Kevin Young
CHANCELLOR’S DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER
in conversation with Frank Wilderson
(African American Studies)
Advisory Committee & Staff

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History

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Program Manager for Persian Studies and Jewish Studies

Alexa Lopez
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Erica Yun and Joo Hoon Sin
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RIGHT: Fund drive for FRESH Basic Needs Hub.
The Humanities Commons was launched in September, 2014, building on the track record of the Humanities Collective. For five years we have worked with many faculty, departments, and programs to develop new centers and clusters and to promote research and professional development in the School and beyond.

The Commons is about community. We are proud to have helped launch the School of Humanities Fund Drive for FRESH Basic Needs Hub, which raised over $20,000 from more than 90 donors in 2018. We were also thrilled to help design Asian Food Week and to host tea tastings in our own lobby. It has been one of the great honors and joys of my professional life to direct the Humanities Commons. I look forward to working with Judy and the amazing staff on many joint projects.

Judy Tzu-Chun Wu
Professor of Asian American Studies

I am honored to be the director of the new Humanities Center and am grateful for Julia Lupton's exemplary intellectual leadership and generosity. The HC will continue its work of supporting faculty and graduate research and professional development, fostering interdisciplinary intellectual synergies, and engaging in outreach to the broader public. In addition, the HC seeks to showcase humanities scholarship in helping us address pressing concerns of our time. After all, for the Humanities, the entire world is our laboratory.

For the 2019-2020 academic year, a year that overlaps with the 2020 census, the presidential election, and the 100th anniversary of U.S. women's suffrage, the Humanities Center will investigate the theme of “Borders and Belonging.” The contemporary political headlines signal a crisis in U.S. society and beyond regarding a desire to strengthen political and cultural borders and to demarcate who deserves belonging and human rights within nation-states. Please join us to consider how understandings of history, culture, and ethics, as well as science and technology, can help us respond to these pressing concerns regarding insiders and outsiders in an increasingly globalized world.
Research Centers & Clusters

Research clusters
Blackness and the Asian Century
Japan Studies
Knowledge, Technology, and Society
Queer Academy
Science, Technology, and Race
States of Wellness
University and State

School centers
Center for Early Cultures
Center for Critical Korean Studies
Center for Jewish Studies
Center for Legal Philosophy
Culture and Capital Center
Forum for the Academy and the Public
Latin American Studies Center
Shakespeare Center
UCI Critical Theory

Campus centers and initiatives
Center for Asian Studies
Center for Medical Humanities
Samuel Jordan Center for Persian Studies and Culture
International Center for Writing and Translation
**CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES**

The Center for Jewish Studies facilitates faculty and student research in Jewish history, culture, and society, and engages the Orange County community through lectures and programs. In 2018-19, the Center hosted the Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company from Israel, a lecture on “Empire and Antiquarianism” with Zvi Ben-Dor Benite (NYU), and a lecture on the politics of conversion in Israel by Leora Batnitzky (Princeton). The Center cosponsored a dramatic reading of a sixteenth-century Talmudic play. Janice Levi (UCLA) won our Graduate Student Essay Prize for her work on Jewish communities in Ghana.

**BLACK STUDIES: CONSORTIUM AND CLUSTERS**

The Black Studies Consortium curates discussions in contemporary critical thought on a global horizon, grounded in Black thought. This work cultivates new directions in the study of science and technology and philosophical and historiographical discussion of global-level matters of difference. At UCI, the Workshop on Science, Technology, and Race (STAR) hosted an event on Tarzan in twentieth-century America. The Workshop on Blackness and the Asian Century (BASIC) pursued projects in Japan, including publications and a conference at the International Christian University.

**LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES CENTER**

The LASC promotes dialogue and collaboration in the study of Latin America across disciplines and organizes educational activities on campus and off. In 2018-19, the Center organized and/or co-organized 27 academic events. Highlights included hosting the SoCal Brazilian Studies Conference, film screenings on campus and in Santa Ana, and talks on slavery (Brianna Simmons), Marxism and deconstruction (Bruno Bosteels), and state terror in Mexico (Alexander Aviña). The Center hosted a dissertation workshop for graduate students, and is working on a 4+1 Masters program with Chicano/Latino Studies and International Studies. The LASC is also pursuing international partnerships. The LASC received a California Humanities grant to support their film series.
JAPAN STUDIES
This research cluster aims to build Environmental and Sustainability Studies within the field of Japanese Studies. The cluster has received an Insitutional Project Support Grant from the Japan Foundation, which has funded a new line Japanese Environmental Humanities starting January 1, 2020. The grant also provides recruitment, summer language study, summer research, and dissertation language fellowships to 2-3 Ph.D. students annually. The Japan Studies cluster hosts an annual international Eco-Japan symposium. This year’s topic was “Japanese Environmental Humanities in the Desert,” held at UCI’s Anza Borrego Springs Research Center.

