The Humanities and Social Change Center at the University of California, Santa Barbara, approaches social change both as an object of critical study and as a constructive task. Focusing on the existential grounds and implications of social change in its political, economic, cultural, and environmental dimensions, and highlighting the decisive roles of technology and science in transforming these domains, we respond critically and creatively to such transformation through an emphasis on its moral, ethical, psychological, and spiritual stakes.

Extending our inaugural year’s work on the theme of "Fact and Value - After Truth," which addresses the political and cultural crisis we currently face regarding the meaning, function, and interplay of facts, values, and truth in public discourse, the Humanities and Social Change Center at UCSB seeks for the academic year 2018-2019 scholars from all fields in the humanities, arts, and humanistic social sciences whose work contributes to our understanding of the epistemological and moral force of affective life in its varied range today (from resentment and rage, paranoia, anxiety, and despair; through addiction and distraction, boredom, indifference, greed and negligence; to trust, hope, care, and love).

Through our year’s work, we will seek to elucidate the roles that mood, sensibility, feeling, and other affective dispositions can play in shaping knowledge or belief about the true and the good; and we will examine the common tension or disjunction between such knowledge or belief and the lives we lead in practice. In exploring this latter problem, our year’s work aims to highlight questions of intergenerational responsibility and care for future generations.

The Center is especially (though not exclusively) interested in proposals for projects engaging traditions of religious and/or philosophical reflection and spiritual practice relating to the epistemological, moral, and spiritual significance of affective life (as for example in debate about relations between knowing and loving, or between theoretical and experiential modes of knowledge); the resonance and/or revision of such traditional thinking and practice in modern and contemporary philosophy and theory (as for example in phenomenological treatments of mood, care, embodiment, and erotic life; or the work of Stanley Cavell and related figures and traditions on skepticism, the epistemology of moods, and relations between knowledge and acknowledgment); the roles (actual or potential) of media, arts, literature, and rhetoric in shaping and mobilizing affective life (or vice versa);
affection, temporality, and the meanings of work, consumption, credit, and speculation in contemporary economies (financial, symbolic, cultural, etc.).

To apply for our Postdoctoral Scholar positions, please visit:

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