

What's new at ACMRS

2023-24



ASU Arizona Center for Medieval
and Renaissance Studies
Arizona State University

ASU Charter

ASU is a comprehensive **public research university**, measured not by whom it excludes, but by **whom it includes** and how they **succeed**; advancing **research and discovery** of public value; and assuming **fundamental responsibility** for the economic, social, cultural and overall health of the **communities** it serves.





**Engage the past.
Define the future.**



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Letter from the Interim Director

Through our dynamic programming, our open-access press, and our internationally recognized RaceB4Race scholarly society, ACMRS continues to define the direction of the future of premodern studies. With a commitment to inclusive practices that guide our efforts, ACMRS has established itself as a model of emulation for other centers and cultural institutions on a global scale. The impact and influential reach of our programming has led to partnerships with other leading institutions like Shakespeare's Globe and the Folger Shakespeare Library, and it has allowed us to secure support from major granting agencies like the Mellon Foundation, the Henry Luce Foundation, the Hitz Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

In a moment when it is most critical, we are demonstrating why the humanities are vital by vividly underscoring how engagement with the premodern past presents important and urgent understandings

of the present. Through the development of pedagogical resources, formal mentoring networks, first and second book institutes, social media training, and an array of initiatives aimed at the professionalization of scholars of color, we are transforming the field of premodern studies and influencing how other organizations think about the reach of the humanities at large. At ACMRS, we have fostered a community of leading scholars, artists, and activists committed to an inclusive future – and that future is bright.

Ruben Espinosa
Interim Director



Enacting scholarly justice



RaceB4Race

RaceB4Race is an ongoing conference series and professional network community by and for scholars of color working on issues of race in premodern literature, history, and culture. Since 2019, RaceB4Race has become a model for social justice programs in academia around the world. By influencing journals and presses to reevaluate their editorial practices to be more inclusive, providing models for antiracist pedagogies, and showcasing the most expansive and innovative scholarship in premodern studies, RaceB4Race has changed the bar of cutting edge research in the field.

RaceB4Race is brought to life by the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies in partnership with The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Division of Humanities and is supported by the Hitz Foundation, the Henry Luce Foundation and the Mellon Foundation.

RaceB4Race symposia

The first RaceB4Race symposium in 2019 was originally imagined to be a small group of scholars engaged in premodern critical race studies in conversation with each other. In actuality, it was a gathering of three hundred graduate students, faculty, university staff, community college students, high school teachers, administrators, artists and members of the community.

By creating a space to engage with questions of race in premodern history, literature, art and culture, RaceB4Race filled a long unmet need. Since then, RaceB4Race has convened six times, expanding its reach and offering opportunities for scholars around the world to learn, develop in their careers and engage with a community of rigorous and ground-breaking scholars.

