

PRF 2023-24 • ENGAGING PORTLAND

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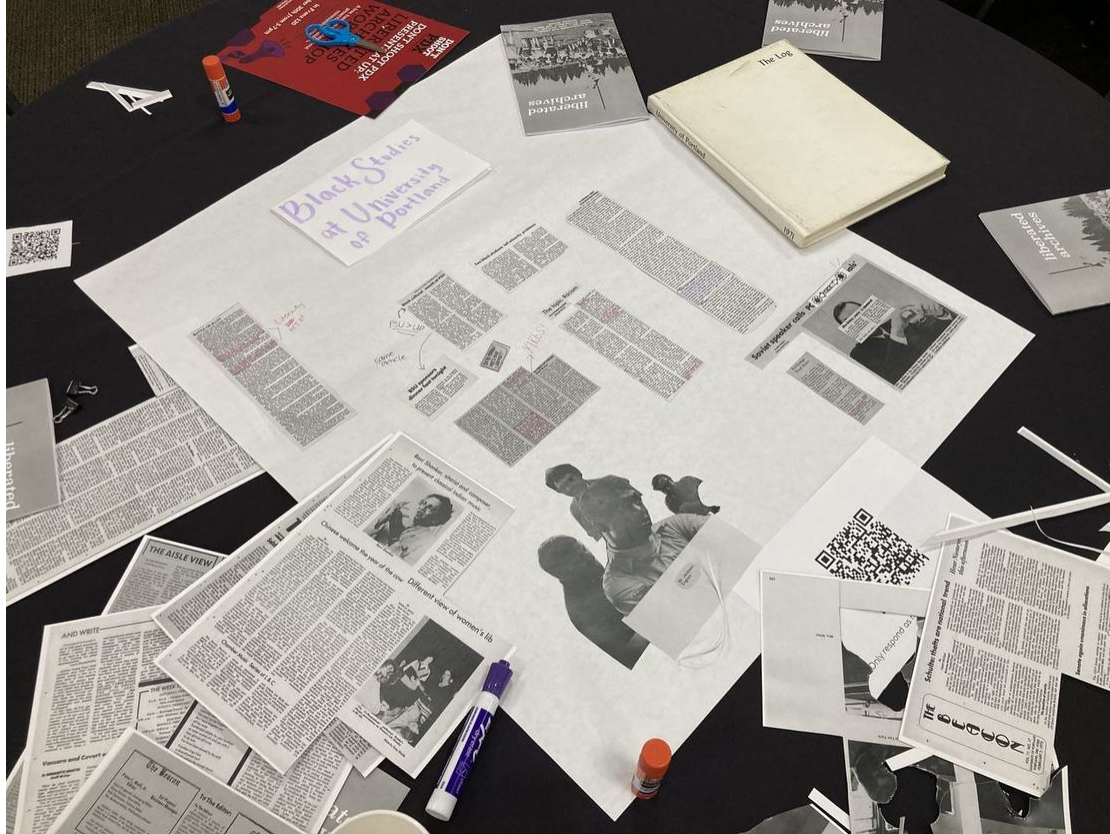


PRF 23-24: Engaging Portland

The program kicked off an exciting year after receiving a record number of student and faculty applications to work on interdisciplinary humanities undergraduate research projects that connect with the city in innovative ways. This year's PRF "Engaging Portland" projects include:

- [**"Democracy in Action: Promoting Civic Engagement in Our Community and Our Classrooms"**](#) (Maye Henning, Political Science and Global Affairs)
- [**"The CHANGE UP Project: Community Health Assessment of the Needs of Gen-Z with the University of Portland"**](#) (Andrew LaFrenz, Integrative Health and Wellness)
- [**"Liberated Archives Exhibit: Memory Work Partnership with Don't Shoot PDX"**](#) (Lizz Schallert, Sociology and Social Work)
- [**"Understanding and Incentivizing Recycling Behavior in Gresham, OR"**](#) (Ruth Dittrich, Economics)
- [**"How Portland Learns"**](#) (Anna Myers and Megan Gill, Education)
- [**"Building Humanities Futures through the PRF Program"**](#) (Jen McDanel and Molly Hiro, English)

Click through the links above for more on each project and team, and read on below for stories about the work they've done so far and upcoming program events!