CENTER FOR CRITICAL KOREAN STUDIES
The CCKS promotes a deep understanding of Korea’s history and culture, thinking critically about Korea’s relationship to the Pacific Rim region and the world, and Korean language learning. In 2018-19, the CCKS held 24 academic and community events, including a reading by Min Jin Lee, author of Pachinko; two talks by scholars of K-Pop; and a conference on “War and Women’s Human Rights: Testimonies of the Comfort Women.” The center also provided two graduate student fellowships, three summer research/language study grants, one faculty research grant and one faculty publication support grant. The CCKS supported a postdoctoral scholar and hosted five visiting scholars from Korea.

CENTER FOR PERSIAN STUDIES
The Samuel Jordan Center for Persian Studies and Culture organizes activities related to the study of Iran and the Persianate world. In 2018-2019, the Center presented the Docunight Iranian series movie screening every month and a screening of “Tehran Tourist,” musical performances by Del Sol Quartet Concert and Mohsen Namjoo at the Barclay Theater, and numerous lectures such as “The Crucible of Empire” series in collaboration with Oxford University. International conferences included “Feasting Iranian Style,” “The Heart of Iran”, and the Armeno-Iranica Conference. The Center hosted Persian language classes for children and philosophy classes for adults, as well as collaborating with community organizations to present the Celebration of Iranian Cinema, Celebrating International Women’s Day, and the 2nd Annual Children Persian Book Festival.
The Center is comprised of more than 40 faculty members who study China, Japan, Korea, South Asia and Southeast Asia; its mission is to enhance the study of the many countries and cultures of Asia. The center provides a forum for discussions across geographic and disciplinary boundaries both on campus and within the community. Activities this year have included a series of talks by Asianists at UCI and in the region; Access Asia, a monthly forum for Asianists on campus; Asian Food Week; Lunar New Year activities; and a conference on the Chinese New Culture movement of the early twentieth century.

HOW TEA TRAVELS was one of five events featured in Asian Food Week and coordinated by the Humanities Commons and the Center for Asian Studies, in cooperation with other centers and programs, including the Center for Critical Korean Studies, the Center for Persian Studies, and Illuminations: The Chancellor’s Arts and Culture Initiative. Other activities included Foods of Japan and Korean Noodles and K-Pop, at the Anteater Recreation Center Test Kitchen.
**CULTURE AND CAPITAL CENTER**
How and in what way do cultural objects—novels and poems no less than TV programs, film, and video games—express the conditions that give rise to their production? The Culture and Capital Center aims to understand how the changing dynamics of capital accumulation transform and are mediated by the culture industry and its study within the university.
We take up the political economy of cultural production in developed and underdeveloped nations alike, even as we study the increasingly transnational nature of cultural production and consumption—as both take shape not so much in as between different nations, regions, and continents.
Events this year included reading groups and a residency with Melinda Cooper (University of Sydney).

**CENTER FOR EARLY CULTURES**
The Center for Early Cultures provides support for faculty teaching and research at UCI in historical studies and provides an intellectual and social space for both faculty and graduate student scholars to interact and exchange ideas. Focusing on classical, medieval and early modern temporal eras, the Center for Early Cultures highlights the indispensable and intellectually rigorous contributions that historical studies across disciplines offer to academic discourses in the humanities. In 2018-19 we hosted talks by Lori Anne Ferrell, Alison McQueen, and Kristen Block. Our annual graduate student conference addressed profanity in early cultures.

