



Liesl Olson, Director
Dr. William M. Scholl Center for American History and Culture
Newberry Library
60 West Walton Street
Chicago, IL 60610

October 12, 2012

Dear Colleague,

I am delighted to learn of your interest in the NEH summer institute, *Making Modernism: Literature and Culture in Twentieth-Century Chicago, 1893-1955*. This institute will bring together twenty-five college and university faculty to explore Chicago's profound influence on the literature and culture of the twentieth century. The institute will be based at the [Newberry](#), an independent research library at the center of Chicago's rich cultural life.

The goal of *Making Modernism* is to understand the literature of Chicago in connection with the urban, economic, and cultural history of the city. The institute will deepen our knowledge of the international impact of Chicago's cultural innovations by illuminating how the literature of Chicago was connected to developments across the arts. Drawing upon scholarship that locates modernist aesthetics in the growth of the urban metropolis, the institute will place Chicago at the center of a new modernist geography.

Making Modernism will emphasize four thematic lines of inquiry: (1) the geographic centrality of Chicago both locally and internationally; (2) modernism's distinctive reception history in Chicago; (3) the historically overlooked women in Chicago who served as important cultural arbiters; and (4) the connections between the "Chicago Renaissance" in the arts, which occurred between 1910 and the mid-1920s, and the "Chicago Black Renaissance," which began in the 1930s and continued through mid-century.

Making Modernism will provide summer scholars with a special opportunity to explore Chicago through both the Newberry's archive and the experience of the city itself. From the records of Chicago's newspapers and journalists, clubs and arts organizations, famous and not-so-famous writers, editors, artists, book designers, and publishers, the Newberry Library's collections on this topic are unsurpassed. Individual research supported by the Newberry's collections, for example, might include projects focused on the 1893 World's Fair, the social and cultural history of Chicago, modern art history, Chicago and Midwestern writers, twentieth-century journalism, Chicago Black Renaissance, and Midwestern book arts and print culture. Particularly relevant collections include the papers of Sherwood Anderson, the Arts Club, Fanny Butcher, Floyd Dell, the Dill Pickle Club, Henry Blake Fuller, Harry Hansen, Ben Hecht, and Ernest Hemingway. For an overview of these collections please see: <http://mms.newberry.org/default.asp>

Each week of the institute will also include site visits to Chicago's museums, clubs, neighborhoods, and landmarks, including the [Art Institute of Chicago](#), the [Arts Club](#), and the

[Poetry Foundation](#) (all within a two-mile radius of the Newberry). There also will be organized trips to the south side of Chicago to visit the Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature at the [Carter G. Woodson Library](#), the oldest and largest African American Studies repository in the Midwest.

II. Project Faculty

Making Modernism will be directed by [Liesl Olson](#), a literary scholar and Director of the Dr. William M. Scholl Center for American History and Culture at the Newberry. Meetings will be held at the Newberry in the mornings, and individual research will be conducted at the Newberry in the afternoons. The institute will feature a group of invited and in-house faculty members from the fields of literature, history, art history, print culture, and African-American studies. Faculty members include:

[Carl Smith](#), Franklyn Bliss Snyder Professor of English and American Studies, Northwestern University. Among many scholarly and popular books on Chicago's history and culture, Smith has written what is still considered the most important account of Chicago's early-twentieth-century writers, *Chicago and the American Literary Imagination, 1880-1920* (1984).

[Neil Harris](#), Preston and Sterling Morton Professor of History and of Art History, The University of Chicago. Harris's voluminous work has focused on American art, artists, and art collecting, on the history of technology, architecture, city planning, and design; on American entertainment; the development of American museums; and world's fairs.

[Tim Spears](#), Professor of American Studies and Vice President for Administration, Middlebury College. Spears's book *Chicago Dreaming* (2005) brings to light the internal desires that lured Midwestern migrants to the city as well as the nostalgia that led them to dream of the homes they left behind. His research and teaching also illuminate the work of many twentieth-century Chicago and Midwestern writers.

[Bill Savage](#), Distinguished Senior Lecturer in English, Northwestern University. Savage's breadth of knowledge about Chicago literature includes an attention to Chicago's newspaper culture. Savage is also an editor for the University of Chicago's series of nonfiction books about Chicago.