PRF Teams Up with Local Organization to Create "Liberated Archives"

In terms of measurable impact, Professor Lizz Schallert's "Liberated Archives" project will leave its mark on the University of Portland campus in more ways than one. The project—in partnership with Taishona Carpenter and Teresa Raiford of Don't Shoot PDX—shines a light on the lived experiences of minoritized communities in North Portland through what's known as “memory work.” By utilizing community and University of Portland archives, PRF student fellows Murphy Bradshaw and Kerri Osumi, along with students Hailey May and Kate Andersen in the social justice capstone course, worked with community partners to understand how archives can be used for social justice and memory preservation. The culmination of this archival work can be seen in a gallery exhibit this spring in the Clark Library on campus.

Through keyword searches in the University of Portland's digital archives, student researchers, headed by Bradshaw, created a zine made up of preserved images from the Beacon and the LOG yearbook.

By featuring their research in a physical magazine, the project makes the history of minoritized communities in North Portland and at the University of Portland more easily accessible. Community members had the chance to directly engage with this research on November 30th, when the collaborators hosted a “Liberated Archives Workshop” that tasked participants with creating collages on topics such as student athletics, the Black Student Union, and "heated discussions" about race from newspaper clippings, photographs and yearbook pages. By searching through research materials and actively creating together, participants had the opportunity to produce their very own “liberated archives."

When discussing the project’s impact, Bradshaw and Osumi highlighted the personal growth they have experienced as student researchers. Bradshaw said that this project may have helped her discover what she would like to pursue after college. “I realized that there are things I am really interested in, like archival research and the examination of stories that are left untold. These things can be turned into a job or responsibility, like working in an archive setting, working in a library setting or a museum setting." For Osumi, the process helped her to engage with Portland in a whole new way. “Up until the PRF program, I did a lot of internships and jobs and volunteering, but was confined to the university and university community,” Osumi explained. “But this project allowed me to branch out to general Portland and North Portland’s community and learn the history and the lived experiences of the people there.” Bradshaw was quick to agree, highlighting that when it comes to learning more about Portland through its residents, “nothing can compare to that perspective."

[Learn more about Don’t Shoot PDX’s Liberated Archives for Black Lives installation>>](#)



Student Spotlight: Sophomore Lisanne Dobson Awarded PRF Scholarship

The Laurie McLary Public Research Scholarship was established in 2021 to help make the high-impact experience of undergraduate research available to a wider pool of students. Recipients receive a stipend to participate in a year-long PRF project as student fellows. This year's Public Research Scholar is Lisanne Dobson, a second-year social justice major. Here are a few of her thoughts regarding the scholarship's impact:

How did you first hear about the scholarship and what motivated you to apply?

I first heard about the scholarship through email, but I hesitated to apply at first. I think the biggest thing preventing most students from applying to scholarships is the automatic assumption that they will be passed over for another candidate, but it is always worth a shot to me and I feel incredibly lucky to have received it.

As a Public Research Scholar, what are some of your responsibilities?

My responsibilities as a student fellow differ week by week, but what I love most about the program is how collaborative it is for students and faculty. We designed and will execute the research working side by side. For my group that looks like going out and talking to the population we're studying, and compiling resources to guide the direction of our final project.

What are a few things that you have learned by taking on this role?

I think that taking this role on has helped me learn about the process of designing a study, as well as what it takes to execute it. I've learned a lot about research ethics and ensuring the safety of participants, making sure that their stories are being told in the most respectful and accurate way possible.



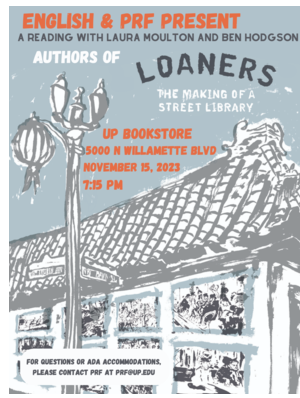
**“Democracy in Action”
builds Portland into
future UP courses**



This year's PRF theme, "Engaging Portland," has inspired a variety of research collaborations that connect with our city in unique ways. One project in particular—"Democracy in Action," led by Professor Maye Henning from the department of Political Science and Global Affairs—is focused on developing course material that can feed into courses such as "Introduction to US Politics" and "American Public Policy." Dr. Henning is supporting her four student fellows in researching and building course modules focused on various aspects of Portland's civic life and history. The result of this work? Future UP students taking these core Political Science courses will be able to understand and even engage with civic issues unfolding in the communities just outside of UP gates.

