The “Humanities Labs Project” is organized around four of the new “areas of study” developed in the English Department’s undergraduate major: Visual Culture, Film and Media; Environmental Humanities; Postcolonial Literature and Culture; and Social Justice. The Labs aim to
1. Identify courses that cluster in these areas of study, including courses across the humanities, arts and social sciences, while supporting supplementary activities that will develop these communities of academic interest for our undergraduates
2. Develop engagement with the Albany community through partnerships and collaboration with regional institutions that extend the Humanities Labs beyond the university
3. Establish long-term collaboration among departments that will develop these areas of study and move them toward a permanent institutional framework;
4. Build a path from participating departments, through the Labs, to the interdisciplinary Liberal Studies MA Program, enhancing undergraduate education further by retaining our best students for an advanced degree.

Our project aims to re-position the humanities as the core of interdisciplinary inquiry within the University at Albany. Labs will afford the opportunity to set up a “laboratory” on campus or in external locales that will extend our student’s experience beyond individual classes and departments, and develop academic communities of interest, in partnership with local institutions. We will invite and support collaborative projects in this broad framework.

The Humanities Labs will have a thematic focus each semester. Fall 2019 will focus on Social Justice, and Visual Culture, Film and Media. Spring 2020 will focus on Environmental Humanities and Post-Colonial Studies, which supports the study of art and social life in the aftermath of colonialism, including migration, diaspora studies, refugee communities, and formations of racial, ethnic, religious and other communities shaped by colonialism and political violence.

In addition to enhancing undergraduate education, the Labs will extend into the Masters of Arts in Liberal Studies

The semester-based Labs will materialize the StAR goal of enhancing undergraduate education through four main tactics – linking courses across disciplines into “areas”; developing community partnerships; cultivating long-term interdepartmental collaboration; and providing a pipeline to a graduate degree for our best undergraduates – by supporting a series of scholarly and public events, including workshops and round-
table discussions, guest lectures and book talks, film screenings and festivals, academic field trips, community partnerships, invitations to community and State leaders in these areas, and events that bring together courses and faculty teaching in each area of study.