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MHC Names Spring 2023 Faculty Grant Awardees

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MHC Names Spring 2023 Faculty Grant Awardees

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The Clement and Linda McGillicuddy Humanities Center is pleased to announce the recipients of its funding decisions for the Spring 2023 Faculty Research Awards and MHC

recipients of its funding decisions for the Spring 2023 Faculty Research Awards cycle. MHC Faculty Grants, adjudicated by a subcommittee of UMaine faculty across humanities disciplines, provide up to \$5,000 to UMaine faculty (including lecturers and adjunct instructors) for financial support of research, community engagement, or innovative teaching. This year's recipients were Robert Ballingall, Ryan LaRoche, Carla Billitteri, Margo Lukens, and Jennifer Moxley.

Robert Ballingall, assistant professor in the **Department of Political Science**, will receive funding for a book project titled *Plato's Reverent City: The Laws and the Politics of Authority*. An MHC faculty grant will help defray costs related to publishing Ballingall's forthcoming monograph in an open access format. Books published open access have much higher citation rates and impact in their fields and with the broader public. Ballingall's book, *Plato's Reverent City* brings out the enduring relevance of one of Plato's least-studied dialogues for understanding the contempt of lawful civility that appears endemic to modern societies. The monograph shows how Plato's *Laws* anticipates this worrying trend with remarkable foresight yet locates its germ in a novel cause. Contemporary observers point to economic disruption, persistent racism, and communication technology to explain the so-called new populism, but the *Laws* dwells on the disruptive consequences of neglecting a certain virtue—reverence, the capacity for showing due respect for what exceeds and circumscribes the human condition.

Carla Billitteri, associate professor in the **Department of English**, was awarded an MHC faculty grant for a project titled "Magnetic Surrealism: Laura (Riding) Jackson 1930s Poetics." This project continues and expands the examination of the philosophical dimensions of Laura (Riding) Jackson's poetics that Billitteri began in her book *Language and the Renewal of Society* (2009). MHC support will help support Billitteri's plan to visit Laura (Riding) Jackson's archive at Cornell University and examine her unpublished letters and notes, and to present her findings at a conference on Logic and Modern Literature, held by the Department of English, University of Lausanne, Switzerland, in September.

Ryan LaRoche, lecturer in **Leadership Studies** and the **Department of Political Science**, received a McGillicuddy Humanities Center grant for work on his biography of Maine lawyer and politician William S. Cohen, tentatively titled "Getting to the Truth: William S. Cohen's Life in Leadership." The MHC grant will provide funding to cover travel and lodging to conduct archival research at both the Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan Presidential Libraries, as well as oral history interviews with individuals familiar with Cohen's leadership, including Cohen himself.

Margo Lukens, professor in the **Department of English** and former MHC director, was awarded a faculty grant to support conference travel for her work on Indigenous literature and drama. Lukens will travel to Pomona College in Claremont, CA for a panel that assembles actors, directors, playwrights and scholars who knew and worked with William S. Yellow Robe, Jr.. She will also be traveling to Toronto for the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association's annual conference to present on *Still They Remember Me*, the bilingual book of Penobscot stories published in 2021.

Finally, **Jennifer Moxley**, professor in the **Department of English** and former MHC director, will receive MHC funding to support a campus visit and public screening of two films based on Stephen King novels, chosen and presented by Millie De Chirico and Danielle Henderson, hosts of the film podcast *I Saw What You Did*, followed by a discussion and Q & A. This visit, supported also by the Stephen E. King Chair in Literature, aims to support film culture and teach students ways to approach film watching. In addition, they will be able to discuss with these working professionals approaches to using one's humanities education (such as writing for TV, podcasting, or film programming).

McGillicuddy Humanities Center Faculty Grants, which are awarded twice per year in a

competitive process, support faculty at all levels with research, community engagement, or innovative teaching proposals. The next application deadline is October 17, 2023. For more information, visit <https://umaine.edu/mhc/research/for-faculty/> or email mhc@maine.edu.

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