

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation – 2021 John E. Sawyer Seminars on the Comparative Study of Cultures
Limited Opportunity

Coordinator: Kristin Anderson, Foundation Relations (kristin.anderson@emory.edu)
Funder Website: <https://mellon.org/programs/higher-learning/sawyer-seminars/>
Submission Limitations: Only one per institution
Internal Deadline: **March 17, 2021**
Internal Link/Website: **All applicants must upload proposals to [InfoReady](https://emory.infoready4.com/#manageCompetitionsDetail/1835535)**
<https://emory.infoready4.com/#manageCompetitionsDetail/1835535>
Foundation Deadline: **May 3, 2021**

Program Purpose: The Mellon Foundation’s Sawyer Seminars program was established in 1994 to provide support for collaborative research on historical and contemporary topics of major scholarly significance. The seminars, named in honor of the Foundation’s long-serving third president, John E. Sawyer, bring together faculty, foreign visitors, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students from a variety of fields—mainly, but not exclusively, in the arts, humanities, and interpretive social sciences—for intensive study of subjects chosen by the participants. This program aims to engage productive scholars in multi-disciplinary and comparative inquiry that would in ordinary university circumstances be difficult to pursue, while at the same time avoiding the institutionalization of such work in new centers, departments, or programs.

Program Overview: To date, 220 seminars have been funded. Their subjects, which have ranged widely, can be viewed on the Mellon Foundation [website](#).

The maximum grant award for each Sawyer Seminar is \$225,000. Each seminar normally meets for one year, though some have continued for longer periods. To allow for planning, seminars need not be scheduled for the coming academic year. Faculty participants largely come from the humanities and interpretive social sciences, although some of the most successful and provocative seminars have also drawn on faculty in the arts and in professional schools. Seminar leaders are encouraged to invite participants from nearby institutions, such as community colleges, liberal arts colleges, museums, research institutes, etc. As the Foundation reviews proposals, preference will be given to those that include concrete plans for engaging participants with diverse institutional and disciplinary affiliations.

Sawyer Seminar awards provide support for one postdoctoral fellow to be recruited through a national competition, and for the dissertation research of two graduate students. It is expected that the graduate students will be active participants in the intellectual life of the seminar. The seminars’ contribution to graduate education in the humanities and social sciences will be carefully considered even though they are not intended to be organized as official credit-bearing courses. Seminars are not expected to produce a written product, though many do.

I. Internal Competition Information: This is a limited opportunity, meaning that Emory University can only put forward one nomination for consideration by the Foundation. To identify that proposal, all submissions will go through an internal review process. Proposals are assessed by faculty members of the Emory Review Committee, and the process is based upon the following timeline:

February 11:	Announcement Circulated
March 17:	Internal Competition Materials Deadline
March 29:	Review Committee Comments Due
March 30 – April 2:	Decision Made and Successful Applicant Informed
April 2 – April 30:	OFR to Work with Applicant(s) on Proposal Development
May 3:	Proposal Submitted

Internal Review Application Components: Please submit the following items by **5 pm on March 17, 2021**, in order to be considered for this competition. You will need to submit these items through this [InfoReady](https://emory.infoready4.com/#manageCompetitionsDetail/1835535) link:

<https://emory.infoready4.com/#manageCompetitionsDetail/1835535>

- An executive summary (*1 page description of proposed work*)
- The rationale for raising the central questions to be addressed and the potential significance of the inquiry to be pursued (*max 2 pages*)
- A general budget and budget narrative (*1 page max*)
- Short CVs (*1-2 pages*) for the principal seminar organizers

PLEASE NOTE: The Internal Review Application Materials are a pared down version of the official Nomination Packet sent to the funder.

II. Official Submission Process:

Once the official Emory nomination has been chosen, the designated proposal will be submitted through the Foundation's [online grant portal](#), managed by Kristin Anderson, the institutional contact. Once a proposal has been invited, Kristin will gain access to the application in the portal, as designated in the invitation letter. Access can then be shared to designated applicant(s).

Official Application Components: The application consists of the following:

1. An executive summary (description of proposed work)
2. The rationale for raising the central questions to be addressed and the potential significance of the inquiry to be pursued
3. A description of the cases to be studied (e.g., nations, regions, time periods, cultural trends, social tensions) and the perspectives to be brought to bear on them; the thematic "threads" that will run through the seminar; and the institution's resources and suitability for the proposed seminar

Note: The text covering these first three components typically ranges from 3,000 to 6,000 words and must not exceed 8,000 words.

4. The procedures to be used in selecting graduate and postdoctoral fellows
5. A well-developed preliminary plan for the seminar that outlines the specific topics to be addressed in each session and provides the names and qualifications of the scholars who would ideally participate
6. A budget and budget narrative, as prompted within the system and informed by the budget guidance below
7. Short CVs (1-2 pages) for the principal seminar organizers. If other participants are identified, please limit information about them to a few lines of text, either within the proposal or as part of this appendix
8. A letter of endorsement from an institutional officer (*Kristin Anderson will secure this letter for the applicant.*)

Budget: Funding requests should not exceed \$225,000 for each seminar. Each seminar's budget must provide for a postdoctoral fellowship to be awarded for the year the seminar meets, and two graduate student dissertation fellowships to be awarded for the seminar year or the year that follows. The amounts for postdoctoral fellowship awards and dissertation fellowship stipends should follow institutional practices. To acknowledge the sustained intellectual involvement of these graduate students in the seminar, institutions may include tuition support or, for those funded by existing fellowships, supplementary support such as research and travel funds. Travel and living expenses for short stays by visiting scholars and the costs of coordinating the seminar, including those incurred for speakers and their travel, may also be included. Funds may not cover released time for regular faculty participants, rentals of university space, or indirect costs.

Budget periods should align with reporting dates that work for the institution, but the first budget period must begin with **October 1, 2021**. For that reason the first period may be longer, or shorter, than 12 months.