[Jacqueline Goldsby](#), Professor of English and African-American Studies, Yale University. Prize-winning author of *A Spectacular Secret: Lynching in American Life and Literature* (2006), Goldsby is currently working on a new book called *Birth of the Cool: African American Literary Culture of the 1940s and 1950s*, which looks at the regenerative aesthetic life that Jim Crow segregation gave rise to during the mid-twentieth-century. Chicago is a particular point of focus for Goldsby, and no scholar has done as much in uncovering in archives, museums, and community institutions the cultural ferment of Black Chicago.

[Martha Briggs](#), Lloyd Lewis Curator of Modern Manuscripts, The Newberry Library. Briggs's research specialty lies in United States social history. More than 800 manuscript and archival collections (including railroad collections, the Midwest Manuscript Collection, the Ayer Modern Manuscript Collection, and the Newberry Library Archives) fall under her jurisdiction.

[Paul F. Gehl](#), Custodian of the Wing Foundation on the History of Printing, The Newberry Library. Gehl is responsible for one of the largest collections on printing history, calligraphy, and design in North America. He is also a historian of education. He has published extensively on manuscript and printed textbooks of the Renaissance, on the book trade, and on modern fine printing and artist's books.

Site visit faculty include:

Sarah Kelly Oehler, Henry and Gilda Buchbinder Associate Curator of American Art, Art Institute of Chicago, Department of American Art. Oehler has contributed to numerous exhibitions and publications at the Art Institute, including *They Seek a City: Chicago and the Art of Migration, 1910–1950*.

Paul Durica, Doctoral Candidate in English Literature, The University of Chicago. Durica has created unique tours of historical Chicago, developed out of his doctoral research on American literature. See: <http://pocketguidetohell.tumblr.com/>

Janine Mileaf, Director, Arts Club of Chicago. Mileaf is an expert in modern European and American art, in particular interwar years, and in the history of photography.

Scholl Center staff include:

Christopher Cantwell, Assistant Director. A United States historian who specializes in religion, politics, and social life, Cantwell is currently at work on a book on rise of evangelicalism in American politics titled *The Bible Class Teacher: Piety and Politics in the Age of Fundamentalism*.

Carmen Jaramillo, Program Assistant. Jaramillo graduated in 2010 from the University of Chicago with degrees in English and French, and currently studies digital history and humanities.

III. Schedule Overview

The four-week institute will be held at the Newberry from June 17-July 12, 2013. Each morning, summer scholars will attend three-hour sessions led by the director, invited faculty, or in-house faculty. The first half of these sessions will usually be an hour-long discussion of the research of these faculty members. After a break, the group will share their own research related to the presentation, and focus on particular assigned readings. In some instances, session leaders may select to view a number of items from Newberry collections related to the morning's topic. Summer scholars also will have the opportunity to meet and discuss their interests with faculty during informal lunches and individual conferences. On most afternoons, summer scholars will have time for sustained research in the Newberry's collections.

Required readings to be completed in advance of the institute include selected articles by the institute's faculty, which will be distributed to summer scholars several months before the start of the institute. Summer scholars also will be urged to read in advance the longer works that will be discussed during the institute, if they are not acquainted with the works already: Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*; Cather's *The Song of the Lark*; Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*; Hemingway's *In Our Time*; Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*; and Wright's *Native Son*.

IV: Institute Schedule

The **first week** of the institute will span the period in Chicago from the 1893 World's Fair through the Chicago renaissance of the 1910s and 1920s. Liesl Olson will lead a session focused on the overarching issue of how Chicago literature and culture have been viewed as an expression of either a local or an international scene. She will be joined by curator Martha Briggs, who will familiarize participants with the Newberry's modern manuscript holdings. Neil Harris will lead Tuesday's session on the 1893 World's Fair. Carl Smith will lead Wednesday's session on the challenges of writing about a place like Chicago, and the themes and styles that

emerged out of the Chicago literary renaissance. In particular, Smith will look at the opening set piece of Henry Blake Fuller's *Cliff-Dwellers* (1893) in which the architecture of a Chicago skyscraper is compared to the cliff-dwelling communities of the American West. Smith will again lead Thursday's session on Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900), the great naturalist novel in which a rural girl is first corrupted by the urban forces of Chicago before moving to New York. On Friday, Neil Harris will lead a session on "Chicago and the Visual Arts" in which he focuses on the Armory Show of 1913 when it came to Chicago, and its aftermath.

