

Heller Center for the Arts and Humanities  
Reading Clusters Application Instructions (**Last updated:** December 2019)

This document describes the Heller Center reading clusters and explains how to create one.

### **Description**

Heller Center reading clusters, or working groups, are self-directed reading projects organized around a topic chosen by a small group of students. Though each cluster is connected to a faculty member and approved by the Heller Center faculty board, the students in the cluster drive the content and organization. The clusters provide no class credit, grades, assessment, or formal writing; their sole purpose is for students to pursue sustained and focused reading around shared intellectual and scholarly interests in an informal, low-stakes, small-group, self-directed setting.

### **Application Process**

Here are instructions for how to apply to organize a reading cluster:

- 1) Find a few friends or fellows students (3 students minimum) and come up with an idea for reading.
- 2) Approach a faculty sponsor and get an “okay” to proceed.
- 3) Write up an application and book list. Your application should describe your reading proposal, explain its rationale and reason for existence, designate one student as primary cluster contact (include email; this student must be currently enrolled at UCCS), and name your faculty sponsor. 300 words total.
- 4) Designated contact student arrange to get a transcript (unofficial is fine), and a (brief) faculty letter (single paragraph) vouching for student’s responsibility and good standing.
- 5) Submit application, consisting of 300 word document, unofficial transcript, and faculty letter, by the deadline. Applications should be emailed, as a single PDF, to: [hellerfs@uccs.edu](mailto:hellerfs@uccs.edu) & [rgoodma2@uccs.edu](mailto:rgoodma2@uccs.edu), with the subject line, “Heller Center reading cluster application.”

That’s it!

### **Selection Process**

After all applications have been received for a given year, the Heller committee will review applications and contact selected clusters by week 17 (finals week) of spring semester. Clusters start the following year.

### **Your Cluster Has Been Selected!—Now What?**

Clusters must plan to meet at least 4 times during the year. To arrange meeting times at the Heller Center, students should email [hellerfs@uccs.edu](mailto:hellerfs@uccs.edu) & [rgoodma2@uccs.edu](mailto:rgoodma2@uccs.edu). Before each meeting time should pick up the key and Heller Event instructions sheet from the University Center front desk. After the meeting, students clean up, lock up, and return the key to the front desk. That’s it!

Each cluster receives a small monetary stipend (\$100) for purchasing refreshments for the meetings and / or books for reading. This money will be disbursed in the form of a single payment to the cluster's designated primary contact person; details regarding disbursement procedures will be provided following the selection of one's cluster. Students should keep their receipts, as they may be asked to account for funds spent at the end of the year.

Though each group has a faculty sponsor, that person is not required, or necessarily expected, to attend meetings, though they certainly can if they want to.

Each cluster runs for a year; renewals or extensions are allowed, with a new application.

Current clusters are posted on the Heller website, with contact information, and past clusters are archived on the site.

### **Getting Books**

Students participating in a cluster should plan to purchase their own book(s) or work with the Kraemer Family Library to locate copies in the collection or online. To do the latter, students should contact Mary Rupp in the UCCS University Archives in the Kraemer Family Library with information about their book selection. The Library has an arrangement with the Heller reading clusters to purchase one copy of the book(s) selected if it is not already within the library collection. The purchased copy (or one from the collection) will be put on reserve for the duration of the reading cluster. It will be checked out for a week at a time (may be returned sooner). The library contact for the clusters is Mary Rupp; please contact her initially through email at [mrupp@uccs.edu](mailto:mrupp@uccs.edu), and please consider if a specific edition or translation of the work is needed and include that information.

### **A Few Possible Reading Cluster Ideas**

Possible ideas around which to organize a reading cluster might include the following, which are offered merely as examples:

- Poetry & Politics
- Theorizing Urban Space
- Theorizing Contemporary Popular Culture
- Reading Dostoyevsky's major works
- Reading *Democracy in America*
- Reading Marx's *Capital*, volume 1
- Slavery and the Atlantic World
- Gender and the Law
- Digital Spaces and Gaming Worlds

### ***What do you want to read more about this year?***

If you have further questions, please contact Steve Carter, Heller Center representative for the UCCS English Department, at [scarter2@uccs.edu](mailto:scarter2@uccs.edu).