

For immediate release
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UCLA Awarded Mellon Foundation Grant to Examine Histories and Practices of Sanctuary

A \$225,000 grant will fund a yearlong seminar series examining how cities serve as spaces of refuge

Los Angeles, CA (University of California, Los Angeles) – The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded UCLA a \$225,000 grant to launch a Sawyer Seminar entitled, “Sanctuary Spaces: Reworlding Humanism.” Acting as temporary research centers, Sawyer Seminars are intended to provide support for comparative research and intensive study in the humanities and social sciences.

Thinking across Europe and the United States, the UCLA Sawyer Seminar will examine sanctuary policies and practices at the scale of cities. Situated at the present historical moment of resurgent white nationalism and xenophobia, *Sanctuary Spaces* will cast a light on migration regimes and state power as well as on the forms of local and transnational activism that create spaces of refuge. With a critical lens around histories of colonial dispossession and racial capitalism, this seminar series is ultimately concerned with the place of racial others – the border-crosser, the asylum-seeker, the refugee – in the liberal democracies of the West. What are the terms of inclusion, integration, community, and hospitality through which protection is extended to such racial others and what are the possible frameworks of redress, justice, and democracy that take account of colonialism and imperialism?

The seminar will be led by an interdisciplinary group of UCLA faculty members. They include principal investigator Ananya Roy, professor of Urban Planning, Social Welfare, and Geography and the Meyer and Renee Luskin Chair in Inequality and Democracy, in collaboration with Leisy Abrego, professor of Chicana/o Studies; Gaye Theresa Johnson, associate professor of Chicana/o Studies and African American Studies; and Maite Zubiaurre, professor of Germanic Languages and Spanish & Portuguese. [The Institute on Inequality and Democracy at UCLA Luskin](#) will be instrumental in organizing the series. The grant proposal was nominated by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and UCLA is one of only 10 universities worldwide to receive this prestigious award in 2019.

Principal investigator Ananya Roy said of the grant: “Today, more than ever, immigration and border policies are a matter of life and death. It is imperative for scholars to participate in the making of frameworks of humanism and justice that challenge state violence. Such an endeavor requires comparative, critical, and historical thinking. That is the goal of the *Sanctuary Spaces* project, and UCLA, with its community of scholars and commitment to public education, is ideally positioned to undertake such work.”

During 2020, Mellon Foundation funds will support the gathering of a diverse range of scholars, artists, and activists from different disciplines and theoretical traditions in shared inquiry. Such work will include public programs, faculty and graduate student seminars, and artistic performances and exhibitions. The Sawyer Seminar will also support a postdoctoral fellowship and two fellowships for UCLA doctoral students.



Gary Segura, dean of the Luskin School of Public Affairs applauded the achievement: “I am thrilled to congratulate the Institute in securing the Sawyer Seminar Grant and can’t wait to participate. There are fewer issues more central to the contemporary world, and more at the heart of turmoil in the democratic world, than international migration and the racialized and xenophobic responses of political leaders in the nations across the global North. This conversation is among the most important we can be having at this moment in history.”

Institute on Inequality and Democracy at UCLA Luskin’s Mission:

The Institute on Inequality and Democracy advances radical democracy in an unequal world through research, critical thought, and alliances with social movements and racial justice activism. We analyze the divides and dispossessions of our times, in the university and in our cities, across the global South and global North.

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