

# PUBLIC RESEARCH FELLOWS

HUMANITIES COLLABORATIVE • COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND

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## PRF Hosts Roundtable, Kicks Off Spring Series

Ever since C.P. Snow coined the “two cultures” paradigm in 1959, it’s been commonplace to assume that there’s a gulf between the humanities and the sciences on college campuses. But how does this division play out in reality? What are the blind spots of this sort of binary thinking? And where does it leave the social sciences, or for that matter, interdisciplinary work? Join the Public Research Fellows on **Thursday, Feb. 3, 4:00-5:15pm in the Bauccio Dining Room** for a roundtable discussion of these issues and how we can bridge the “two cultures” at UP.

This event kicks off the PRF Spring Series; stay tuned for two more workshops that will follow up on the conversation with hands-on exploration of the potential in interdisciplinary work:

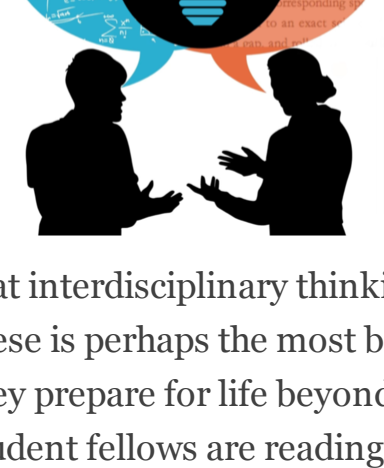
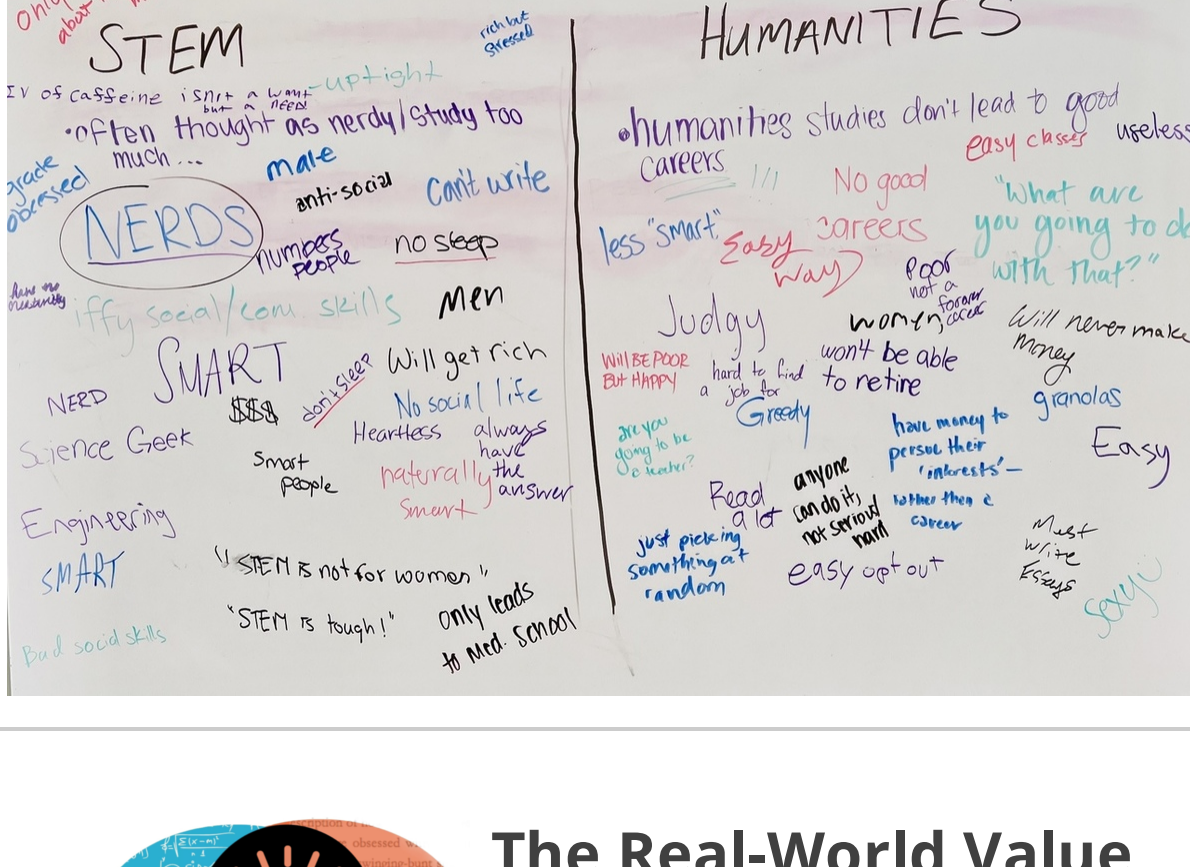
- **Student Workshop, Wed. 2/9 6-7pm**  
Everybody’s Interdisciplinary: Framing Your Liberal Arts Coursework for the Future
- **Faculty Workshop, Fri. 2/18 1:30-2:30pm**  
Putting Interdisciplinarity to Work: a Faculty Brainstorming + Sharing Session

