



2024-25 Kinder Institute Society of Fellows

Call for Applications

Deadline: Sunday, March 31, 2024 (11:59.59pm)

One of two flagship programs at the Kinder Institute, the Society of Fellows brings undergraduates from across Mizzou's campus together for a year of communal inquiry into the history, theory, and practice of constitutional democracy around the globe. Any current undergraduate who is returning to Mizzou for the full 2024-25 school year is eligible to apply for the Fellows program. Application materials and instructions can be found on page two of this call, and any questions can be directed to Kinder Institute Director of Undergrad Studies and Society of Fellows Program Coordinator Dr. Thomas Kane, KaneTC@missouri.edu.

The Kinder Institute will hold an optional info session about the Fellows program on Friday, March 8, at 12:00pm in Jesse Hall 410. No RSVP necessary.

Program Description

The Fellows program is made up of the following three core components:

Summer Seminar: Every year, a week or two before the fall semester starts, the Fellows program kicks off with a three-day conference at the Tiger Hotel, through which participants attend a series of seminars, lectures, discussions, and dinners with faculty from across an array of departments at MU. The conference sessions aren't thematically organized but are instead designed to bounce around so that Fellows can collectively explore and discuss a wide range of topics related to the study of constitutional democracy. For context, last year's conference included seminars on science, theology, and the Declaration of Independence; the politics of sound; and Che Guevara's revolutionary vision. Full attendance at the conference—tentatively scheduled this year for either August 5-8 or 12-15, 2024—is mandatory, and the Kinder Institute will provide lodging (at the Tiger Hotel) and meals for all Fellows for the duration of the conference.

Monthly Events: In order to continue the conversations that get started at the conference, we get the Fellows back together 3-4 times per semester for various academic events, which might include lunch with scholars visiting the Kinder Institute, dinner lectures with KICD faculty, cultural excursions out on the town (e.g., film screenings, plays), or meetings of the new Dead Poets Society of Fellows book club. In order to remain in good standing with the Fellows program, participants must attend at least two scheduled events per semester.

Journal on Constitutional Democracy: Though not a required part of the program, Fellows have the option to enroll in CNST_DEM 4975/4975H, a writing course through which students spend two semesters patiently conceptualizing, researching, drafting, and revising a substantial article project (15-20 pp.) that's ultimately published in the Kinder Institute's undergraduate *Journal on Constitutional Democracy*. A wonderful course for anyone who loves (or wants to love) essay writing, the Journal class meets two hours/week in the fall and one hour/week in the spring and applies toward the experiential requirement for both the B.A. and Minor in Constitutional Democracy (students can also apply it to the Political Science or History degrees).

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The two components of the Society of Fellows application detailed below should be saved as a **single PDF** using “SOF Application-Your Last Name” as a file name.

Applications should be submitted via email to Dr. Thomas Kane, KaneTC@missouri.edu, by Sunday March 31, 2024 (11:59.59pm)

I. Academic Resume

In addition to standard resume fodder—e.g., contact information, work and volunteer experience—the academic resume you submit for your Fellows application should include (but shouldn’t necessarily be limited to) details such as: your major/minor and GPA; clubs and other orgs that you’re involved with on campus; and a short list of classes that you’ve taken at Mizzou which you feel prepare you especially well for the study of democracy at the heart of the Fellows program. (A note on this last item: These don’t at all have to be only History or Political Science or Constitutional Democracy classes, so be expansive in interpreting “prepare you especially well for the study of democracy.”)

II. Essay Questions

Please respond to **all three** of the following essay questions in 350-500 words **each**:

- Essay 1: We often think about studying democracy as an exercise in reading history and political philosophy, interpreting polling data, scouring old newspapers, etc. Yes. But also no. For Essay #1, we want you to do two things:
 - Create a “syllabus” of three things from the history of popular culture that have helped you understand the history and theory of democracy better. By popular culture we mean movies, literature of all kinds, works of visual art, albums/songs, public monuments, modes of transportation, and more. The only rule is that you have to use three *different* forms of pop culture in your syllabus (i.e., it *can't* be three movies; it *can* be a movie, a book of poems, and a song). Two additional notes: (1) Remember that popular culture doesn’t have to mean best-selling/world-renowned; a documentary that, like, ten people saw could count; (2) Pop culture doesn’t have to mean contemporary. Things from the 19th century were popular, too!
 - The syllabus doesn’t apply toward your word count, so use your 350-500 words to describe how these three things came together to teach you something new about democracy.
- Essay 2: If you could design a major that doesn’t exist at Mizzou (or anywhere else, most likely), what would it be and what would you hope that your hypothetical degree-seeking students took away from it? In addition to a description of the major and its purpose, include names and one-sentence descriptions of 3-4 classes that would be a part of your major’s core curriculum;
- Essay 3: What do you think is the most understudied or overlooked era/event/moment/movement in the history of humankind and why do you think it deserves more attention?

Ed. Note: The essays are designed for you *not* to give rote answers that you think we want to hear but, instead, creative answers that demonstrate the breadth and depth of your curiosity, so be adventurous in responding!