

## Letter from the Director



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Welcome to the Newhouse Center for the Humanities!

As I write, I approach the half mark of my first year as the Director. I remain a faculty member in the [French Department](#), where I continue to participate. My goal for the Center is first and foremost to continue its legacy as a place of plenitude and creativity. Conceptually, the Center is located in the “Humanities,” taken in its broadest framing to include the fine arts and to encompass humanistic approaches across disciplines, thus taking us beyond what we might typically think of as the Humanities. Physically located in a breathtakingly beautiful space in Green Hall, the Newhouse Center is an intellectual home from which to think, debate, experiment, and create. I’m keen to present some of the new projects to be introduced in this tenth anniversary year of the Center. I feel extremely fortunate to be its third director, and I wish to express a sense of my admiration for the two previous directors, whose achievements for the Center

both provide a wonderful foundation for the work I am embarking on and a solid challenge to meet.

I am honored to have a stellar group of individuals who have recently accepted to serve on the [Advisory Council to the Director](#) in an honorary capacity. I am grateful to President Bottomly for having formally appointed each of them. In addition, a group of dynamic, accomplished Wellesley faculty members and heads of other units comprises the internal [Advisory Board](#). They are instrumental in advising on and energizing all aspects of the Center; they contribute to programming, participate in selection of fellows and other visitors, give input and critical feedback on projects, suggest directions, or simply provide practical input, and, when the opportunity presents, take on aspects of programming themselves.

The focus of our interdisciplinary work at the Center in the next years will hinge on “method.” This year’s fellows have initiated conversation amongst themselves and with faculty in and beyond the college through a series of [Ateliers](#) conceived from a range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary stand points. The newly launched [Distinguished Thinkers](#) program has brought great excitement to our community and stimulated many organized collectives that have taken the form of book clubs, discussion groups, and other specially designed forums that various student groups have already adopted or proposed with enthusiasm and energy. I welcome any member of the community to propose a [reading group](#), made up of a mix of members of our community and beyond, around the Distinguished Thinkers or other announced speakers. Two [Newhouse Courses in the Humanities](#) being offered for the first time this year enjoin specific curricula to Newhouse Center programming. This idea is still quite experimental and the fit has to be carefully thought through well in advance of the year's program. I will keep the faculty updated if there are opportunities to competitively propose such a course, which is what I would like to do in the future.

In general, most events sponsored and supported by the Newhouse Center will tend to be approached as the culmination of a project rather than as a scheduled incident. Typically, these will allow for inclusion of the fellows in residence and the use of Newhouse infrastructure. Increasingly, programming at the Center includes targeted groups from the college community. Projects in the most creative formats, promoting unusual conversations or unpredictable partnerships, will be viewed with great enthusiasm and favor for Newhouse support. The community is encouraged to approach the Director or a member of the [Advisory Board](#) with these ideas well in advance. A project that is open to discussion and

brainstorming will generally be preferred over a fully formed event seeking physical space or funds. The center is committed to nurturing such initiatives, collaboratively turning them into projects, and bringing them to fruition. I am excited to hear from faculty, students, and all staff in this context!

Two recent graduates have become part of the Newhouse Center team as our [Research and Outreach Assistants](#). Students have become very actively involved in the center in various capacities. Ningyi Xi, the [Director's Executive Assistant](#), manages my calendar, schedule, and appointments in addition to the website and other projects. Please also take a look at our other [student assistants' profiles](#).

Some immediate opportunities for Wellesley faculty and other departments at the Center include the collaborative [interdisciplinary challenge](#), having your [department or unit meeting hosted by the Center](#), [integration of a Newhouse fellow](#) into your teaching, research, or other campus activity, workshop or [Atelier](#), and a Critical Thought network that is being established.

Please come by and visit the Center, and continue to visit us virtually to keep abreast of our programs. I wish you very well for the new year!

ANJALI PRABHU

02 December, 2015