

### **Faculty Member Contact Information**

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### **1 Funded, 2 Unfunded URCA Assistant(s)**

**Are you willing to work with students from outside of your discipline? If yes, which other disciplines?**

- Yes

**How many hours per week will your student(s) be required to work in this position?**  
(Minimum is 6 hours per week; typical is 9)

- 8

**Will it be possible for your student(s) to earn course credit?**

- Yes, in HUM495: Digital Humanities Internship for 1-3 credit hours.

**Location of research/creative activities:**

- primarily the IRIS Center (Peck 2226), with field trips Saint Stanislaus Conservation Area, local archives

**Brief description of the nature of the research/creative activity?**

- Troubled Waters: Critical Hiking at Saint Stanislaus Conservation Area is a digital humanities project that engages visitors to a local hiking trail with histories of enslavement, colonization, and cultural erasure that have shaped it. Saint Stanislaus Conservation Area is a greenspace in St. Louis County. When hikers visit the trail, they encounter pleasant woods, scenic vistas, and some mysterious ruins. People are naturally curious about the ruins! But none of the limited signage at the park explores the site's troubled histories. This project uses digital storytelling to 1) surface those histories for park users, 2) research how human histories are written on the landscape through both buildings and changes to the site's ecology, and 3) investigate how knowledge of the

site's past changes people's relationship to the place and how they understand their obligations to people and to the environment.

- Current URCA's are working on documenting the site's historical and contemporary ecology using archival and field methods; exploring contemporary hikers' relationships to the site through spatial analysis of their hikes; and producing a video that engages public audiences with the site's past, present, and future.

### **Brief description of student responsibilities?**

- Student activities will draw on their major and academic interests to contribute to one or more of the project strands:
- Indigenous ecologies and plant knowledge: Students with an interest in ecology and biology will survey plants at the conservation area, researching their status (native, non-native, invasive) and comparing current park ecology to historical species lists to understand how settler presence has transformed the region's ecology. Outputs will include data, as well as storytelling elements that link the ecological data to the project's broader narrative and communicate the research to public audiences.
- Histories of enslavement and resilience: Students with an interest in history and sociology will work with historical sources to recover the voices and experiences of Black and indigenous community members. They may also visit local archives, including the Jesuit Archives and Research Center and the State Historical Society of Missouri.
- Contemporary relationships to the environment: Students with an interest in ecology, geography, and sociology will work with reviews of the park and trails from Google Reviews, Yelp, and AllTrails. They will conduct text analysis and discourse analysis to understand what it is that people value about the park, where the points of friction are, and how they read the park's history on the trail. (IRB approved, 3100 Stories of St. Stanislaus: Working Title)

**URCA Assistant positions are designed to provide students with *research or creative activities* experience. As such, there should be measurable, appropriate outcome goals.**

**What exactly should your student(s) have learned by the end of this experience?**

- This project sits at the intersection of a number of disciplines. As a result, students will learn to connect seemingly unconnected fields like history and biology to inform one another. As a demonstrable outcome, students will be able to share their work to interdisciplinary audiences, accounting for differences of vocabulary and methods.
- Students will also practice specific disciplinary skills like transcription of historical sources; data collection, processing, and analysis; and sampling techniques.
- Students will learn to humanize data and how to ethically use and represent data related to traumatic histories – in this case, enslavement and colonial and racial violence.

- Students will learn and practice strategies for advocacy, linking their research to possible policy responses that might address the continued manifestations of injustice in the St. Louis region.

**Requirements of Students**

**If the position(s) require students to be available at certain times each week (as opposed to them being able to set their own hours) please indicate all required days and times:**

- N/A

**If the location of the research/creative activities involves off campus work, must students provide their own transportation?**

- If students have transportation, there are off-site opportunities available at Saint Stanislaus Conservation Area (Florissant), the Jesuit Archives and Research Center (midtown St. Louis), and the State Historical Society of Missouri (University of Missouri)

**Must students have taken any prerequisite classes? Please list classes and preferred grades:**

- N/A

**Other requirements or notes to applicants:**

- N/A