What's exciting is that in developing these modules for future courses—each one includes not just reading and assignments, but a community engagement component—the four student fellows have been getting off campus and into the city themselves. This requires thinking about how to engage with Portland and its residents in ethical ways, and learning about histories that aren't always visible. Sophomore fellow Shane Ruyle, for instance, wanted to learn more about Portland's houselessness crisis by bypassing the front-page news stories and instead speaking with members of local unhoused communities directly. In conversation with the "Democracy in Action" team as well as with local community partners, Shane developed an approach to talking with and documenting perspectives of unhoused Portlanders based in transparency and mutual decision-making; as a result, future POL students will be able to engage with the stories they have shared and thus gain a richer sense of the people living very different lives than those on UP's campus.

In addition to engaging with Portland's unhoused community, the project's student fellows are developing hyperlocal course units on food sustainability, displacement and gentrification, and city government, via engaged humanities thinking and methods. All of this work will pay off for years to come, as students taking intro-level US Politics courses will now be part of a broader effort at UP to be the university "of, for, and with" Portland, as President Kelly has urged.



Authors of [Loaners: The Making of a Street Library](#) Visit UP, Demonstrate the Power of the Humanities in Our Communities

On November 15, 2023, Ben Hodgson and Laura Moulton of Portland's local non-profit [Street Books](#) visited the University of Portland for a reading and talk co-hosted by the English Department and the Public Research Fellows. Street Books' mission is to create a community built around mutual empowerment and access to literature through their bicycle-powered mobile library. Before their reading, which was open to the public in the university's bookstore, they attended a Q&A panel during Dr. McDanel's Introduction to the Engaged Humanities course with the PRF student cohort. Below is a transcript of an excerpt of this session.

Audience:

In this class, we talk a lot about being interdisciplinary, being cross-disciplinary, and how to work from different perspectives. How in your work have you found that it's necessary to employ different disciplines and employ different perspectives to find a solution and how has that been valuable?

Ben Hodgson:

It was Isaac Asimov. A guy was looking for science fiction. I go, "How about this?" He goes, "Isaac Asimov, who's that?" And I said, "Did you see that movie iRobot?" And he goes, "Oh, with Will Smith, yeah!" I said this is the guy that wrote it, maybe 60 years ago. I think he checked out the book—

does that count as two disciplines? [laughs]

Laura Moulton:

Absolutely. I think it's also interesting [...] we get a range of people with different experiences who are incredible readers. Like the one guy Hodge received— you're going to love this— Hodge calls me one night and says the guy turned down Nietzsche, not because he didn't want to read Nietzsche but because it was the wrong translation. And I was like yes! Tell that story to the world. [...]

Street Books was originally a 3 month art experiment: what would happen if I rolled out with this kind of weird looking thing, and waited, and invited up people who never get invited to do cool looking stuff, ever? The assumption is that we want them to clean up, and they need to shower, and they need to have a job, and they need to live in a particular house with a key, and then we will invite them to cool art projects. That seems to be what we kind of do as a society, but what happens if we say, hey this is for you? This is actually for you.

My thinking on this has changed over time, but the fundamental part of Street Books is that everyone is welcome. [...] The whole model has been largely collaborative, hugely welcoming, a kind of radical hospitality, in hopes of shifting the system. The system, you remember, works very well for some people, as it has been designed, and not so well for others. I hope we answered your question— we'll be thinking about that one for a long time.

[Read the full transcript of the Q&A session>>](#)

[Learn more about Street Books>>](#)

Creating Humanities Futures through Collaborative Faculty/Student Research

We've all heard the timeworn jokes and stereotypes about the humanities—at this point they seem to be built into our culture. But what if the culture has it wrong? That's the premise of a new course-

