

Job Announcement

Rice Family Postdoctoral Fellowship in Bioethics and the Humanities

The Hastings Center seeks applications for a 2-year, full-time fellowship position, within the Center's new Bioethics and the Humanities Initiative (BHI). The BHI, created with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and private donors, has three aims. The first is to bring together insights from the humanities and the sciences, to advance public conversations about bioethical questions. The second aim is to cultivate a habit of thinking that increases our chances of talking with, rather than past, others as we attempt to engage in such conversations. The third is to support young scholars in the humanities who seek to promote truly integrative and open-minded public conversation regarding a bioethical question about which they care deeply.

Approximately half of the Rice Family Fellow's time will be devoted to their own scholarship, and the other half to advancing the work of The Hastings Center. Optimally, those two lines of work will be intimately related and mutually reinforcing.

The successful candidate will propose a theme and/or question that they will explore by writing an essay, article, or grant proposal. Applicants might want to develop one of the ideas below, but they are heartily encouraged to propose others.

- **Difference and Equality.** The science of genetics proceeds from the premise that human beings are genomically different. The humanities and interpretive social sciences proceed from the premise that all human beings are of equal moral worth. Is it, in the real world, possible to act in accordance with both of those premises?
- **Disability and Identity.** The disability rights movement has called attention to the way in which traits traditionally viewed as disabling are *inessential* features of the persons with those traits. This has been one of the insights that has led to "person-first language," as in, "he is a *person with* autism." Some people who embody such traits, however, consider those traits to be *essential* features of who they are, and argue for "identity-first language," as in, "he *is an* autistic." Is there a way to benefit from the insights at work in both of those apparently incompatible views?
- **Illness and Badness.** Some observers suggest that, by definition, someone who shoots innocent strangers for no apparent reason is mentally ill. Others maintain that such a view is factually incorrect, conceptually confused, and/or ethically corrupt. Is there any way to reconcile those apparently antithetical views?

The successful candidate will have completed their dissertation in the humanities within the last 3 years. Following the NEH's definition, we include within the humanities not only traditional disciplines like philosophy, literature, and history, but also "those aspects of social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods." The successful candidate also will be eager to step up and contribute to the Center's ongoing work, including helping to write a grant, the content of which may be beyond the Fellow's usual academic comfort zone. Evidence of interest in reaching beyond the academy to a broader public audience will be viewed highly favorably.

The Rice Family Fellow will work closely with [Erik Parens](#), who is Director of the Bioethics and the Humanities Initiative. In addition to having a strong background in the humanities and a keen interest in bioethics, the successful candidate will enjoy working in a small, highly interdisciplinary institution in Garrison, NY, which is a 75-minute train ride from NYC, up the Hudson River.

Candidates must already have the right to work in the U.S. (e.g. they must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents).

To apply: Upload a letter of application, including your **not more than 150-word** proposed theme and/or question, along with your CV, two writing samples (preferably one that is short and public-facing and one that is longer and scholarly), and the names and contact information for two references [here](#). Questions sent to fellowship@thehastingscenter.org will be answered promptly.

Application deadline: December 31, 2019. Applications will be reviewed as they are received. The Fellowship will begin in September of 2020. It includes a salary of \$55,000, plus health insurance, generous vacation, sick leave and holiday schedules. The Hastings Center is an equal opportunity employer, committed to building a diverse staff and creating an inclusive environment for all employees. For more information about The Hastings Center, visit: www.thehastingscenter.org.

The Hastings Center is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan institution that since 1969 has been a leader in research, education, and policy recommendations on the ethical and social impact of advances in medicine, health care, and biotechnology.