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# The Center for the History of the New America

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## Center Part of \$1.25 Million Mellon Grant Project



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In July 2015, the Center for the History of the New America—in partnership with the College of Arts and Humanities (ARHU), the Arts and Humanities Center for Synergy, and the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities—was awarded a \$1.25 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to fund research, education, and training at the intersections of digital humanities and African American studies.

The grant, *Synergies among Digital Humanities and African American History and Culture: An Integrated Research and Training Model*, will expand the Center's research agen-

da by engaging scholars and students in the digital humanities and in African American history and cultural studies.

The grant will fund work exploring African American labor, migration, and artistic expression—topics that incorporate broad intellectual interests shared by many scholars, students, and staff at UMD.

Specific research projects will be undertaken in collaboration with the Center, the David C. Driskell Center for the Study of Visual Art and Culture of African Americans and the African Diaspora (with its collection of over 50,000 objects that chronicle the development and understand-

ing of the study of African American visual culture), and the UMD libraries' recently acquired George Meany Memorial AFL-CIO Archive, a preeminent research collection for the study of American labor history.

The grant also includes money to run workshops, to deliver public programming, to support faculty research, and to integrate digital work into a number of innovative undergraduate curricular initiatives.

The Center will connect its work on the grant project to its expanding Archive of Immigrant Voices oral history repository.

**BLACK  
LIVES  
MATTER**

*Fall's  
Events  
Included  
Panels  
Exploring  
the Political  
and  
Cultural  
Experiences  
of  
Migration*

**Fall 2015 Events**

The Center hosted and co-sponsored a wide variety of events in the Fall 2015 semester, drawing in audiences of students, faculty, policymakers, and community members.

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In October, the Center co-sponsored a roundtable event with the Asian American Studies Department, the Center for American Politics and Citizenship, and the Federal Bar Association to examine so-called "sanctuary cities." The panelists discussed communities working to provide safe havens for immigrants and larger debates about racial justice in the US today and in the past. Panelists included Mark Shmueli (former member of Governor's Commission to Study the

Impact of Immigration on the State of Maryland), Sameera Hafiz (National Domestic Worker's Alliance), and Antoine Banks (Professor of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland).

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In October, the Center co-sponsored an address by Alicia Garza, a leader of the #BlackLivesMatter movement. Garza discussed race and policing as part of the twenty-first century civil rights movement. In a separate luncheon, Garza spoke about her work as the Special Projects Director for the National Domestic Workers Alliance.

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In October, the Center convened a panel of experts to discuss the mi-

grant crisis in the Middle East and Europe which has transformed demographics and energizing debates about citizenship, identity, and human rights.

*2015: The Migrant Crisis and the Transformation of Europe* featured scholars specializing in European and Middle Eastern Studies, as well as a human rights lawyer working on migrant issues. The panel was co-sponsored by the Nathan and Jeannette Miller Center for Historical Studies.

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The Center also continued its popular Immigration in Film Series with a screening of *Can*, a documentary exploring refugees and mental illness.



## ***Remaking America: The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 and Its Impact Conference***

On November 12, 2015, the Center will host a one-day conference marking the fiftieth anniversary of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. The conference will explore the policy implications of the revised immigration framework created by

the Act, as well as the effects of the Act on communities in the United States and abroad.

Erika Lee, Director of the Immigration History Research Center and the Rudolph J. Vecoli Chair in Immigration History

at the University of Minnesota, will deliver a keynote address.

Invited speakers include Jennifer Bickham Mendez,, Nancy Foner, Christina Getrich, Christina Greer, Jan Padios, Rogers Smith, Sam Vong, and Ruth Wasem.



## **Organizing for Power & Workers' Rights in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

In April 2016, the Center will host a symposium exploring workers and organizing in the twenty-first century.

Attacks on the freedom to organize in the last several decades have created new challenges for working people. New creative approaches have

consequently emerged in sectors across the economy such as in domestic care, fast food, and big box merchandising.

This symposium seeks to examine all those areas while also placing them within the context of a rapidly globalizing environment.

In addition to the symposium, participants will be invited to view the newly acquired AFL-CIO Labor Archive at the University of Maryland.

***“What are the most effective strategies for organizing and supporting working people today and in the future?”***

## **Migration Exchanges Series Features Two Speakers**

This fall, the Center featured two speakers in its “Migration Exchanges” series which provides a forum for scholars to present their work to faculty, students, and staff.

In October, Thayse Lima shared her work examining the dialogues between Hispanic American and Brazilian cultural and literary critics during the second half of the twentieth century.

In November, Perla Guerrero presents her research on Mexican immigrants to the poultry factories of Arkansas.





We're on Facebook and Twitter!  
Follow us and we'll keep you  
informed of upcoming events!

*One of the Center's major goals is to serve as a source of outreach and community service to the University's surrounding communities.*

*The Center is making strides to bring its scholars and students into active engagement and dialogue with these communities and with their associations, advocacy groups, and media workers, as well as with individual members of the wide variety of ethnic groups in the region. It hopes to engage with high school students and teachers throughout the metropolitan area. The Center is seeking projects that will bring the University and local populations together.*

## Updates on the Center's Ongoing Research Projects

In March, the Center hosted a two-day workshop to explore future possibilities for the *Transforming the Afro-Caribbean World* digital humanities (DH) project. Invited scholars discussed potential sources for digitization and the DH tools that would bring to life the experiences of Afro-Caribbean migrants in the era of the construction of the Panama Canal.

The Center completed

the first stage of its research into K-12 social studies standards related to im/migration. Funded by a UMD-SI seed grant, the Center and the National Museum of American History (Smithsonian Institution) assessed the state of the field; preliminary research suggests that K-12 history standards related to immigration history are fragmented

and, in particular, very few states include the post-1965 history of immigration. The Center is working to expand the scope of the project with proposals for teacher training and for revision of K-12 standards related to immigration history.



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