Partner institutions

Folger Shakespeare Library

King's College London

Brandeis University

University of Toronto

Rutgers University

Shakespeare's Globe



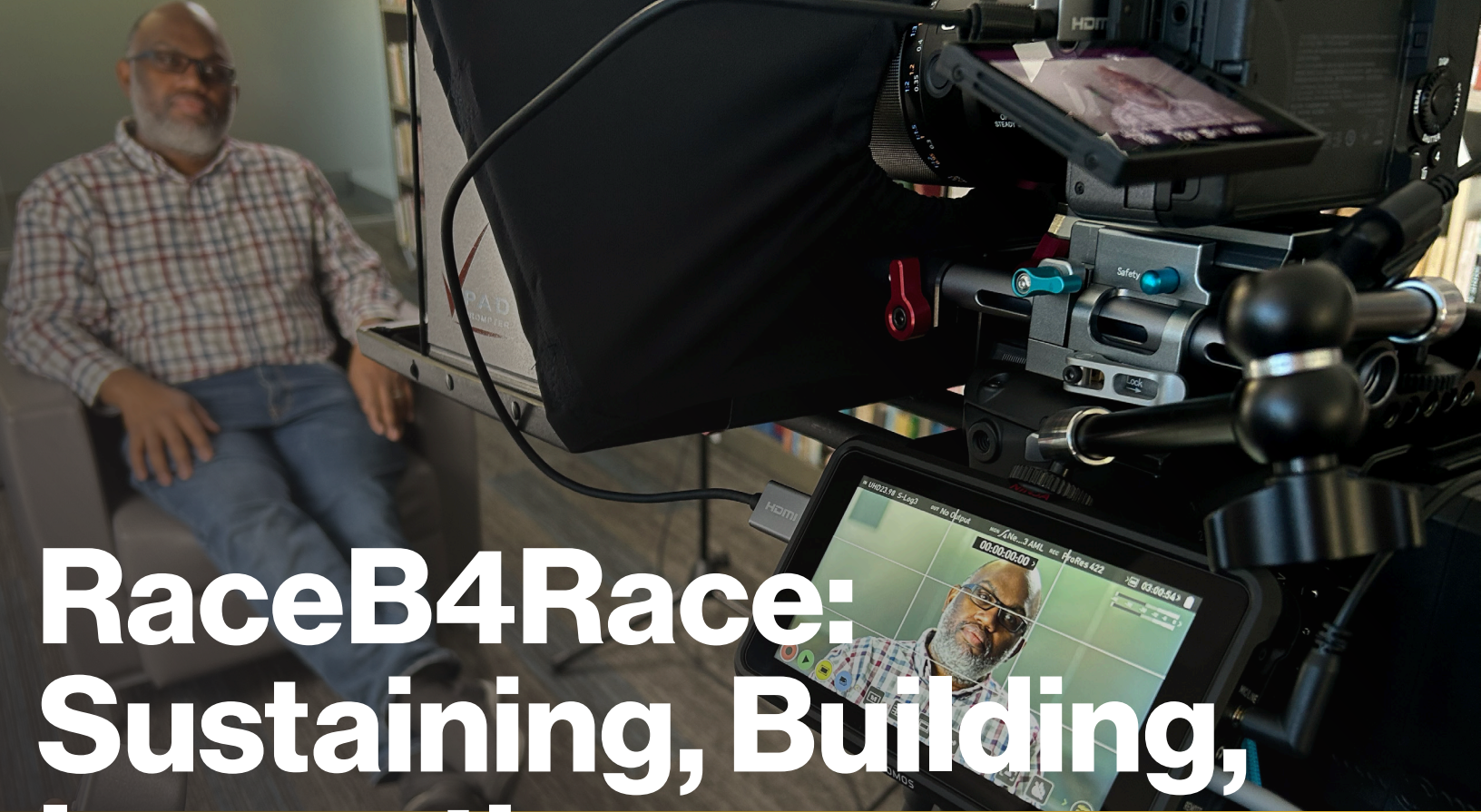
Poetics

A RaceB4Race Symposium

This symposium invited scholars and poets to examine the ways race can, should, and/or does function within poetic paradigms. Along with one of our distinguished speakers, Fred Moten, we ponder “the question of how we can read the poem is redoubled now, now, how can we read this poem?”



In January of 2023, Poetics brought together scholars, students, artists, poets, activists, staff and community members. Speakers included Brandi K. Adams, Tanvir Ahmed, Suzanne Coley, Reginald Jackson, Promise Li, Jackie Murray, Susie Phillips, Debapriya Sarkar, and Reginald Wilburn.



RaceB4Race: Sustaining, Building, Innovating

In fall of 2021 ACMRS was awarded \$3.5 million by the Mellon Foundation to diversify the curricula, academic pipelines, popular narratives, and public-facing media and personnel for premodern literature, history and culture. Through curricula development,

scholar support and mentoring, social media training and content creation, as well as supporting a robust network of scholars, ACMRS has been hard at work on this ambitious project.



Introducing Throughlines

With support from the Mellon Foundation, the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies is creating a useful range of higher education curricula and pedagogical resources for educators at all stages of their careers. This project offers new ways of teaching the past to engage the present moment.

Throughlines will house a wide range of premodern critical race studies teaching materials, including lectures, pedagogical approaches, exemplar syllabi, classroom discussion models and more. These materials are developed by cutting-edge scholars in the fields of premodern studies in collaboration with the Throughlines team. Contributors include Dan-el Padilla Peralta, Kim F. Hall, Cord J. Whitaker, Chouki El Hamel, Leslie Alexander, Margo Hendricks, and more.