**UCI SHAKESPEARE CENTER**
The UCI Shakespeare Center aims to share the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries with the campus and community. Events in 2018-19 included public programming for New Swan Shakespeare Festival; collaborations with the UCI Libraries around the First Folio; community reading groups held throughout Orange County; and lectures and symposia that bring scholarship and performance together. The Kirk Davis Jr. Annual Public Shakespeare Lecture featured Seth Lerer (UCSD) and Musicians in Ordinary, for a lecture/concert. We partnered with the Irvine Barclay Theatre on National Theatre Live! screenings. We raised money in the community to support graduate students and local teachers. A scholarly volume, *Face to Face in Shakespearean Drama*, is coming out in 2019.
**CENTER FOR MEDICAL HUMANITIES**

The Center for Medical Humanities advances the understanding of health, healing, and well-being while serving as a campus hub for exploring and probing the arc of living and dying from a range of disciplinary perspectives. This year the Center awarded over $16,000 for individual and collaborative research projects, conference support, and community engagement initiatives. Campus events included: a launch celebrating the bicentennial of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, a seminar and lecture from renowned disabilities scholar Dr. Karen Nakamura (UC Berkeley), and a talk exploring the intersection of medicine, journalism, and empathy by Jon LaPook, medical doctor and chief medical correspondent for CBS News [RIGHT].

**STATES OF WELLNESS**

The research group States of Wellness went on Bungacast to record podcasts about the research of graduate students Thomas Williams, Michael Mahoney and Ben Krueger-Robbins. Their approaches to their respective topics—depression and economic crisis, Big Pharma and the DSM diagnostic categories and AIDS and the branding of NBC during the Reagan years—were unabashedly polemical and historical. The podcasts critiqued the ways in which health has been commodified as ‘wellness’ — a term that encompasses the ideals of self care foisted upon societies that travail under the burden of neoliberalism and its austerity policies.

**CENTER FOR LEGAL PHILOSOPHY**

The Center for Legal Philosophy fosters the work of UC Irvine scholars who scrutinize legal practice through the interpretive lenses of the humanities, particularly that of philosophy. A related aim is to expand the profile of UCI in the dynamic and growing field of jurisprudence, as legal philosophy or critical legal theory are often called. The center’s highlight this year was a conference on rights centered on the book *Rights and Demands: A Foundational Inquiry* (Oxford University Press: 2018), by UCI Melden Professor Margaret Gilbert [RIGHT]. The conference drew preeminent scholars of rights and ethics to a spirited two-day event in which the meaning and scope of rights, including legal and human rights, and even social and moral norms in general, were vigorously dissected and debated.
QUEER ACADEMY
This research cluster was formed by graduate students who sit at the margins, to explore the implications of de-centering normative modes of being in the academy and in academic processes. Representational politics do not suffice in making higher education accessible and safe for people from marginalized communities, because the oppressive systems that we study and live within permeate the terms of our education. The Queer Academy organized workshops on Pedagogy, Queer Moments in Life and Work, Interdisciplinarity, Refusing Clear Distinctions, and a summit with the Deans of Humanities, Arts, and Social Science.

UNIVERSITY AND STATE
This research cluster is dedicated to understanding how state institutions operate, by critically reflecting on the ideals and aims of scholarship. The group organizes events and promotes modes of critical writing and publishing that traditional forms of social critique often miss for want of interrogating their own relationship to the state. The group undertook collaborative archival research at UCSD and UCR with the help of a UCHRI grant. The group also hosted a conference on the state as fetish, a workshop with the University of Chicago Press, and another workshop on virtuousity, in cooperation with the UCHRI’s Horizons of the Humanities and the Universidad Complutense de Madrid’s Department of the History of Philosophy.

KNOWLEDGE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY
This research cluster hosted the Southern California Epistemology Network. Through the Provost’s Initiative on Understanding and Engaging with Extremism, Duncan Pritchard (Philosophy [RIGHT]) has created and launched a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) on Relativism and Scepticism. The MOOC is the cornerstone of a new campuswide project, “Integrating Intellectual Virtues into the UCI Curriculum and Co-Curriculum.” The success of cluster activities has already had an impact, with UCI jumping to a ranking of 9th in the world for epistemology in the 2017 international rankings of philosophy graduate programs.
KOREAN COMFORT WOMEN AND THE U.S. DISCOVERIES highlighted newly discovered U.S. archival materials on Korean comfort women with supporting documentary film clips and book displays. This UCI Libraries exhibit was produced in collaboration with Professor Chungmoo Choi, UCI’s Department of East Asian Studies, and the Center for Critical Korean Studies. June, 2019.
MINISEMINARS

RANJAN GHOSH
The Plastic Turn
October 8, 2018

NINA POWER
Voice, Noise, Silence, the City, Nature

The Ecstasy of Noise: Silence and Sacred beyond Cacophonic Modernity
April 9, 10, and 11, 2019

KOEHN LECTURE

SYLVIA FEDERICI
The Legacy of Marx’s Work in 21st-Century Politics and Feminism
November 14, 2018

WELLEK LECTURES

GEORGES DIDI-HUBERMAN
How Try Tell? A Short Journey into the Papers of the Warsaw Ghetto
May 28, 29, and 30, 2019
The Forum brings scholars together with journalists as well as novelists, cartoonists, comedians, and other public intellectuals from outside of the academy, to explore and debate current issues in politics and culture through public events and writing residencies.

