

Call for Participants:

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

Application Deadline: December 15, 2020

Program Dates: February 12 and April 23-24, 2021

Overview:

Since 2008, the MCEAS Undergraduate Research Workshop has hosted a workshop for advanced undergraduates writing an honors thesis or research paper in early American studies at MCEAS Consortium member institutions. 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 American and Atlantic topics before approximately 1850. Participants receive a distinctive opportunity to tour archives, attend the McNeil Center's prestigious Friday seminar series, work with a graduate student mentor, and present their work at a conference at the University of Pennsylvania. While admission to the Workshop is competitive, the atmosphere of the Workshop is one of mutual support, collaboration, and celebration. Participants often report that the experiences of meeting like-minded students, networking with scholars and archivists, and discussing capstone research projects have been a highlight of their college careers. Undergraduate Research Workshop participants are now enrolled in Ph.D. programs, attending law school, and working in public history.

The 2021 Workshop will be fully remote, most likely utilizing Zoom for all sessions. Dr. Whitney Martinko of Villanova University will serve as the program's faculty advisor.

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. We encourage students at the freshman and sophomore level with interest in participating in a McNeil Center event to apply for the Dallett Hemphill Public History Summer Internships instead of this program. Visit <http://www.mceas.org/consortium.shtml> for a recent list of Consortium member institutions. 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. Applicants should be pursuing independent research that includes the use of primary sources. They must be available on all of the program dates, and their faculty sponsors must be available to attend the seminar and conference via Zoom on April 23-24, 2021. 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.

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 12, 2021:

This meeting focuses on research and gives undergraduates the chance to meet one another and with their graduate student mentors. This meeting is optional for faculty mentors. Student project abstracts will be circulated in advance. In the morning, the workshop's faculty advisor, Dr. Whitney Martinko, will accompany students on virtual tours of Philadelphia-area archives as they learn about conducting original research and working with primary sources in these and other institutions. Later, students will deliver five-minute presentations on their research and have one-on-one time with their graduate student mentors. There will be a McNeil Center Friday seminar from 3 to 5 p.m. (EST) via Zoom to end the day.

Conference, April 23–24, 2021:

The second event is a 1½ 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 with academic schedules that do not readily align with a student being able to present a formal paper by April. Students should note the option for which they are applying in their application materials. Please note that the less formal option will be limited to two to three students, with the majority of spaces reserved for traditional formal papers. All students will meet informally with the MCEAS Friday seminar presenter for April 23 and then attend the seminar. The conference takes place the next day, April 24.

Accommodations & Travel:

Students will not receive travel or lodging support this year because all events will be held online.

Application Procedure:

Applicants must submit the following to their faculty advisor: 1) a cover sheet with applicant's name, 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 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 in an e-mail with the subject line "Application: MCEAS URW 2021" to mceas@sas.upenn.edu by December 15, 2020.