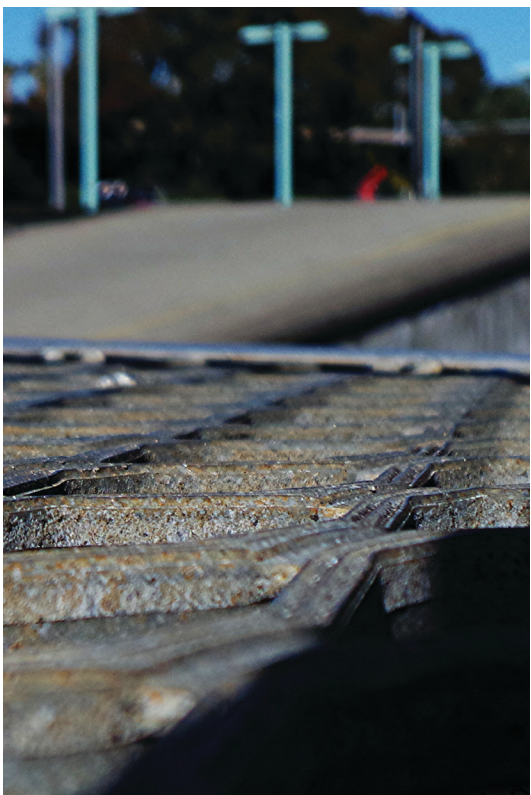


IAS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE FELLOWSHIPS

2023–2024 THEME: PLATFORM



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A platform aspires to operate across devices and experiences, de-emphasizing form in favor of content. A platform can be a foundation for political ideology, a web-based application for discourse, a system yielding multifaceted biomedical and communicative ends, and more.

From a social science perspective, a platform can be understood as an infrastructure for action, an architecture or affordance that enables and constrains social, economic, and political possibilities, and conditions how we represent and experience the world.

The Platform theme aims to incite scholarly thinking across platforms of different kinds, and in different mediums—including analog, electronic, and virtual—to explore the norms and practices that organize, permeate, and stem from them. What historical, technological, theoretical, and policy perspectives and methodologies are key for understanding platforms and how they operate in academia, government, and industry, as well as in the physical world and in the realm of social relations?

The theme will explore ways to account for the expansion, rise, and influence of “the platform” in global society. In what ways do platforms—such as biomedical technologies—structure, reorganize, and consolidate science, knowledge, and markets? How does the dominance of private platforms produce forms of inequality—including along vectors of race, gender, class, nation, and region—and compel reimaginings of public infrastructure? How do today’s platforms differ from the social infrastructures and architectures of the past?

Platforms have become default archives for both personal and institutional artifacts like data, text, sound, and images. Whose history is being preserved and whose is lost? How does exclusion from a platform—such as the deplatforming of controversial nations or figures, and particular forms of speech—highlight its power?

These queries and considerations are suggestive and do not exhaust the concerns of this year long engagement of the Platform theme. Scholars from across the social sciences as well as the information sciences, the humanities, law, and related fields are encouraged to apply.

The theme will be led by Alondra Nelson, Harold F. Linder Professor at the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS); Lisa Nakamura, Gwendolyn Calvert Baker Collegiate Professor at the University of Michigan; and Christian Sandvig, H. Marshall McLuhan Collegiate Professor of Digital Media at the University of Michigan.

Applications from scholars working outside the theme are also welcome.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: OCTOBER 15, 2022

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