This year’s conference, **FIRE AND ICE: THE SHIFTING NARRATIVE OF CLIMATE CHANGE**, featured Bill McKibben [right], Elizabeth Kolbert, James Gleick, and Nathaniel Rich, among others. The Forum also sponsors pop-up events that respond to current events, such as this year’s panel on the controversies around the Brett Kavanaugh Supreme Court nomination.
Digital Humanities Working Group

The Digital Humanities Working Group sponsors conversations and skills development around humanities and computing. Led by Madelynn Dickerson (UCI Libraries) and Dwayne Pack (Humanities Computing) in 2018-19, the DHWG sponsored workshops and social hours for humanities faculty, graduate students and staff interested in building skills and awareness of digital methods.

11/1/2018 A Gentle Introduction to Voyant Tools
2/5/2019 JSTOR Data for Research Live Webinar
3/7/2019 StoryMapJS Workshop
3/8/2019 Evoke Lab and Studio Tour
5/7/2019 Formatting in Word
5/30/2019 New Paths in Digital Humanities with Fulbright Scholar Tamas Scheibner
Presses and Publishing

Kate Marshall (UC Press) [RIGHT] ran a workshop on revising dissertations into books. Students from Humanities and Social Sciences as well as faculty and alumni attended. Judy Tzu-Chun Wu (LEFT) is on the Press’s advisory board and also attended.

The School of Humanities sent four graduate students and one undergraduate to the Los Angeles Review of Book’s Publishing Workshop. During an intensive three-week summer program on USC’s campus, Workshop Fellows work with industry professionals who are at the top of their fields and leading transformations in traditional and digital publishing.

Through lectures, seminars, and practical instruction, Fellows learn the foundations of book, magazine, and online editing and production; digital and print publishing; SEO and audience metrics; and the financial and business aspects of the industry.
Featured faculty publication grants

Alex Borucki, ed. With David Eltis and David Wheat, *From the Galleons to the Highlands: Slave Trade Routes in Spanish America* (University of New Mexico Press)

The essays in this book demonstrate the importance of transatlantic and intra-American slave trafficking in the development of colonial Spanish America, highlighting the Spanish colonies’ previously underestimated significance within the broader history of the slave trade. Spanish America not only received African captives directly via the transatlantic slave trade, but also from slave markets in the Portuguese, English, Dutch, French, and Danish Americas, ultimately absorbing more enslaved Africans than any other imperial jurisdiction in the Americas except Brazil.

Bliss Cua Lim, *The Archival Afterlives of Philippine Cinema* (Duke University Press)

This monograph, forthcoming in the Camera Obscura book series at Duke University Press, is about the crises that beset Philippine cinema’s dwindling film archive. To take one particularly stark statistic, of over 350 films domestically produced during the Spanish and American colonial periods, prior to the outbreak of World War II, only five full-length feature films survive; of the silent film era, nothing remains. The book reconstitutes histories of institutional ephemerality and crucial struggles between the state and private corporations that shaped the nation’s much-diminished cinematic reservoir.
**Featured graduate student fellowships**


**Amanda Mixon**, PhD candidate in Comparative Literature, was awarded an AAUW American Dissertation Fellowship for “Queerer, My God, to Thee: 20th-Century White Southern Lesbian Writers and Antiracist Praxis.” Amanda’s dissertation frames Lillian Smith, Rita Mae Brown, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Mab Segrest, and Dorothy Allison as a distinct political tradition concerned with how people are trained to inhabit and (re)produce whiteness.
TH!NK

Designed and directed by Marcello Fiocco (Philosophy) [LEFT], TH!NK introduces elementary school students to philosophical thought and discourse, in four schools in Irvine and Costa Mesa. In 2018-19, iRH!NK was hosted in six schools in four school districts. Two of these schools are Title 1. TH!NK was also run as part of the after-school program at the Kidseum in Santa Ana (administered by the Bowers Museum).

