Application for the

NEH 2017
Summer Seminar for Faculty
“Housing, Race, and Inequality in Modern America”

June 11-July 8, 2017
SUNY Potsdam

Seminar Leader:
Tracy E. K’Meyer
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University of Louisville

Applications due by January 15, 2017
to
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NEH Seminar on Housing, Race, and Inequality in Modern American

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Seminar Description:

In response to the 2015 killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and the not-guilty verdict in the trial of the white policeman who shot him, African American journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates wrote a public letter to his son in which he contrasted the “Dream” that is “perfect houses with nice lawns,” “Memorial Day cookouts, block associations and driveways,” and “treehouses and the Cub Scouts” with the reality of his inner city neighborhood in Baltimore, where fear permeated the houses, music, postures, and relationships of his family and friends. When Coates chose to explain the division between “America” and African Americans that led to blood on the street and injustice in the court through the juxtaposition of the idealized suburbs and his reality in a low income black community, he personalized what historians and other scholars have argued about housing: that how and where people live is central to racial inequality and to the conflicts around race and poverty in modern America. Throughout the twentieth century, residential segregation has concentrated people of color and low income families in constricted urban neighborhoods or, increasingly, in older, close-in suburbs, while whites and the more wealthy move further out into newer communities. Over thirty years of federal, state and local policy and private actions created this pattern, and forty-plus years since the Fair Housing Act have done little to change it. This divide has myriad social and economic consequences. In most communities, residence determines where children go to school and the quality of education they receive. Poor urban neighborhoods receive fewer services, and are “food deserts” where fresh, healthy food can be harder to come by. Such areas are more likely to suffer air and water pollution. And, in the age of declining city budgets, reduced public transportation can mean restricted access to jobs and healthcare. More philosophically, living separately breeds a lack of understanding and sympathy, contributing to the racial and class polarization seen in response to the events in Ferguson and elsewhere. We are living in a moment when there is an urgent need to understand the political, social and cultural forces that produced residential segregation, and to explore ways to overcome the resulting inequities.

This seminar will introduce the participants to the scholarship on the causes of residential segregation, the relatively unheralded efforts to overcome it, and connection between unfair housing and broader social inequalities. Moreover, we will seek to go beyond a discussion of policy and explore questions of how segregated neighborhoods were experienced and remembered. The seminar will open with historical works documenting how government policy and private practices created and buttressed residential segregation in both urban and suburban contexts. Participants will employ a variety of sources, including oral histories, photographs,
ethnography, literary analysis, and histories, as windows to the experience of living in a divided society. The seminar will then turn to the struggle to break down segregation, with readings about the neighborhood organizing to create and protect integration, efforts to pass fair housing legislation, and faltering attempts to enforce the Fair Housing Act on both a federal and local level. The seminar will conclude with readings about the role of housing segregation in producing contemporary social inequalities. During the seminar participants will prepare an individual presentation that links the themes of the reading with their experience with segregation/integration in their own childhood neighborhood.

**Week 1: Post World War II Segregation in Housing.**
During this week we will get acquainted and go over the individual project. Then we will turn to the question: how did racial segregation in housing develop in the postwar era? More specifically, what was the relative importance of public policy and private behavior?

Tuesday/The Suburbs:
Introductions
Individual project directions
Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, p. 190-218
David Freund, *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics*, p. 244-381
Stephen Grant Meyer, “Keep this Neighborhood White,” introduction to *As Long As They Don’t Move Next Door*, p. 1-12

Thursday/The City:
Kevin M. Kruse, “‘Going Colored’: The Struggle over Race and Residence in the Urban South,” in *We Shall Independent Be,* African American Place-Making and the Struggle to Claim Space in the United States, p. 199-222

**Week 2: The Experience of Segregation**
This week the seminar will focus on the social/economic/cultural/political conditions in residentially segregated communities, primarily in the period before the 1968 Fair Housing Act. In particular we will discuss, how do we know? What are different windows into the experience in these communities? What kinds of sources and perspectives can we use? What kinds of sources might be used to understand our own childhood community?
Tuesday/In the Suburbs:

Thursday/In the City:
OR
selection of website exhibits on pre-1970 African American urban neighborhoods

**Week 3: Integrating Housing**
Equal opportunity in housing, or “Fair Housing” as it was called by advocates, was one of the most difficult challenges faced by the civil rights movement. In this week we will discuss the efforts of “fair housers” to achieve integration during the period before and after the passage of the 1968 Fair Housing Act.

Tuesday: The Open Housing Movement
Mary Lou Finley et al, *The Chicago Freedom Movement: Martin Luther King Jr., and Civil Rights Activism in the North* (2016) about 350 pages

Thursday: Bottom Up and Top Down
Christopher Bonastia, *Knocking on the Door: The Federal Government’s Attempt to Desegregate the Suburbs*, p. 91-143

**Week 4: Impacts**
In this final week we will examine the extent to which American communities remain segregated, and how that persistence continues to impact low income and minority communities today. We will also hear the participants’ presentations of their individual projects.