[Download and share the roundtable flyer>>](#)

## Overheard at UP: Humanities/STEM Stereotypes

Sitting in the library, working on a final paper, an English major overhears someone behind her say that history majors don’t understand the true stress of being in college the way biology majors do. Sound familiar? While we all know that these kinds of stereotypes often aren’t accurate, they still tend to circulate widely. This year PRF is calling attention to disciplinary stereotypes on UP’s campus to explore why we fall into this sort of thinking and how we might move toward more collaborative practices. The PRF interns Sarah James and Crystal Wallace recently asked students to share stereotypes about the Humanities and STEM through Instagram and on a whiteboard on the library patio. Check out the responses below and stay tuned to the PRF instagram account for more highlights.

[Follow us on Instagram to participate in future polls>>](#)



## The Real-World Value of Interdisciplinarity

Would you ever write poetry to better understand a science equation? Literature and mathematics are typically seen as distinct, segregated subjects that don’t intersect. But recent research suggests that interdisciplinary thinking across seemingly disparate fields like these is perhaps the most beneficial kind of work students can do as they prepare for life beyond college. This year in the PRF course, student fellows are reading about the theory, practice, and real-world value of thinking beyond disciplines as a way to situate their participation in interdisciplinary, project-based working groups. One reading they begin with is Ashley Bear and David Skorton’s article [“The World Needs Students with Interdisciplinary Education.”](#) The authors highlight research showing that interdisciplinary learning is associated with “improved written and oral communication skills, teamwork skills, ethical decision making, critical thinking, and the ability to apply knowledge in real-world settings”—all skills that happen to be precisely what employers want.

[Want to read more? Try Cathy Davidson on "The New Education" >>](#)

## Student Fellow Spotlight: Gina DiLisio on Food as a Form of Connection

As a member of the Table Talk working group, senior Gina DiLisio wants to reveal how food brings people together. Originally from the Bay Area, Gina grew up in a family that views food as way to connect: at restaurants, they make it a tradition to switch plates with each other, converting the experience of eating into something that goes beyond physical nourishment and becomes something more personal, interactive, and communal. Likewise, her working group aims to make connection a key to their exploration of food, linking UP students with the wider community of food producers in the Portland area. After a field trip to the St. John’s farmers market where group members spoke to a variety of makers, bakers, and growers, Gina realized that we have a lot to learn from the community around us, and that a first step might be to “introduce ourselves to our neighbors more often.” As a part of her contribution to the Table Talk group, she plans to interview the Native American Family Center to amplify stories about food in our local neighborhoods that UP students might not otherwise encounter.



[Read more about the Native American Family Center >>](#)



## Health Humanities in Portland: PRF Working Group Joins Local, National Movement to Connect Art and Wellness

PRF’s working group LoosenUP and one of Portland’s most popular attractions, the Portland Art Museum, share a common goal: to help people feel better. Just as LoosenUP holds events throughout the year for the UP community to decompress with art and music, so too does the museum. Through their recurring virtual event, “Slow Looking,” the museum is cultivating an “art focused meditation experience” in which docents lead attendees through a relaxed and calming tour of the art found at the museum. Research shows that these kinds of experiences don’t just provide a fleeting sense of relaxation in the moment—they also have long-term medical benefits. Dr. Kenneth Weizer of Portland Providence works in oncology, but his true passion is making sure that his patients [take care of their creative wellness during their treatment.](#) Prescribing his patients unconventional "medicine" such as drawing, sculpting, and even just laughing, Dr. Weizer is taking the idea behind the museum’s “Slow Looking” event and giving it a medical purpose for those who need it most. The LoosenUP working group seeks to build on these new ways of thinking about humanities and wellness through its own work in the UP community. Their project is part of a larger [field of health humanities](#) that is rapidly growing across the country as scholars, artists, and physicians come together to harness the healing power of literature, music, and art.

[Attend Portland Art Museum's "Slow Looking" virtual event on Zoom, 1/29/22, 1-2PM >>](#)



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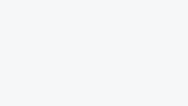
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