The first week will also include two site visits: On Wednesday, Paul Durica will lead an afternoon walking tour of "Towertown," the name for the neighborhood immediately surrounding the Newberry when it was once a bohemian and literary enclave. On Friday, art historian and Arts Club Director Janine Mileaf will host a lunch at the Arts Club and lead participants on a tour of the club's permanent collection.

The **second week** of the institute will focus on "little magazines," regionalism, and several of Chicago's most well-known writers. Monday's session will begin with Liesl Olson's discussion of the origins of Harriet Monroe's *Poetry* magazine in the commercial and cultural aspirations of Chicago. On Tuesday, Olson will focus on Margaret Anderson's *The Little Review* and the left-wing literary culture in Chicago out of which the magazine grew. She will be joined by Paul F. Gehl, who will introduce the Newberry's collections on printing, design, and graphic arts in Chicago. Wednesday's session on Chicago and the Midwest will be led by Tim Spears, who will discuss the now classic account of Chicago's relationship to its vast hinterland, as put forth by William Cronon in *Nature's Metropolis* (1991). Spears's second session on Thursday will focus on Sherwood Anderson and Willa Cather, writers who mark the transition from more realistic modes of regionalism to that of modernism. Olson and Spears will team-teach the next session on Friday, focusing on the early work of Ernest Hemingway, which was influenced not only by Sherwood Anderson (whom Hemingway met during his time in Chicago) but also by Hemingway's relationship to the values he imagined as Midwestern.

There will be one site visit during the second week, on Monday afternoon, to the nearby Poetry Foundation. Here, the "modest effort to give to poetry her own place"—as founder of *Poetry* magazine, Harriet Monroe, described her aims in 1910—has taken literal manifestation in Chicago architect John Ronan's new building. Participants will be given a private tour of the building and library by a member of the Poetry Foundation's staff.

The **third week** will focus on Chicago journalism, and individuals in Chicago's literary world who bridged racial and class divides. Monday's session will be led by Bill Savage, who will provide an overview of journalism in Chicago and the culture that developed around newspapermen and women, editors, and the advertising industry. In the afternoon, Martha Briggs will introduce participants to the journalism collections at the Newberry. On Tuesday, Savage will discuss the imprint of Chicago journalism upon the work of particular American writers including Floyd Dell, and Ben Hecht. Savage's third session on Wednesday will focus on writer Jack Conroy, his proletarian politics, and his work with writers Arna Bontemps, Richard Wright, and Nelson Algren. After the July 4th holiday (a Thursday), Liesl Olson will lead Friday's session, focusing on Gertrude Stein's visits to Chicago in 1934-35. Stein's lectures during this period illuminate how her experience of Chicago shaped her conception of a uniquely American idiom.

The **fourth and final week** will explore the Black Renaissance in Chicago and connect this period with earlier points of focus. Most of the week's sessions will be led by Jacqueline Goldsby. On Monday, Goldsby will provide an overview of the Black Renaissance in literature, music, and the visual arts. On Tuesday, she will focus on Vivian G. Harsh, the pioneering African-American librarian who established a "Special Negro Collection" that became a research and programming center for Chicago's community of black scholars and activists. On Wednesday, Goldsby will treat the life and poetry of Gwendolyn Brooks, whose work was inspired by her Bronzeville neighborhood and its community of artists and writers. In the afternoon, participants will be introduced to the collection that Harsh assembled at the Carter Woodson Regional Library. Goldsby's final session on Thursday will focus on *Native Son* (1940), Richard Wright's spectacular story of Bigger Thomas, an African-American living in a South Side ghetto. The last day of the institute on Friday will be led by Liesl Olson and devoted to raising questions and drawing connections: for instance, between the naturalism of *Sister Carrie* and *Native Son*; between the Chicago of Carl Sandburg and the Chicago of Gwendolyn Brooks; between Stein's conception of American writing and the actual prose of her American peers; and between the various locations in Chicago that were vital to its literary history.

There will be two site visits during the fourth week: on Wednesday to the Harsh collection (mentioned above) and on Thursday to the American Wing of the Art Institute. At the Art Institute, curator Sarah Kelly Oehler will lead summer scholars on a tour that includes paintings by Archibald Motley Jr. next to iconic images by Grant Wood and Georgia O'Keeffe.

V: Institutional Context and Resources at the Newberry

The Newberry Library, founded in 1887, is an independent research library dedicated to the advancement and dissemination of knowledge, especially in the humanities. The Newberry acquires and preserves a broad array of special collections research materials relating to the civilizations of Europe and the Americas. The Library is renowned for its holdings in early modern history, literature, American Indian history, genealogy, geography, cartography, travel, the exploration and settlement of the American Midwest and West, visual and material culture, and the history of printing and publishing.