By providing accessible, free and easy to use teaching resources for premodern critical race studies, Throughlines aims to change the way literature, history, and culture is taught in higher education. Giving educators the tools they need to to engage students in discussions of the historical arcs of race-making and systemic racism will change the way future scholars, leaders and innovators in our country think about equity and inclusion.

Throughlines will launch to the public in the fall of 2024. Join our mailing list at acmrs.asu.edu/about/ mailing to stay in the loop.

Curricula development

RaceB4Race is in the process of developing a useful range of higher education curricula and pedagogy for educators at all stages of their careers. These teaching materials will be freely available online. Throughout 2023 ACMRS has met with leading scholars in the field, gathered resources and developed the initial content for this curriculum. This year, ACMRS will continue to craft curricular materials for Throughlines that offer more complete and accurate narratives about the past and its modern uses.

Public intellectual development

Just as important as social media training for scholars, media and public intellectual training gives scholars a way to communicate the importance of premodern critical race studies in the face of extreme backlash and opposition. RaceB4Race will continue to support the development of premodern critical race scholars as public intellectuals through year-long virtual workshops. Literary agents, editors, radio and television producers, etc. will continue to work with the cohort as a group and individually to coach scholars on the steps involved in becoming an acknowledged, public expert.

Mentorship network

Directed by Patricia Akhimie at the Folger Shakespeare Library, 15 leaders in the field are working directly with early career scholars and engaging in a semester-long interdisciplinary and cross-institutional reading and research group. This community of care addresses many inflection points in a scholar's career: isolation in their field or institution, under-advisement about what it takes to turn research into a book and navigating the institutional demands of the tenure track. ACMRS is proud to welcome the second cohort of mentors and mentees in the fall semester of 2023.

Book institutes

RaceB4Race seeks to address a glaring need to support early and mid-career scholars through the process of publishing their first and second books – key critical junctures in an academic career. During the spring of 2023 and under the direction of Patricia Akhimie, the RaceB4Race First and Second Book Institutes provided a cohort of 23 scholars from around the world with the opportunity to focus on their monograph projects with a group of invested scholars and expert institute leaders Cord J. Whitaker, Jonathan Hsy, and Jean E. Howard.

Social media content creation

Research shows that many members of Gen-Z value and prioritize non-hierarchical teaching and learning models, especially through social media. A group of undergraduate students, in collaboration with postdoctoral research scholars and ACMRS faculty, is creating peer-to-peer social media content that explores premodern globalism and the earliest constructions of racial formation.

Social media fellows

Due to the public nature of this work, RaceB4Race scholars and students must be trained in digital, personal, and institutional safety. In the spring of 2023, under the direction of Dorothy Kim at Brandeis University, a cohort of 10 scholars and students received specialized training from digital humanists, lawyers, and other experts, giving them the tools they need as they share RaceB4Race-produced materials, give public appearances, or engage on other platforms that bring broader public attention to narratives about race in the past and its modern uses.





Welcome Tanvir Ahmed

Tanvir Ahmed joined ACMRS in the fall of 2023 as our newest Postdoctoral Research Scholar. He holds a PhD in Religious Studies from Brown University, where he specialized in the study of Islam. His work takes a deconstructive approach to Islamic materials – such as hagiographies, shrine guides, royal chronicles, personal letters, and song – to highlight counter narratives by non-elite and marginalized subjects that challenge received knowledge about Muslim society and culture. Ahmed's scholarship is set to appear in forums such as *History & Theory*, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, *Viator*, and *Afghanistan*. His works of fiction are published or under contract at *Strange Horizons*, *The Deadlands*, *Translunar Travelers Lounge*, *khōrēō magazine*, and *Dancing Star Press*.

We are thrilled to welcome Tanvir to our team of incredible Postdoctoral Research Scholars.



Eduardo Ramos
Postdoctoral
Research Scholar
2022-24



Cornesha Tweede
Postdoctoral
Research Scholar
2022-24

Bridging the Shakespeare – Latinx Divide

The Crossing Latinidades Humanities Research Initiative, an award from the Mellon Foundation housed at the University of Illinois Chicago, aims to bring synergy between R1 Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) in the United States. With a \$100,000 subaward, the Bridging the Shakespeare – Latinx Divide working group collaborates, shares research and organizes symposia with PhD candidates across the country.

