline: November 15, 2019

Program Dates: February 7 and April 17-18, 2020

Overview:

Each spring semester, a select group of undergraduates is invited to become a part of the McNeil Center's intellectual community and participate in one of the leading forums for undergraduate research on early American and Atlantic topics. Participants receive a unique opportunity to experience the pleasures of scholarly life: they tour archives, attend the McNeil Center's prestigious Friday seminar series, present their work at a conference at the University of Pennsylvania, and are supported along the way by their peers, graduate student mentors, and faculty from participants' colleges. The experiences of traveling to Philadelphia, meeting like-minded young scholars, working with their graduate mentors, attending scholarly seminars, and giving a presentation at an Ivy League university often combine to make participation in the Workshop a highlight of their college careers. While admission to the Workshop is competitive, the atmosphere of the Workshop is one of mutual support, collaboration, and celebration.

About:

The MCEAS Undergraduate Research Workshop was established in 2008 to extend the benefits of the Center to undergraduate students enrolled at MCEAS Consortium member institutions by holding a workshop for advanced undergraduates writing an honors thesis or research paper in early American studies. The Workshop provides a structured environment in which students come together with undergraduates from other institutions, as well as graduate students and faculty, to discuss their own research. A highlight of the program is the mentoring given each undergraduate by a MCEAS dissertation or postdoctoral fellow. The Workshop meetings are held in conjunction with the Center's regular Friday seminar so that undergraduates can experience these scholarly seminars firsthand. Now in its eleventh year, the Workshop has exceeded our expectations, allowing undergraduates to join the exceptionally supportive and successful community of scholars at the McNeil Center. Undergraduate Research Workshop participants are now enrolled in Ph.D. programs in History, attending law school, and working in public history. Undergraduates from the following institutions have thus far participated in the Workshop: Brigham Young University, Bryn Mawr College, Catholic University, Dickinson College, Fordham University, Franklin and Marshall College, George Washington University, Gettysburg College, Iona College, Johns Hopkins University, Lehigh University, Millersville University, New York University, Princeton University, Providence College, Rider University, Rowan University, Seton Hall University, Stockton University, SUNY Stony Brook, Swarthmore College, Temple University, The College of New Jersey, the University of Delaware, the University of Maryland at College Park, the University of Pennsylvania, Ursinus College, and Villanova University.

Eligibility:

The Workshop is open only to undergraduates at the senior—or in certain circumstances, junior—level who attend McNeil Center Consortium institutions in good standing. If your

institution is not yet a Consortium member, please contact Amy Baxter-Bellamy at abaxter@sas.upenn.edu to find out how to join. If you are not sure, visit <http://www.mceas.org/consortium.shtml> for a recent list of Consortium member institutions. Applicants should be pursuing independent research that includes the use of primary sources. Applicants must be available on all of the program dates, and their faculty sponsors must be available to attend the seminar and conference on April 17-18, 2020. A maximum of two students will be accepted from any one institution per year, and preference will be given to applicants from Consortium institutions who have not recently participated. We encourage students at the freshman and sophomore level with interest in participating in a McNeil Center Consortium event to apply for the Dallett Hemphill Public History Summer Internships instead of this program. More information is available at <http://www.mceas.org/internships.shtml>.

Workshop Events:

Attendance at Workshop events is mandatory for all participants including undergrads, grad mentors, and (for the April conference) faculty sponsors.

Works-in-Progress, February 7, 2020:

This meeting takes place on Friday, February 7 from 10 am to 2:30 pm. It focuses on research and gives undergraduates the chance to meet one another and with their graduate student mentors. This meeting is optional for undergraduates' faculty mentors. Student project abstracts will be circulated in advance. In the morning, students will have the opportunity to tour archives and gain hands-on experience with primary sources. Later, the faculty advisor will lead students to the McNeil Center on Penn's campus, where lunch will be provided and students will deliver five-minute presentations on their research and have one-on-one time with their grad mentors. There will be an MCEAS Friday seminar (featuring the work of Kirsten Wood) from 3 to 5 p.m. at the Center; attendance at this seminar is optional but encouraged.

Conference, April 17-18, 2020:

The second event is a 1 ½ day meeting culminating in a professional-style conference with 10-minute formal paper presentations by undergraduates, and comments by graduate student mentors. Past undergraduate participants have used a section or chapter of their project that works well as a discrete topic for the conference paper. In addition, the conference will include opportunities for students to present in one of two ways: either by giving a traditional formal paper OR by participating in a less formal roundtable presentation of students' work-in-progress that focuses on research topics and tactics. This option is offered to accommodate Consortium institutions whose academic schedules do not readily align with a student being able to present a formal paper by April. Students should note for which of the two options they are applying in their application materials. Please note that the less formal option will be limited to two to three students only, with the majority of spaces reserved for traditional, formal papers. In both cases, students meet informally with the MCEAS Friday seminar presenter (who will be Laurel Thatcher Ulrich) and then attend the seminar, followed by dinner. Participants then spend the night in Philadelphia. The conference takes place the following Saturday, and will end by 5 p.m. at the latest. Breakfast and lunch will be provided on Saturday.

Accommodations & Travel:

Participants should make their own arrangements for travel to the Workshop meetings. The McNeil Center will reimburse round-trip transportation expenses up to \$100 (for both meetings combined). Please note that the Center does not reimburse incidental expenses, such as parking, room service, meals, or local transportation costs. The Center will also provide participants (faculty and undergraduates) one night's lodging at a local hotel for the April conference. Instructions for obtaining reimbursement will be provided prior to the Workshop meetings. When making your arrangements, please keep in mind that the University of Pennsylvania's policy for reimbursement states that travelers who choose to use their own automobiles on a trip where air or rail travel is more appropriate will be reimbursed an amount not to exceed the lowest logical air or rail fare to the destination.

Application Procedure:

Applicants must submit the following to their faculty advisor: 1) a cover sheet with applicant's name and institution, advisor's name, and project title; 2) a brief description of the proposed research project (500 words maximum); and 3) a one-page resume highlighting academic experiences. Please also note whether the application is for a traditional formal paper OR participation in the less formal roundtable presentation of work-in-progress (for the April conference). The project description must include: a title, the name(s) of sponsoring faculty (probably but not necessarily including the student's advisor), the type of project (thesis, capstone, research seminar paper, etc.), research question, significance of project, approach and/or method, and key primary sources to be used. Applicants must also request that their faculty advisor write a one-page (max) letter of recommendation addressing the faculty member's knowledge of the student's qualifications, stage of the project, the faculty member's relationship to the student, and impact of participation to the student's learning. Application materials should be submitted by the faculty advisor as a single PDF document electronically through e-mail with the subject line "Application: MCEAS URW 2020" to: Zara Anishanslin, MCEAS/URW Coordinator, at zma@udel.edu and cc: mceas@sas.upenn.edu.