BELOW: Yumi Zhao, Brenna Perez and Freddy Guzman, H. O. T. interns at the Bowers Kidseum
**Humanities Out There**

Humanities Out There was founded in 1997 as an educational partnership between UCI’s School of Humanities and local schools. Undergraduate interns provide homework help at the Bowers Kidseum in Santa Ana. Our incoming Teaching Fellow is Miguel Ramon (English) [RIGHT].

**LEFT:** Sean Beall (History ’18) discovered his passion for education as an intern for H. O. T. He worked at the Kidseum after graduation and is returning to UCI for an MA in Education.

**RIGHT:** Alden Wood (English PhD ’19) has completed two years as our H.O.T. Teaching Fellow. He has accepted a tenure-track appointment in English at Rice University.
FACULTY LEARNING COMMUNITY

Laura Mitchell (History) [RIGHT] led a year-long Faculty Learning Community for the Humanities. The FLC provided members with space and a support network that extends outside of their departments to share teaching practices. The FLC focused on the student experience of reading. Through investigation of available scholarship, sharing resources, and workshopping syllabi and lesson plans, faculty developed specific strategies for classes across the School, from introductory and general education courses to specialized seminars for majors.

PEDAGOGY CERTIFICATE

Pedagogical Fellows Anandi Rao (Comp Lit) and Alden Sajor Wood (English) ran a six-session certificate program in active learning. Thirty-one humanities graduate students completed the training.

PEDAGOGY SKILL SHARES

Three skill-shares featured the innovative teaching of humanities graduate students and lecturers. Many volunteers came from the Mellon 5+2 program and are also Pedagogical Fellows in the School.

LEFT: Anandi Rao (Comp Lit), Claire Gordon (History), and Tamara Beauchamp (Core).
Through a partnership with Ridge2Reef, an NSF project directed by Steven Allison (Evolutionary Biology and Ecology), the Humanities Commons sponsored a series of events on science writing and climate communication.
ILLUMINATIONS: THE CHANCELLOR’S ARTS AND CULTURE INITIATIVE was launched in 2016 to promote cultural programming and performance opportunities across campus. Humanities faculty have taken the lead in applying for grants to support film series, visiting artists, and undergraduate research and creative inquiry. The ILLUMINATIONS AUTHOR SERIES works with English, African American Studies, Asian American Studies, Lower Division Writing, and other units to bring compelling speakers to campus. COOKING WITH THE PROFESSOR, founded by Yong Chen (History), has spawned other food-related programs at the Anteater Recreation Center Test Kitchen [RIGHT].

ABOVE: BENJAMIN BALINT, author of *Kafka’s Last Trial*, with Julia Lupton, (English), Rebecca Sacks (MFA) and Scott Lerner (MFA).

LEFT: Kevin Young, Poet, New Yorker Editor, and Director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, was a Chancellor’s Distinguished Speaker for 2018-19.

BELOW: The Buddhist Table, part of The Virtuous Table, funded by the Confronting Extremism Initiative and co-sponsored by Religious Studies.
EXHIBITION
This exhibit paired eight poems by Jonathan Alexander (English) and panoramic paintings by Antoinette LaFarge (Art), bringing to life the story of a young gay man arriving in New Orleans in the late 1950s to start a new life.

CONVERSATION KITCHEN
hosted by Adriana Michelle Campos Johnson (Comp Lit) and Alex Borucki (History), for the Latin American Studies Center with music, food, and lots of talk.

PANEL
on the new label “Latinx” hosted by Roderigo Lazo (English) and Humanities Core

SYMPOSIUM AND WORKSHOPS
curated by Daniel Gross (English) and Jonathan Alexander (English) co-sponsored by the Office of the Campuswide Writing Coordinator and a grant from the Humanities Commons
The UCI Humanities Center: Ideas that Matter

In the UCI Humanities Center, you will find innovative collaborations that:

**Spark new knowledge**
The Humanities Center provides our faculty and graduate students with financial resources, staffing support, and grant-writing consultation as they pursue human-centered responses to the grand challenges of our time.

**Launch vibrant intellectual communities**
The Humanities Center fosters the ethos of interdisciplinary collaboration by sponsoring learning communities, public events, conferences and research centers.

**Inspire conversations that matter**
The Humanities Center is driven by the combined creative power of our faculty and students, internationally renowned visiting fellows, and members of the public passionately learning about and debating ideas that matter.

FRONT COVER: Kevin Young in conversation with Frank Wilderson. Photo by Steve Zylius.
BACK COVER: Photo by Judy Wu.

https://www.humanities.uci.edu/humanitiescenter/