The project team's aim is to show students why their analyses, performances and adaptations of Shakespeare can transform the field by fostering cross-institutional and cross-regional dialogues within the humanities about national and linguistic identity, immigration, race, ethnicity, economics, ethics, citizenship and social justice – all issues that define, in part, the Latino experience in the U.S.

Principle Investigators: Ruben Espinosa and Ayanna Thompson (ASU), Kyle Grady (University of California, Irvine) and Joseph Ortiz (University of Texas at El Paso)

funding
update



RaceB4Race Public Circulation of Ideas

With support from the Henry Luce Foundation, the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies will continue to expand the field of premodern critical race studies through the creation of accessible public scholarship.

During a year-long seminar a cohort of premodern critical race scholars from diverse fields (e.g., literary studies, history, classics, religion, art history and archeology) will come together for a series of seminars featuring discussion, design and workshopping that culminates in collaborative public-facing projects. The RaceB4Race Public Circulation of Ideas aims to expand both academic and public understanding of premodern critical race studies through the cultivation of public scholars and scholarship.

The Henry Luce Foundation awarded ACMRS a \$50,000 seed grant to develop this project and expand the program for the future.

ACMRS Open Access

With support from the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), with funding made possible through the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies was awarded \$100,000 to reimagine the landscape of open access publishing in premodern studies.

Through this “ACMRS Open Access” grant, the ACMRS Press team hosted free, public-facing virtual workshops for scholars, students, teachers and community members who are interested in publishing their projects in open access formats. These workshops focused on identifying, explaining, and modelling the differences between academic publishing, writing for a general public, and navigating the publishing process in open access and traditional print publishing.

\$3.75 million in active grants

funding update

RaceB4Race Sustaining, Building Innovating



\$3.5 million from the Mellon Foundation

Crossing the Shakespeare – Latinx Divide



\$100,000 subaward from CLHRI and the Mellon Foundation

RaceB4Race Public Circulation of Ideas



\$50,000 from the Henry Luce Foundation

ACMRS Open Access



\$100,000 from SSRC and NEH



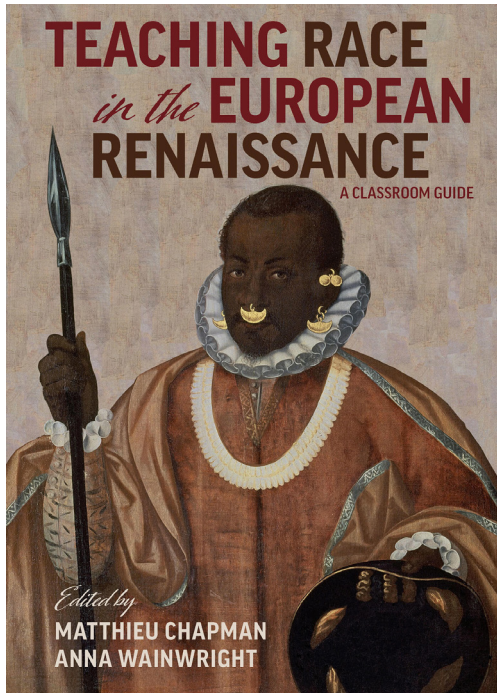
**Making knowledge
accessible to all**

ACMRS Press and open access initiatives

ACMRS Press publishes, disseminates and promotes the most forward looking and innovating research in premodern studies. We publish projects that are historically grounded and theoretically expansive, with the aim of fostering dialogues that reach into the present moment and point us to different, more inclusive, futures.

We must transform the way premodern texts are taught so that every person can see themselves in the archive. The problem, however, remains access. Most academic books, including ones about how to best