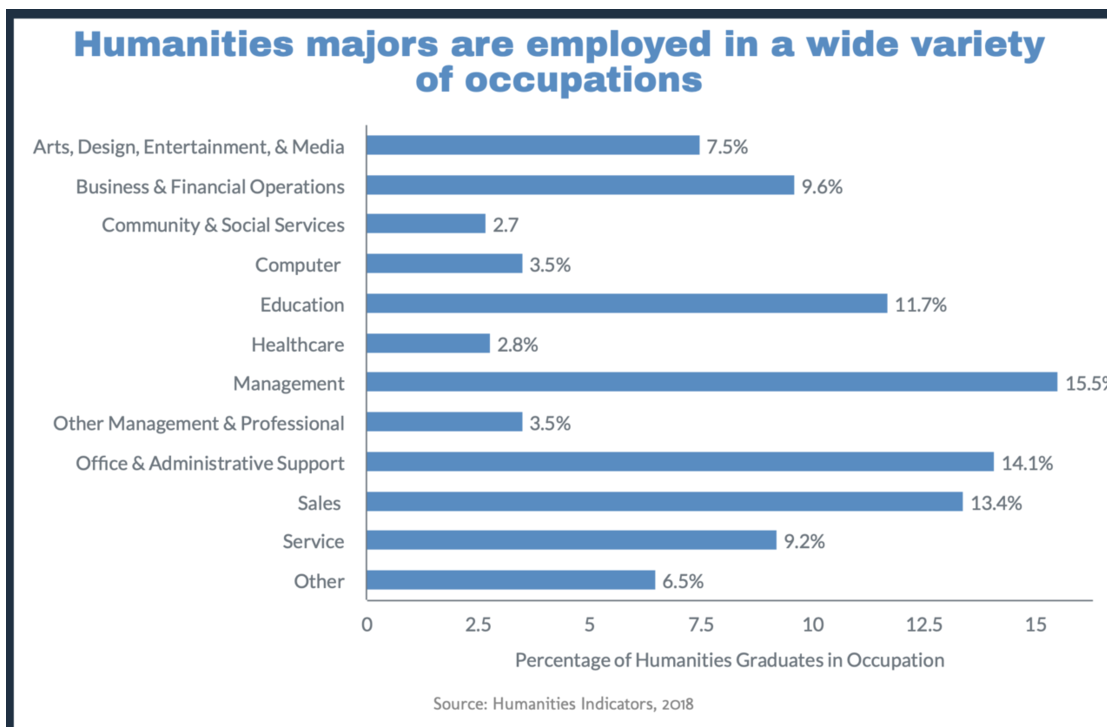
building project that PRF directors Jen McDanel and Molly Hiro and their student fellows Katherine Johnson and Lilly Grey Rudge are working on this year. In 23-24, the PRF program introduced a curricular track for its undergraduate research projects to bring together faculty and students to create new course syllabi, assignments, and activities. Recognizing that pedagogy is just as deeply informed by research as traditional writing and presentation projects, the prospect of building a course for humanities majors—with the help of humanities majors themselves—seemed like an apt use of this new type of undergraduate research project at UP.

After spending the fall semester researching humanities professional development courses at other universities and meeting with faculty and administrators from a wide range of institutions, the group has developed a pilot syllabus for the inaugural Humanities Futures workshop this semester. A cohort of eight humanities majors will experiment with resources and activities that the group has curated from their research, with the goal of helping the students develop their own professional paths while also helping the program build out the course for future humanities majors. At the end of the semester, student fellows will interview the workshop cohort to record the takeaways from the course and future areas for development. In the meantime, check out some of the key findings from the group's research about humanities futures:

- Research shows that **humanities majors do just as well as other majors** in terms of traditional measures of professional success, including employment, advancement, and income; they also tend to report higher levels of job satisfaction than other majors.
- **Humanities students report high levels of satisfaction with their majors** but are often unsure how to translate their academic work into future professional paths; this suggests that new ways to support these students in making those connections is key.
- **Humanities majors go on to a much wider range of jobs and professions than traditionally thought**; BYU, for instance, reported to us that after researching alumni outcomes, they realized that their humanities majors were doing “literally everything” after

graduation and that they needed to showcase that more broadly to current and prospective students.

- There's a [nationwide movement toward building up humanities programs](#) in ways that showcase their professional strengths; Arizona State, for instance has seen major increases in the number of humanities majors after taking on a marketing and program-building campaign 5 years ago.
- Connecting humanities majors to high-impact opportunities that relate to what they study, especially internships and undergraduate research, is key to making apparent the often less concrete, but tremendously valuable, benefits of humanities work. Programs at California State University-LA and University of California-Irvine reported to us that adding these high-impact experiences as requirements for their majors has resulted not only in increased numbers of majors, but increased satisfaction among students.



Save the Date: Upcoming PRF Events

- [**The Flickering Universe: An Evening with Patiann Rogers, Robert Pyle and UP Scholars**](#): Tuesday, 2/20, 6-7:15pm on Zoom
- Liberated Archives exhibit: now showing at Clark Library, through May
- Humanities Alumni Panel: Thursday, 3/21, 6-7pm, location TBD
- Engaged Humanities Faculty Lunch: Wednesday, 3/27, 12-1:15pm, Teske Room
- PRF Showcase: Friday, 4/26, 3-5pm, Franz Hall Lobby



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