

Call for Participants:

Thirteenth Annual Undergraduate Research Workshop
Sponsored by the McNeil Center for Early American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania

Application Deadline: December 1, 2021

Program Dates: February 11 and April 22-23, 2022

Overview:

Since 2008, the McNeil Center for Early American Studies has hosted a research workshop for advanced undergraduates enrolled at MCEAS Consortium institutions. Students writing an honors thesis or senior-level research paper about an American or Atlantic World topic before approximately 1850 are invited to join this intellectual forum. Participants tour archives, attend the McNeil Center's Friday seminar series, work with a graduate student mentor, and present their own original research at a conference at the University of Pennsylvania. All discussions of student research aim to foster an atmosphere of mutual support, collaboration, and celebration. Participants often report that meeting like-minded students, networking with scholars and archivists, and discussing capstone research projects have been a highlight of their college careers. Undergraduate Research Workshop participants are now enrolled in Ph.D. programs, attending law school, and working in public history.

Meeting modality for the 2022 Workshop will depend on public health guidelines related to COVID-19. We hope to convene the February 11 sessions in person in Philadelphia and hold the April conference in the hybrid modality of in-person and Zoom.

Dr. Whitney Martinko of Villanova University will serve as the program's faculty advisor.

Eligibility:

The Workshop is open only to undergraduates at the senior—or in certain circumstances, junior—level who attend McNeil Center [Consortium institutions in good standing](#). Applicants must be pursuing research that includes the use of primary sources. They must be available on all of the program dates, and their faculty sponsors must be available to attend the seminar and conference April 22-23, 2022.

We encourage students at the freshman and sophomore level with interest in participating in a McNeil Center event to apply for the Dallett Hemphill Public History [Summer Internships](#) instead of this program.

If your institution is not yet a Consortium member, please contact Amy Baxter-Bellamy at abaxter@sas.upenn.edu to find out how to join. A maximum of two students will be accepted from any one institution per year, and preference will be given to applicants from Consortium institutions who have not recently participated.

Workshop Events:

Attendance at Workshop events is mandatory for all participants including undergrads, graduate students, and (for the April conference) faculty sponsors.

Works-in-Progress, February 11, 2022:

This meeting focuses on research and gives undergraduates the chance to meet one another and with their graduate student mentors. This meeting is optional for faculty mentors. Student project abstracts will be circulated in advance. In the morning, the workshop's faculty advisor, Dr. Whitney Martinko, will accompany students on a tour of an archive in Philadelphia as they learn about conducting original research and working with primary sources. Later, students will deliver five-minute presentations on their research and have one-on-one time with their graduate student mentors. We hope that the archival tour will be in-person, and that mentors and mentees who are able to do so will meet in-person at the McNeil Center. Those not able to attend in person can meet online at their convenience. There will be a McNeil Center Friday seminar from 3 to 5 p.m. (EST) via Zoom to end the day.

Conference, April 22–23, 2022:

The second event is a 1½ day meeting culminating in a professional-style conference with 10-minute formal paper presentations by undergraduates and brief comments by graduate student mentors. Past undergraduate participants have presented a section or chapter of their project that works well as a discrete topic for the conference paper. In addition, the conference will include opportunities for students to present in one of two ways: either by giving a traditional formal paper OR by participating in a less formal roundtable discussion of students' research topics and tactics. The latter option is offered to accommodate Consortium institutions with academic schedules that do not align with a student being able to present a formal paper by April. Roundtable presentations will be limited to two to three students. Students should note the option for which they are applying in their application materials. All students will meet informally with the MCEAS Friday seminar presenter for April 22 and then attend the seminar. The conference takes place the next day, April 23. While the April 22 sessions will likely convene entirely via Zoom, it is possible that the conference on April 23 will be hybrid.

Accommodations & Travel:

If there are in-person options for this event, participants should make their own arrangements for travel to the Workshop meetings. The McNeil Center will reimburse round-trip transportation expenses up to \$100 (for both meetings combined). Please note that the Center does not reimburse incidental expenses, such as parking, room service, meals, or local transportation costs. The Center will also provide participants (faculty and undergraduates) one night's lodging at a local hotel for the April conference for those who are able to attend in person if that is an option. Instructions for obtaining reimbursement will be provided prior to the Workshop meetings. When making your arrangements, please keep in mind that the University of Pennsylvania's policy for reimbursement states that travelers who choose to use their own

automobiles on a trip where air or rail travel is more appropriate will be reimbursed an amount not to exceed the lowest logical air or rail fare to the destination.

We will know closer to the spring semester whether any sessions of the Workshop will have the option to meet in person. If the Workshop is fully remote, there will be no travel reimbursement or lodging provided.

Application Procedure:

Applicants must submit the following to their faculty advisor: 1) a cover sheet with applicant's name, advisor's name, project title, and whether the application is for a traditional formal paper OR less formal roundtable presentation; 2) a brief description of the proposed research project (500 words maximum); and 3) a one-page resume highlighting academic experiences. The project description must include: a title, the name(s) of sponsoring faculty (probably but not necessarily including the student's advisor), the type of project (thesis, capstone, research seminar paper, etc.), research question, significance of project, approach and/or method, and key primary sources to be used. Applicants must also request that their faculty advisor write a one-page letter of recommendation addressing the faculty member's knowledge of the student's qualifications, stage of the project, the faculty member's relationship to the student, and impact of participation to the student's learning.

Application materials should be submitted by the faculty advisor as a single PDF document in an e-mail with the subject line "Application: MCEAS URW 2022" to mceas@sas.upenn.edu by December 1, 2021. Applicants will be notified of the selection committee's decision by December 17.