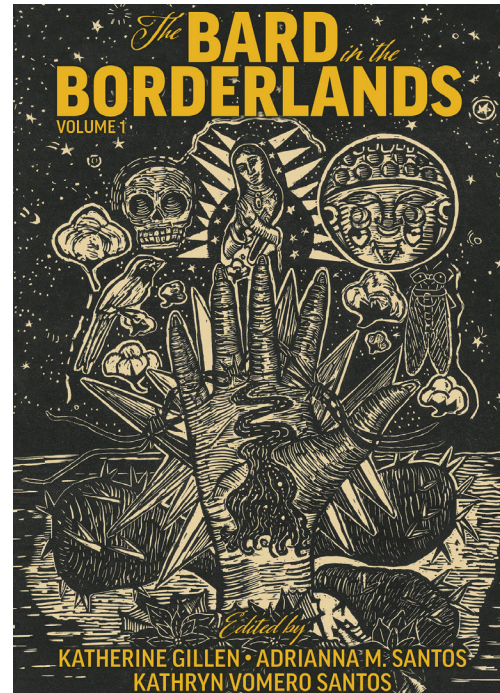
teach the past, are prohibitively expensive and fewer and fewer libraries have standing orders to purchase them. If our vanguard research and pedagogy remain behind a paywall, only those who can afford access can truly participate in new knowledge creation. Therefore, our press publishes this scholarship in an open access format.



Teaching Race in the European Renaissance

Edited by Matthieu Chapman and Anna Wainwright

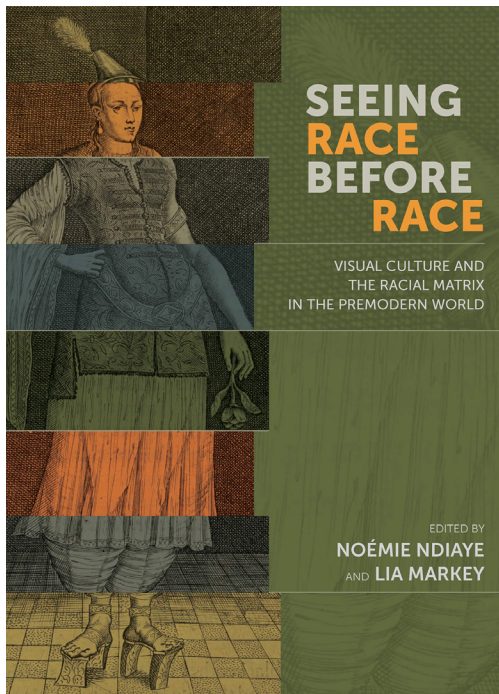
This collection provides both educators and students the tools they need to discuss race in the European Renaissance both in its unique historical contexts and as part of a broader continuum with racial thinking today.



The Bard in the Borderlands, Vol 1

Edited by Katherine Gillen, Adrianna M. Santos, and Kathryn Vomero Santos

This anthology celebrates the dynamic, multilingual reworking of canon and place that defines Borderlands Shakespeare, and it situates these geographically and temporally diverse plays within the robust study of Shakespeare's global afterlives.



Seeing Race Before Race

Edited by Noémie Ndiaye and Lia Markey

The capacious visual archive studied in this volume includes a trove of visual materials. Contributors explore the deployment of what coeditor Noémie Ndiaye calls “the racial matrix” and its interconnected paradigms across the medieval and early modern chronological divide and across vast transnational and multilingual geographies.

Play On Shakespeare

Enlisting the talents of a group of contemporary playwrights, screenwriters, and dramaturges from diverse backgrounds, this project reenvision[s] Shakespeare for the twenty-first century. These volumes make these works available for the first time in print—a new First Folio for a new era.

Learn more at acmrspress.com

The Sundial

The Sundial is a digital publication showcasing some of the most forward-thinking public humanities work in the fields of premodern studies. The essays we publish highlight ways we can use premodern pasts to engage with and interrogate our understanding of the world today. *The Sundial* is a space for authors to write for broader audiences and gain greater exposure for their work, a space to try out new, daring, risky ideas.

During the 2022-23 academic year, articles in *The Sundial* were read 6,757 times.

Learn more at medium.com/the-sundial-acmrs



“A Marvelous Proper Man”: Shakespearean Ableism, Modern Transphobia, and Pronouns

by Bridget M. Bartlett



Teaching Reproductive Justice in the Premodern Classroom

by Valerie Traub



Un-Mooring Race in Sicilian Folklore: The Tradition of “Testa di Moro”

by Laura Ingallinella

ACMRS YouTube channel

In an effort to promote greater access to forward-looking conversations in the premodern fields, ACMRS hosts digital, free and open to the public events. These events invite speakers to engage in dialogues on the contemporary and historic lenses through which we can investigate, interrogate and reinvision the issues our world faces now.

