

ARC Critical University Studies Research Track

The Advanced Research Collaborative (ARC) at the CUNY Graduate Center is pleased to announce a new and exciting research track in Critical University Studies. Applications for Distinguished Visiting Fellowships and Distinguished CUNY Fellowships for the 2019-20 academic year are open and will be accepted through October 31, 2018.

The ARC invites proposals that examine the role of higher education, especially public universities, at the intersection of issues of race, class, gender, culture, political economy, and politics. Growing out of theoretical developments in the fields Cultural Studies and Critical Legal Studies, CUS critically examines the institutional structures, purposes, and ideologies of public higher education. The CUS field has grown and its practitioners have proliferated at a range of public universities in the past few years, including in the University of California, University of Wisconsin, and CUNY systems. Two major presses have announced CUS series (John Hopkins University Press and Palgrave UK). A number of scholars, including CUNY faculty and graduate students, are working on or have worked in the past on public higher education issues and projects.

CUS research topics might include:

- the political economy of government funding of public higher education and the impact of government budget cuts and concomitant rise in tuition costs in public universities
- the history of public university systems nationally and internationally
- issues of meritocracy vs. open access at public universities and the impact of those divergent ideologies on the historical and contemporary demographic make-up of public universities
- the impact of technological changes on public university teaching and learning
- curricular transformations and challenges, including the creation of alternative pedagogies and fields of scholarly inquiry (e.g. ethnic/gender/sexuality studies; digital humanities) and related challenges to existing curricula (e.g., the humanities “crisis”)
- the dramatic growth in administrative hiring, costs, and business practices in public universities
- the differential impact of budget cuts and increasing austerity in public institutions on students of color and poor and working-class students

- neoliberal attacks over the past four decades on public institutions in general and public universities in particular by politicians and business interests intent on privatizing public goods like education;
- the rise of contingent academic labor and its impact on the structure, function, and very purposes of public higher education
- the history of academic unionism and analyses of its current status at public institutions
- oppositional responses of college faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students, and the larger communities they serve to the funding cuts and disciplining faced by public higher education systems around the country as public demands for access have increased
- the narrowing gauge of what is considered appropriate or acceptable curricula in public institutions and the scrutiny/surveillance of scholarship and teaching faculty and staff, not least in social media and its discourses..

The ARC is especially interested in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary proposals that call on humanistic inquiry and innovative methodologies. We particularly welcome researchers from the human and social sciences and the humanities who have undertaken creative approaches to documenting, analyzing, and interpreting public university structures and who have undertaken archival and ethnographic research on public university life.