There is no institution better equipped than the Newberry Library to explore Chicago's literary and cultural centrality. The Newberry collections contain extensive research materials relating to the history of Chicago, including its newspapers and journalists, clubs and arts organizations, writers, editors, artists, book designers, and publishers. The library's holdings more broadly in twentieth-century American literature also make it the best place to study Chicago as part of a larger modernist network. Current Scholl Center Director Liesl Olson specializes in Chicago's cultural history and has worked extensively in the Newberry's collections. Olson, Briggs, and Gehl will be particularly adept at directing participants to resources in the Newberry's collections, especially underutilized archives and recent acquisitions. The Newberry Library is expert at providing neutral ground where scholars may gather, share viewpoints, and discuss their teaching and research.

Summer scholars will be given special privileges during the institute at the Newberry, including a research carrel, extended reading hours, and the ability to page items on reserve for the length

of their stay. Research and study will be facilitated by access to a full range of computing services. Summer scholars will have wireless Internet access from their carrels, as well as workstations and printers elsewhere in the Library. The Newberry allows the use of personal digital cameras to photograph library materials for research and teaching purposes.

VI: Stipend

Summer scholars will receive a stipend of \$3,300. Stipends are intended to help cover travel expenses to and from the project location and living expenses for the duration of the period spent in residence. Stipends are taxable. Applicants should note that supplements will not be given in cases where the stipend is insufficient to cover all expenses.

Summer scholars are required to attend all meetings and to engage fully as professionals in the work of the project. During the institute, they may not undertake teaching assignments or any other professional activities unrelated to their participation in the institute. Summer scholars who, for any reason, do not complete the full tenure of the project must refund a pro-rata portion of the stipend.

VII: Housing

Summer scholars are required to make their own housing arrangements for the institute. The Newberry has negotiated discounted rates for its visitors at many hotels and dormitories within walking distance. For a complete lists of the Newberry's discounted housing arrangements as well as a list of area dining options see: <http://www.newberry.org/accommodations-and-dining>

Over the course of your time in Chicago, you will have the opportunity to visit many of the city's vibrant and diverse neighborhoods. But it is highly advisable that you find housing near the Newberry or within easy access to public transportation to the Newberry. Directions to the Newberry are here: www.newberry.org/general/directions.html

The Newberry Library does not have a visitor parking lot, though it does provide discounted rates at nearby garages. Please consider all other means of transportation, rather than driving to the Library.

Please be aware that housing and transportation costs are generally greater in Chicago than in other parts of the country. You should be prepared for the possibility that the NEH stipend for this seminar may not entirely cover housing and transportation costs for a four-week stay in Chicago.

VIII. Eligibility and How to Apply

Scholars specializing in American literature, American studies, twentieth-century American art, African-American studies, urban history, and women's studies will find the institute especially attractive. Ideally the institute might bring together literary scholars who theorize their subjects historically and historians who understand art and literature not just as cultural repository but also as aesthetic value. The institute will not require that participants have extensive prior knowledge of twentieth-century culture in Chicago. However, successful applicants should have knowledge of the subject sufficient to allow them to articulate in concrete ways how four weeks of concentration on the topic will enhance their research and teaching. The ideal institute

participant will bring to the group a fresh understanding of the relevance of the topic to their teaching and research, and will welcome the opportunity to conduct a research and reading program that would support new scholarly publications and pedagogic innovation.

Eligibility: NEH projects are designed primarily for teachers of American undergraduate students. Qualified independent scholars and those employed by museums, libraries, historical societies, and other organizations may be eligible to compete provided they can effectively advance the teaching and research goals of the institute. An applicant need not have an advanced degree in order to qualify. Adjunct and part-time lecturers are eligible to apply. Up to three institute spaces are reserved for current full-time graduate students in the humanities. Applicants must be United States citizens, residents of U.S. jurisdictions, or foreign nationals who have been residing in the United States or its territories for at least three years immediately preceding the application deadline. Foreign nationals teaching abroad at non-U.S. chartered institutions are not eligible to apply.