All ACMRS events are livestreamed and recorded and uploaded to the ACMRS YouTube channel. Previous events include conversations with major writers like Zadie Smith, Fred Moten, Jericho Brown, Marlon James and more. All RaceB4Race symposia and digital webinars are also available to watch on our YouTube channel.





Engaging our community

Connecting scholars, students and artists

ACMRS supports an expansive community of scholars, students, university staff, administrators, artists and theater practitioners. Our free, open to the public events feature experts in their fields who focus on intersectional and expansive topics related to premodern literature, culture and history. We offer awards, internships and residencies that support scholars and students at critical junctures in

their careers. These programs offer participants the ability to develop new skills, create professional networks and conduct research that looks to the past to imagine different, more inclusive, futures.



Distinguished Speaker Series

The ACMRS Distinguished Speaker Series brings prominent artists, performers, writers and public figures whose work has been influenced by premodern art and culture to ASU for a free, public event.

In January of 2023, ACMRS was honored to host a conversation between Pulitzer-prize winning poet Jericho Brown and poet/artist and MacArthur Fellow Fred Moten. This conversation, moderated by Ayanna

Thompson, examined the ways race can, should, and/or does function within poetic paradigms.

The recording is available on the ACMRS YouTube channel.



CALL AND

RESPONSE

A Summer Discussion Series

Call and Response is a digital event series hosted by the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies and sponsored by the Institute for Humanities Research at Arizona State University.

Every summer, we bring together scholars of premodern history, literature

and culture to discuss a pressing issue in our present moment and to shed light upon its long historical relevance. Past discussions have addressed issues such as police violence, archival erasure and reproductive justice.



Inclusive Futures: Race, Religion and PCRS

This discussion with Bernadette Andrea, Geraldine Heng, Stephanie Shirilan and Lehua Yim, moderated by Patricia Akhimie, addressed the reach and limits of antiracist research and teaching. This discussion aimed to have an honest conversation about who is included and who is excluded when it comes to antiracist work in premodern studies. How do we engage (or do we engage with) anti-Semitism?

Islamophobia? anti-Asian racism? anti-immigrant sentiments? Namely, how do we envision effective allyship in premodern studies?

This conversation, the most recent in the Call and Response discussion series, is available to watch on the ACMRS YouTube channel.

ACMRS Short Term Residencies

The ACMRS Short Term residencies enable scholars who have earned a PhD in a premodern field to pursue their research for a period of four to six weeks. The residency is designed to allow scholars to focus on finishing projects for publication, and to take advantage of the faculty and staff at ACMRS to receive mentoring and advice in bringing their project to publication. In line with ACMRS' mission of access, these residencies are flexible, allowing scholars to

visit ASU for any amount of time as fits their schedule and ability.

While visiting, residents meet with ASU faculty and students, and give a presentation about their work in progress.



Suzanne Coley

2023-24 Short Term Resident



Nahir Otaño Gracia

2023-24 Short Term Resident

What do you do at ACMRS?

I work with a team of other undergraduate students on creating content for our social media campaign targeted towards Gen Z college students. This content aims to increase the interest in and accessibility of research conducted by scholars in premodern critical race studies.

What drew you to ACMRS?

History and English classes have always been my favorite, especially because I find it so interesting



and important to learn about the story of the past. But throughout my education, there was a lack of inclusivity in the field, and an avoidance of using our knowledge about the past as a tool to understand and change our present – when I first learned about ACMRS, the supportive, diverse community of scholars stood out to me, and their work to widen the scope of premodern studies made me realize that there was so much crucial research being done that more people need to know about!

What is something you've taken from the experience of working at ACMRS?

My time at ACMRS has helped me become more proactive and confident in my skills. I've learned to trust myself and to not be afraid to ask for help because of the supportive environment the ACMRS team has created, which has in turn made me branch out in my education to learn more about literature and other subjects which have always been interesting yet intimidating to me.


ACMRS Undergraduate Student Workers

Haley Rominger (Grad year 2023)

Paulina Soto (Grad year 2025)

Andrea Zamora Chavez (Grad year 2023)

Meet Paulina Soto



acmrs.asu.edu