

BUHF Announces “Judgments of Value” as Theme for AY 2009–10

The Boston University Humanities Executive Committee is pleased to announce a new initiative for AY 2009/2010, designed to foster interdisciplinary collaboration. The Foundation has established “Judgments of Value” as its theme for the year, and invites proposals for projects and activities addressing the ways we make evaluative judgments about the products of culture. We especially welcome proposals promoting discussion of this theme across cultures, periods, and disciplinary lines, including proposals for developing interdisciplinary courses. The Foundation has already begun planning some programs on this theme, and we hope that departments, centers, institutes, and individuals from a wide range of disciplines and schools will propose related projects for inclusion under this year-long umbrella. It is our hope that projects and activities grouped under this theme will bring together scholars and students from various disciplines in the humanities and related fields. **Please note that this new initiative will not preclude proposals for humanities projects on other topics, nor will it affect the funding of faculty fellowships.** It is intended as an invitation, not a prescription.

Theme Statement

In recent decades, critics and scholars in fields directly examining the arts—such as literature, art history, and musicology—have engaged in a lively debate about the explicit and implicit criteria on which value judgments have been made in the past, and about factors now shaping our own judgments. In philosophy and religion, questions of value have long been central and urgent. Many topics in linguistics, ethnography, history, and anthropology are also relevant to this discussion, as are the experiences of creative and performing artists.

Among questions we hope to pose are these:

- What are the determinants in the history of taste?
- What tensions exist between ethnographic and aesthetic value?
- How does ideology direct aesthetic hierarchy?
- Is there still an argument to be made for intrinsic value?
- What human faculties (emotion, reason, the senses etc.) come into play in making such judgments?
- What criteria do we apply in judging different art forms?

Inquiries about project proposals and Foundation policies are welcome. For thematic and intellectual questions, please contact James Winn, Director of the Foundation (winnjama@bu.edu). For questions about budgets, deadlines, and application forms, please contact Christine Loken-Kim, Senior Administrator of the Foundation (lokenkim@bu.edu).