

## **Human Distinctiveness Summer Seminar Project May 27 – June 17, 2015: Call for Proposals: Further Details**

This RFP is open to the full range of scholars who have gained a relevant doctoral degree. Theologians from different Christian denominational backgrounds are welcome to apply, including those with distinct theological expertise in, for example, systematic theology, philosophical theology, biblical studies, liturgical studies, moral theology, early Church history, etc. We are also open to theologians writing from the perspective of other religious traditions. For anthropologists we anticipate those who apply will have a particular interest in evolutionary anthropology, the archeology of religion, the evolution of religion, and/or issues related to human distinctiveness. While preference will be given to those who are in faculty positions at the time of application, the only eligibility requirement is a doctoral degree and a track record in research publications.

Candidates may choose to apply for (a) three week summer seminar in 2015 and follow-up 3-day seminar in 2016 only, or (b) summer seminar and follow-up seminar combined with a one-semester research leave period. Some of those who apply for (b) may be considered only eligible for (a) since this depends on the quality of the project proposal submitted.

Of the fifteen successful applicants for participation in the summer seminar, up to *twelve in theology* and up to *three in anthropology*, initially up to a total of *five awards* will be made for additional sabbatical leave grants. These awards will range from \$35,000 to \$44,000 total and grant expenditure must be taken up by December 2016 or earlier. The second short follow up seminar in June 2016 is intended to monitor progress on all applicants' research projects. *Those who are accepted for the summer seminar only in 2015 may still re-apply for a further round of sabbatical leave awards, subject to further funding, which will be announced subsequently. In this scenario you will not be required to attend a second three-week summer seminar.*

Ordinarily speaking, travel expenses to and from Notre Dame for each summer seminar will be covered up to a maximum total cost of \$1,500-\$2,000 for overseas candidates and \$500-\$1,000 for U.S. candidates, although exceptions may be negotiable depending on final cohort selected and particular circumstances. Full board and lodging at the Morris Inn will be covered during the seminar period itself.

Those candidates who apply for (a) need to demonstrate clearly:

1. How attendance at the summer seminar is important for their intellectual development as scholars.
2. How their research trajectory in this respect conforms with JTF donor intent (for more information see JTF website: <http://www.templeton.org/sir-john-templeton/philanthropic-vision>).
3. Likely travel costs to be incurred (estimate only).

Submission materials for candidates in category (a):

- A curriculum vitae showing background education, research experience, and current position, along with an attached two-page letter of intent in a combined PDF file that covers points 1-3 above. Please include in your letter

details of when you hope to take your leave award, no later than December 2016.

- The candidate is also responsible for ensuring that two letters of reference are submitted to the project administrator by the deadline.
- All application materials should be submitted to the project administrator Rebecca Artinian-Kaiser by **February 25, 2015**. Email address: rartinia@nd.edu

Those candidates who apply for (b) need to demonstrate clearly:

1. How attendance at the summer seminar is important for their intellectual development as scholars.
2. How their research trajectory in this respect conforms with JTF donor intent (for more information see JTF website: <http://www.templeton.org/sir-john-templeton/philanthropic-vision>).
3. Estimate of likely travel costs for summer seminar attendance up to the maximum indicated. Demonstration of the exact funding required for one semester sabbatical leave and explicit reasons for request amount.
4. A plan of the research that proposed in outline form, including bibliography and publication and dissemination plans.

Submission materials for candidates in category (b):

- A curriculum vitae showing background education, research experience, and current position, along with an attached two-page letter of intent in a combined PDF file that covers points 1-3 above. Please include in your letter details of when you hope to take your leave award, no later than December 2016 (matching funding extensions can go beyond this date if needed).
- A five page, single-spaced project proposal that fulfills point 4 above.
- Evidence (where applicable) of additional funding allowing, in most cases, depending on seniority of candidates, a further period of leave immediately before or after the sabbatical leave period funded by this project. This can take the form of an official letter from your institution or, in some cases, willingness to be self-funded/unpaid leave. (Note: this is not a requirement for applicants).
- Two letters of reference to reach the project administrator by the deadline.

