

# HISTORY OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

GRADUATE STUDENT WORKSHOP

The Tobin Project seeks applications from doctoral students undertaking new research related to its Institutions of Democracy initiative that explores how American democracy has functioned and evolved over time. Doctoral students *from all disciplines* who are considering research on this *and related topics* are encouraged to apply.

The deadline for applications is January 31st, 2018.

The Tobin Project aims to foster innovative and rigorous research that addresses major challenges facing society. Tobin is currently working with leading scholars from a wide range of disciplines to investigate the institutions, both formal and informal, that have shaped American democracy. By studying the practices, policies, and values that have influenced collective decision making and produced democratic outcomes over time, we hope to improve our understanding of what might determine democracy's health and vitality in the future. The Tobin Project seeks applications from doctoral students from all relevant disciplines, including but not limited to history, political science, law, economics, anthropology, and sociology.

## RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP AND WORKSHOP

Fellowship recipients will be awarded grants of up to \$1000 and travel to Cambridge, Massachusetts to share and develop their research-in-progress with a community of other fellows and Tobin Project staff. The fellowship grants are meant to partially or fully support research expenses and provide general support to graduate students working on topics related to the Tobin Project's research priorities. Any additional research costs should be noted in the budget and will be considered for funding if it is available.

Fellows will attend a two-day workshop in Cambridge, MA, where they will present their research-in-progress. The workshop will provide an interdisciplinary seminar-style environment for fellows to receive feedback on their research, with a particular focus on strengthening fellows' skills in formulating and refining core research questions. The workshop represents a rare opportunity to receive critical feedback on new research outside of a departmental environment. **The workshop will begin on the evening of Wednesday, May 30th, 2018, and conclude on the afternoon of Friday, June 1st, 2018. The Tobin Project will cover travel and lodging expenses.**

## APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

All applications should include the following:

- Curriculum Vitae
- Project title and short abstract (100-150 words)
- Research proposal (600-900 words).
  - Please include the following in the proposal:
    - The question(s) your research aims to address
    - Research methodology and initial hypotheses
    - Connection to the Tobin Project's research
    - Expected output (e.g., journal article, dissertation chapter, etc.) and timeline
    - Potential impact of the project in the academic literature and/or the policy world
    - Budget

Please email application materials as a single PDF to [research@tobinproject.org](mailto:research@tobinproject.org) by January 31st, 2018. In the subject line, please indicate that you are applying to the Graduate Student Workshop.

# HISTORY OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

*How has democracy functioned and evolved in America over time? What roles have institutions played in influencing collective decision making and managing the tensions of democracy?*

Concern for the health and stability of American democracy has been growing. Observers have warned that polarization, paralysis, and distrust in government threaten to undermine the democratic process. Yet the actual implications of recent events for the enduring health of American democracy remain difficult to assess. Despite considerable scholarly attention paid to the subject of American democracy, we lack a working understanding of how democratic outcomes are achieved and the factors that contribute to the health of our democracy. With the goal of building this understanding, the Tobin Project seeks to launch a new field of study, the History of American Democracy, focused on rigorously investigating how American democracy has functioned and evolved over time.

As part of this project, the Tobin Project seeks to convene graduate students with diverse perspectives on the question of how different institutions have shaped American democracy. Historically-minded scholars from any academic discipline are invited to contribute to this nascent field by identifying

important challenges of democratic governance and the different institutions that have helped manage and navigate them. Successful applications might explore how individuals and groups used different institutions to influence democratic decision making, as well as how institutions helped create, prevent, or dislodge concentrations of power within American democracy. The workshop seeks to put into dialogue numerous strains of historical scholarship, from American culture to social movements, law, and economics. By convening scholars from different disciplines on this topic, we aim to generate a deeper understanding of how democracy actually works, providing scholars, policymakers, and the public with the necessary tools to diagnose contemporary problems and design effective solutions.

For additional information on the Tobin Project's Institutions of Democracy research initiative, please visit: <https://www.tobinproject.org/research-inquiry/democracy>.

## THE TOBIN PROJECT

The Tobin Project, founded in 2005 on the belief that rigorous scholarship on major, real-world problems can make a profound difference over the long term, strives to be a catalyst for transformative research in the social sciences. The mission of the Tobin Project is to mobilize, motivate, and support a community of scholars across the social sciences and allied fields seeking to deepen our understanding of significant challenges facing the nation. Inspired by Professor James Tobin's belief that scholars have a vital role to play in the public sphere, the Project has built an interdisciplinary network of over 600 leading scholars across 80 universities, from Nobel Laureates to the most promising graduate students, who are together working to generate pioneering research on pressing problems of the 21st century. Currently the Tobin Project is focused on four core research areas: Economic Inequality; Government & Markets; Institutions of Democracy; and National Security. For more information, please visit [www.tobinproject.org](http://www.tobinproject.org)

The Tobin Project is a non-partisan organization recognized as a public charity under sections 501(c)(3) and 509(a)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code.

**THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS IS JANUARY 31, 2018.**  
Please direct submissions and any questions to [research@tobinproject.org](mailto:research@tobinproject.org)