

The Institute for Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies at UMass Amherst

Call for Faculty Fellowship Applications for 2018-2019

1948: A Global History

In the academic year 2018-2019, the Institute for Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies (IHGMS) at UMass Amherst will bring together an interdisciplinary group of scholars from the Five Colleges. This group of IHGMS Fellows will explore the topic of “1948: A Global History.” The project organizers are Alon Confino (director of the Institute and professor of History and of Judaic Studies at UMass) and Daniel Gordon (professor of history at UMass).

In and around 1948 several significant events took place that have shaped the world in which we now live. Fundamental transformations occurred on the local, national, and global levels in the wake of World War II. Some of the events that marked this period are: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted by the United Nations; the start of the Cold War, and the ideological fight pitting communism and capitalism; de-colonization and the end of European hegemony; the beginning of apartheid in South Africa; and the partitions of India/Pakistan and Palestine/Israel, with their forced migrations.

It was an era of massive yet contradictory change. Several events contributed to making the world more “global,” as we call it today, such as the foundation of the World Health Organization and of UNESCO. Yet, other trends intensified national aspirations and exclusions. Liberal democracy appeared triumphant, yet in 1947, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer revised and republished an earlier collaboration under a new title, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Here they argued that reason, progress, and even history itself were all mythologies.

Our aim is to bring together a group of about ten scholars who work on these or related topics and to meet periodically to share our respective visions of the years around 1948 as a watershed in history. The possible inclusion of selected graduate students will be discussed by the group at a later stage.

The project is open to Five College faculty in all disciplines, and to all relevant topics—the topics mentioned above and below are merely examples, not a full list of possibilities. The aim is to create a closely-knit scholarly environment for critical inquiry, debate, and exchange of ideas. The group will meet five times per semester (both Fall and Spring) over dinner at the IHGMS to discuss our research as individuals and to pool our efforts to conceptualize the era as a whole. We might discuss such questions as:

- How does this period mark the beginning of decolonization, and the simultaneous fashioning of new kinds of European supremacy?
- What was the relationship between efforts to promote universal values and institutions, on the one hand, and the proliferation of nationalist movements, on the other?
- What kinds of new ethnic and racial classifications emerged alongside of universalist ideas?

- How can comparative, trans-national analysis improve our understanding of the logic of partition, the creation of refugee populations, and other modes of separation, voluntary and imposed, that emerged in the late 1940s and early 1950s?
- What role did new forms of *media* play in shaping public perceptions and political policies?
- What new political and social *moods* emerged in this era and what were the consequences of these moods?

IHGMS Fellows will have opportunities to present their work in progress. They will also select and read together key contemporary documents. And they will interact with outside speakers-- the group has a budget to invite guest speakers over the year. An international workshop at the end of spring semester 2019 will conclude the fellowship.

Fellows will receive \$2,500 for research stipend. Fellows are expected to attend all of the meetings. Applications, including a two-page research proposal and a CV, should be emailed to ihgms@umass.edu by March 15, 2018.

If you have any questions please email Alon Confino (confino@umass.edu) and Daniel Gordon (dgordon@umass.edu).