Doctoral Fellows at the Jackman Humanities Institute, 2019-2020
Annual Theme: Strange Weather

Chancellor Henry N.R. Jackman Graduate Fellows in the Humanities

Chiara Graf, Classics
*Wisdom and Other Feelings: Affect, Knowledge, and the Senecan Subject*
Chiara’s dissertation treats the relationship of affect and natural science in the works of the Roman philosopher, scientist, and tragedian Lucius Annaeus Seneca (c.1 BCE-65 CE). What feelings arise in the face of unexpected, beautiful, or frightening natural phenomena? What can these feelings teach us? How can we harness them towards ethical thought and action? She argues that affect can provide routes to knowledge and define the subject’s relationship to the cosmos. Chiara’s research draws heavily upon the history of science, the study of ancient literature, and modern philosophy and critical theory.

Judith Ellen Brunton, Study of Religion
*A Pandemonium of Hope: Oil, aspiration, and the good life in Alberta*
Judith’s research explores how oil companies, government agencies, and community organizations in Alberta use oil to describe a set of values about land use, labour, and aspiration. Oil, in Alberta, is a key symbolic element in imagining what a good life is. To explore these messages about goodness, her project follows oil through four key cultural portraits grounded in ethnographic and archival work: the Christian colonial project of settlement in western Canada; historical narratives that frame energy as “heritage”; white-collar corporate culture in Calgary; and the entangled cultural assertions of the Calgary Stampede. Judith’s research works to discover the relationship between oil and these social worlds of value in Alberta, and to identify key areas of inquiry for the work of imagining a future that navigates the realities of climate change.

Henry Ivry, English
*Transscalar Narratives: Crisis and Form in the Anthropocene Contemporary*
Henry’s dissertation looks at how *scale* operates as a central feature in both current literary criticism and crisis narratives. Examining the representation of crises from 9/11 to Ferguson, his dissertation looks at the way in which the Anthropocene requires us to account for a divergent set of scales, bringing together surprising and often divergent times, places, and assemblages. Identifying what he calls “transcalar narratives,” his dissertation claims that a transcalar account of both literature and literary criticism enables an understanding of what it means to live in a time when human agency is at once massive and miniscule. Questions of politics, identity, ecology, and geology, he argues, are complementary and co-constitutional. Tapping into the heuristic possibility of the literary, Henry follows Bruno Latour in suggesting that in the era of strange weather, “Fiction anticipates what we hope to observe soon.”