Tuesday:
Individual presentations
If time begin discussion of impacts

Thursday:
Complete discussion of impacts

Each participant will choose one topic listed below and read suggested articles on that topic. Participants may do additional reading as they see fit. Discussion will consist of participants sharing what they learned about their chosen area. Topics:
Changes in the suburbs
Schools
Individual Presentation Project:
Although housing choice—or lack of it—fundamentally shapes life experiences from education to social group to access to jobs, healthcare, transportation, and healthy food, most of us as children likely were not aware of the forces shaping the demography of our own neighborhoods nor have considered how that impacted our lives. In order to bring together the different questions and types of sources encountered in the seminar, each participant will make a short presentation for the seminar about the racial/ethnic/class make up of a community in which you lived before graduating high school. The presentation can emphasize whatever themes and take whatever form the participant chooses. Some things to think about:

- How would you characterize the community: urban, suburban, small town; segregated or integrated; demographic breakdown?
- When and how was the community created/built?
- What are your memories of who lived nearby?
- What sources could be used to access the experience of living there?
- How did living there impact your life experience?
- What is that community like now? How has it changed? Why or why not?
- Reflection on how your own housing experience reflects the themes in the seminar readings
APPLICATION
SUNY Potsdam NEH Faculty Development Program
Summer Seminar for Faculty

Our summer seminar is offered to faculty of the Associated Colleges of the St. Lawrence Valley (SUNY Potsdam, Clarkson University, St. Lawrence University, and SUNY Canton). The seminars provide area faculty with a valuable opportunity to enrich their knowledge of the subjects that they teach and research by working with distinguished outside experts, by studying alongside other instructors and scholars, and by undertaking individual projects of their own design.

There are up to eight participants selected for each seminar. Through research, reflection, and discussion with the seminar director and with other seminar members, participants have an opportunity to deepen their understanding of their field and to improve their ability to convey that understanding to others. Participants are expected to take part fully in the work of the seminar and to complete all seminar projects.

Although writing may be encouraged by seminar directors, lengthy papers typical of graduate courses are not required. Seminar topics are broad enough to accommodate a wide range of interests. The topics allow participants to address significant questions, explore major texts, and extend their thinking beyond disciplinary concerns.

Eligibility

To be eligible applicants must be members of the faculty of SUNY Potsdam or faculty of one of the Associated Colleges. Faculty members who have participated in previous SUNY Potsdam NEH Seminars are eligible to apply, but preference will be given to those who have not previously participated.

Selection Criteria

The selection committee will review applications and select participants on the basis of (1) the applicant’s qualifications to do the work of the seminar and make a contribution to it; (2) the conception and organization of the applicant’s proposed study project in relation to the seminar topic; (3) the potential value of that project to other members of the seminar.

Stipend and Conditions of Award

Individuals selected to participate in the four-week seminar will receive a stipend of
$3,000 and an allowance of up to $500 for purchase of library books and travel related to the seminar project.

Participants are required to attend all seminar sessions and to engage fully in the work of the seminar. During the tenure of the seminar they may not undertake other professional duties that will interfere with their participation in the seminar (in particular, they may not be teaching Summer School in tandem with participating in the seminar).

Immediately following the completion of the seminar, participants will be asked to submit an evaluation. In addition, ten months following the seminar, participants will provide an evaluation of the impact the seminar had on their profession development with particulars about papers given, scholarship published, and curricula projects implemented as a result of participation in the seminar.

Applications may be submitted by ordinary post to the NEH Program Chair, Professor Geoffrey Clark, Dept. of History, Satterlee Hall, SUNY Potsdam, 44 Pierrepont Ave., Potsdam, NY 13676. Alternatively, applications may be submitted electronically to the NEH Chair by email at clarkgw@potsdam.edu. If submitting electronically, please include all application materials in the proper order in ONE Word file and include your last name in the file name.

APPLICATION MATERIALS

Please assemble your application by drafting the following documents:

1. Application Cover Sheet, to include:
   - Applicant's Title and Name
   - Home Address
   - Work Address
   - Telephones: Cell, Home, and Work
   - Academic Discipline of Applicant

2. Description of Objectives

   Applicants must write an essay describing their objectives in applying to the seminar. Close attention should be given to the preparation of the description of objectives because it will be considered carefully by the committee members as they make their selections. This essay should include any relevant personal and academic information. The essay should address reasons for applying to the seminar; the applicant's interest, both academic and personal, in the subject of the seminar, qualifications to do the work of the seminar and to make a contribution to it; what the applicant wants to accomplish in the
The relation of the seminar to the applicant's professional responsibilities. The descriptive material provided about the seminar should be read carefully because the committee may request that particular information be given in the description of objectives.

The application essay should be NO MORE THAN three to four double-spaced pages. Be sure to address the following questions in relation to the proposed project:

a. The specific study, research, or curricular project, including the basic ideas, problems, and questions that are of interest, with a specific concrete plan of investigation and a statement of its rationale.

b. If the proposed project is part of a long-term undertaking, the present state of the larger undertaking and how the summer project fits in.

c. The relation of the study to the applicant's immediate and long-range objectives as a teacher and scholar.

d. Other information relevant to the proposed project.

3. Professional History

An application must include the professional history form (included below). A c.v. may be attached but cannot take the place of the professional history.
Professional History Form

1. Applicant’s Name and Institutional Affiliation (include department).

2. Applicant’s Field of Specialization

3. Full Time ________ Part Time _______

4. Number of Years Teaching __________

5. Education (list institutions, dates of attendance, major field and graduate degrees)

6. Graduate Work in field of seminar

7. Teaching/Research interests in field of seminar
8. Sabbatical Leaves or other released time for research or study (specify when, where, and for what purpose)

9. Employment History (give institutions, dates, major responsibilities)

10. Courses Taught during the last two years

11. Academic Awards and Grants (mention any special awards or professional distinctions)
12. Previous SUNY Potsdam NEH Seminars in which you have participated

13. Most significant Publications and Professional Activities (This list should be selective, not exhaustive.)