



Research Clusters 2012-2013

Futures for Humanistic Learning

Convener: Tim Cassedy, Department of English

The initial focus of this research cluster will be on the digital humanities. In recent years, this cognomen has been applied to diverse activities, including scholarly collaboration through social media; attention to electronic texts and text technologies; online publication; the creation of repositories of data pertaining to history and literature; and the development of tools for manipulating such data. Scholars have recognized the potential of these practices to fundamentally change what humanists do. The events sponsored by this cluster will highlight current scholarship in digital humanities and hence address what is humanistic knowledge and what is its value for our present world.

Reframing African

Convener: Dayna Oscherwitz, Department of World Languages

This research cluster will examine how Africa, Africans, and African issues are currently represented or not represented within US higher education and more broadly in the US media, and seek ways that higher education, generally, and Dedman College, specifically, can work to create broader and more accurate awareness of Africa, Africans, and African issues. There will be two central questions explored by this cluster. First, how we might better coordinate, integrate, and disseminate the existing (and growing) body of research and teaching about Africa at SMU to create more in-depth knowledge among members of the university community, and second, how we might harness the growing African immigrant population in Dallas to promote that knowledge beyond the university walls. This cluster is planned as three to four roundtable discussions during the current academic year.

The 'World' in University Education

Convener: Steven Lindquist, Department of Religious Studies

The purpose of this research cluster is to explore the concepts of "world," "international," and "global" within higher education and how they might be conceived to best suit the needs of students and faculty of Dedman College, as well as the broader university. A central question is how might the myriad knowledges produced in different geographical areas and at different times (from peoples and institutions to languages and literatures to religions and cultures) fit into our larger educational strategy? How can we more broadly conceive of a world-oriented education to suit our needs and strengths and what are potential gaps that should be addressed? This cluster is planned as four roundtable discussions during the current academic year.