Applicants must complete the NEH application cover sheet (see below) and provide all the information requested below to be considered eligible. Individuals may not apply to study with a director of an NEH Summer Institute who is a current colleague or a family member. Institute selection committees are advised that only under the most compelling and exceptional circumstances may an individual participate in an institute with a director or a lead faculty member who has guided that individual's research or in whose previous institute or seminar he or she has participated. **Please note:** An individual may apply to **up to two** projects in any one year (NEH Summer Seminars, or NEH Summer Institutes), but may participate in **only one**.

Application Instructions:

A complete application consists of three copies of the following collated items:

1. the completed application cover sheet,
2. a detailed résumé, curriculum vitae, or brief biography, and
3. an application essay (four pages, double-spaced) as outlined below as well as:
4. two letters of recommendation.

The application cover sheet must be filled out online at this address:

<https://securegrants.neh.gov/education/participants/>

Please fill it out online as directed by the prompts. **When you are finished, be sure to click on the "submit" button.** Print out the cover sheet and add it to your application package. At this point you will be asked if you want to fill out a cover sheet for another project. If you do, follow the prompts and select another project and then print out the cover sheet for that project. Note that filling out a cover sheet is not the same as applying, so there is no penalty for changing your mind and filling out cover sheets for several projects. A full application consists of the items listed above, as sent to a project director.

Résumé

Please include a detailed résumé, curriculum vitae, or brief biography (not to exceed five pages).

The Application Essay

The most important part of the application is the essay. It should be no more than four double-spaced pages. In the essay applicants should do the following things: (1) include any relevant personal and academic information; (2) state reasons for applying to this particular institute; (3) explain interest, both intellectual and personal, in the literature and culture of twentieth-century Chicago; (4) comment on qualifications and experiences that equip the applicant to do the work of the institute and to make a contribution to a learning community; (5) identify what one hopes to accomplish through participation in this institute (including individual research or writing projects); and (6) show how involvement in *Making Modernism* connects with one's professional responsibilities.

Letters of Recommendation

The two referees may be from inside or outside the applicant's home institution. They should be familiar with the applicant's professional accomplishments or promise, teaching and/or research interests, and ability to contribute to and benefit from participation in the institute. Referees should be provided with the director's description of the institute and the applicant's essay. Applicants who are current graduate students should secure a letter from a professor or advisor. Please ask each of your referees to sign across the seal on the back of the envelope containing the letter. Enclose the letters with your application.

Selection Criteria

Applications will be reviewed by a committee that includes the seminar director, a member of the institute faculty, and a colleague from the Newberry. Recent summer scholars are eligible to apply, though the selection committee is charged to give first consideration to applicants who have not participated in an NEH-supported Seminar, Institute, or Landmarks Workshop in the last three years. The most important consideration in the selection of participants is the likelihood that an applicant will benefit professionally. This is determined by committee members from the conjunction of several factors, each of which should be addressed in the application essay. These factors include:

1. quality and commitment as a teacher, scholar, and interpreter of the humanities;
2. intellectual interests, in general and as they relate to the work of the institute;
3. special perspectives, skills, or experiences that would contribute to the institute;
4. commitment to participate fully in the formal and informal collegial life of the institute;
5. the likelihood that the experience will enhance the applicant's teaching and scholarship

When choices must be made among equally qualified candidates, several additional factors are considered. Preference is given to applicants who have not previously participated in an NEH Summer Seminar, Institute, or Landmarks Workshop, or who significantly contribute to the diversity of the institute.

Submission of Applications and Notification:

Applicants should make three hard copies of their application materials and send them along with their letters of recommendation to:

Liesl Olson, Director

Dr. William M. Scholl Center for American History and Culture

Newberry Library
60 West Walton Street
Chicago, IL 60610

Applications should be postmarked no later than March 4, 2013.

Successful applicants will be notified of their selection on Monday, April 1, 2013, and they will have until Friday, April 5 to accept or decline the offer. Once you have accepted an offer to attend any NEH Summer Program (NEH Summer Seminar, Institute or Landmarks Workshop), you may not accept an additional offer or withdraw in order to accept a different offer.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

Endowment programs do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age. For further information, write to the Equal Opportunity Officer, National Endowment for the Humanities, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20506. TDD: 202/606-8282 (this is a special telephone device for the Deaf).

If you have any questions or inquiries, please contact the Scholl Center at either scholl@newberry.org or at (312) 255-3524. You may also contact me directly at olsonl@newberry.org

I hope you will consider applying to *Making Modernism*. Your interest in the institute is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Liesl Olson

Director
Dr. William M. Scholl Center for American History and Culture
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