The letter of intent should indicate why the background c.v. provides suitable intellectual training for the research that is intended and why attendance at the summer seminar is appropriate. The project proposal should make the case for research to be conducted in the way intended, including full details of publication outputs expected during or immediately following the sabbatical leave period. Anticipated submission dates and likely publishers should be included in the proposal if possible.

It is expected that candidates will take their period of leave in their home institution. However, where candidates have permission to conduct research elsewhere, provisional details of where this might take place, along with reasons

why this will enable research to benefit should be included. Any travel costs to contexts for sabbatical leave taken outside the home institution are not covered by the grant.

All application materials should be submitted to the project administrator Rebecca Artinian-Kaiser by **February 25, 2015**. Email address: [rartinia@nd.edu](mailto:rartinia@nd.edu)

### *Areas of Possible Theological Research*

Possible topics for research on the general theme of human distinctiveness include a whole host of possible questions, in addition to the evolution of wisdom example that we will feature at the summer seminar, some of which are illustrated below. We intend this list to be illustrative only for the purposes of encouraging research proposals, but it is not intended either to be exhaustive or to limit research.

1. Theological questions associated with evolution, for example: what is the theological significance of how humans have come to terms with sin, evil, and death?
2. How is the theological concept of revelation and grace connected with the anthropological concept of transcendence?
3. Evolution of religion as such. What does it mean that we are created in God's image as well as evolved?
4. What are the different ways in which human distinctiveness is understood in anthropology compared with theology?
5. What new insights emerge in the biblical text when it is read through an evolutionary anthropological lens?
6. How is the social context of human beings portrayed in particular ancient theological traditions and in what ways does this raise interesting issues to consider for anthropologists?
7. What is the role of particular dispositions, including, for example, compassion, hope, charity, faith, gratitude, humility, forgiveness, and mercy in defining human distinctiveness? How might evidence of such characteristics appear in the historical record? (A project could focus on one or more of these).
8. How are reason and emotion expressed in the different moral virtues and/or passions, how might this have left traces in archeological history?
9. What are the explicitly theological implications of the fact that theology and faith practice are always culturally embedded?
10. How might specific liturgical studies or the work of particular theologians who study such sacramental practices connect with anthropological analyses of ritual practices?
11. What issues of philosophical theology and method are raised by engagement of theology with anthropology? Which philosophical traditions might be the most fruitful to consider in the context of evolutionary anthropology and why? (Examples could include, for example, hermeneutical scholars such as Paul

Ricoeur, Thomists such as Bernard Lonergan, or a whole host of other traditions.)

12. What might the mystical theological tradition illuminate when considering anthropological aspects of religious experience?

#### *Areas of Possible Anthropological Research*

While we consider it less likely that the anthropologists who come to the final week of the summer seminar will wish to engage in a full proposal of research, we anticipate that one or two of the five successful candidates may be in this position. Areas of possible anthropological research include the following:

1. The evolution of ritual/Ritual in human evolution
2. The use of symbol and meaning in human evolution
3. Assessing human distinctiveness in the evolutionary record
4. Engaging religion via the archeological past
5. Social complexity and symbolic behavior

#### **Criteria for Selection**

Candidates will be selected by a cross-disciplinary panel of expert and experienced faculty with experience relevant to particular applications and based on the following criteria:

1. Excellence and originality of the research project and its coherence with project aims and donor intent.
2. Demonstration that research background to date is suitable to conduct such research.
3. Evidence of likelihood of intellectual benefit from the summer seminar.
4. Evidence of ability to work in a collegial context.
5. Evidence of availability to conduct research and a track record of excellence in publications.

*At the long list stage, candidates will be contacted again to confirm their availability to attend the summer seminar in 2015.* Successful applicants who are offered a place at the summer seminar in 2015 or who are offered a combined summer seminar and sabbatical leave award will be notified of the final results no later than March 25, 2015. If necessary, an interview by Skype will be conducted for candidates on the short list. All successful applicants will be asked to complete a questionnaire that will ask about their expectations in taking part in the summer seminar program and research project, as well as to include a photograph and a short biography to be used for publicity purposes following the announcement of the awards.

#### **Media Coverage**

The successful candidates will be announced through the Notre Dame web page, which will also be set up for the purpose of recruiting applicants.