

Learner-Centered Education Program
Arizona Board of Regents
Attachment A
INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FORM

Proposal Title: Mediated Geographies: Critical Pedagogy and Geography Education

Institution: Arizona State University Dept./Unit: Geography

Multi-Campus/University Projects
(check other campuses or universities participating) List other participating agencies:
X ASU Main X UA _____
____ ASU East ____ UA South _____
____ ASU West X NAU _____

Briefly describe the program and the development plan. The aim of the program is to create an integrated series of innovative undergraduate courses in each of the Geography departments in Arizona's three universities using the learner-centered strategy of "critical pedagogy". Students will be encouraged to examine critically mediated material (advertisements, television shows, films), as it specifically relates to geographic processes and theories. Students will engage in group work and conduct peer reviews at an end-of-semester conference. The PIs will evaluate this feedback and use it to modify the pedagogical approach for future courses within the departments and, potentially, to the broader university.

Funding Category

Indicate a primary (P) and, if applicable, secondary (S) funding category:

Professional Development _____ Program or Course Development/Modification _____
LCE Research X Improved Assessment of Learning Outcomes _____

Authorizations

Project Director

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Official Authorized to Enter into Contractual Obligations

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MEDIATED GEOGRAPHIES: CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND GEOGRAPHIC EDUCATION

I. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FORM (ATTACHMENT A)

II.1. ABSTRACT

There is a need to engage students in the critical evaluation of mediated information in their daily lives and to learn to use technologies related to digital media as a way of exploring and expressing geographical constructs and processes. The principal goal of this project is to create an integrated series of innovative undergraduate courses in each of the Geography Departments in Arizona's three universities using the learner-centered strategy of "critical pedagogy." The key objective of the courses – and the basis for the integration – is to encourage students to critically examine mediated material (advertisements, television shows, films) as it specifically relates to a geographic process or theory, and to engage one another in group projects and peer reviews. The use of "critical pedagogy" and learner-centered education is crucial in examining mediated material as it seeks to empower students by constructing a "dialogue amongst learners" rather than a "monologue of lectures." During the fall semester of 2005, each principal investigator (PI) will work with their teaching assistants (TA), on-campus resources, and an external consultant to develop the technology lab assignments that will be used in the undergraduate courses. A three-day workshop in January 2006 will be held at ASU to bring together the PIs, TAs, and the external consultant. At the workshop all of the labs assignments will be tested and pedagogic strategies related to visual media literacy will be discussed and developed. Because all three courses vary in their thematic content, our intent is not to create "templates" that will be used at all universities. Rather, we are interested in developing flexible strategies that can be applied in similar ways for each course. In the spring semester of 2006, each PI will teach a course that implements the new pedagogic practices. In these courses students will work in groups on semester long projects that require them to develop digital video or digital photographic presentations focused on geographic theories or processes. Students from all schools will present their work at a three-day conference to be held at Northern Arizona University in late-April of 2006. The principal purpose of the conference is to provide a forum for the evaluation of the student projects and for evaluation of the project as a whole. The conference will require students to present their work and conduct peer reviews of both their own group work and that of other groups. We expect this learner-centered education project to help build the foundation for future collaborations between the participating departments, and possibly other departments or interdisciplinary initiatives within and across the three universities. The total amount of funding requested by all three universities is \$95,806.

II.2. IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS

A range of new information technologies has propelled us into an era in which cross-scalar (e.g., local, regional, and national) and trans-national/global processes influence the quantity and quality of information, knowledge and ideas. Effective collection, use, and presentation of information is central to the success of undergraduate study in any discipline, especially when students must find jobs within the new information economy. New and improving technologies continually offer students enhanced access to information; however, little attention has been paid to their abilities to understand and decipher meaning, critically evaluate source material, and assess the relative weight of rhetoric, ideology, bias, perception and stereotyping. More importantly, existing undergraduate courses and curricula often fail to teach and challenge students to critically engage different forms of visual media (television, news, websites, advertisements, and documentary and narrative film). Uncritical consumers of visual information will be uninformed citizens and ineffective decision-makers. Their numbers will only increase as information technology advances and information systems become more complex. Through the learner-centered education program we seek to engage students both to critically evaluate the vast amount of visual information in their daily lives, and become literate in the technologies related to digital media.

The principal objective of this project is to create an integrated series of undergraduate courses in the Geography Departments of Arizona's three universities. These courses will use learner-centered techniques to help students improve their visual media literacy skills emphasizing how these skills can relate to geographic theories and processes. Visual media literacy focuses on understanding how meaning, stereotypes, rhetoric and ideology are appropriated and packaged into visual media (Jones, Dixon Sui 2005; Rose 2001; Smith 2002; Gold and Gold 2002; Aitken 1994; Kennedy 1994; Natter and Jones 1993; Jenkins 1990; Youngs and Jenkins 1984; Burgess and Unwin 1984; Burgess 1982). While geographers increasingly use media to teach geographic theories and processes, students are typically not taught how to critically evaluate the meanings inherent within images. Visual media are today's cognitive maps (Jameson

1992, 1988, 1984) or social cartography (Bruno 2002, 1997) of meaning creation and identity formation at multiple scales. As such, critical evaluation of images is needed to develop our understanding of a diverse range of geographic processes and theories presented in everyday mediated images. In academia, these themes are increasingly being addressed by a growing interdisciplinary group that links visual media, culture production and reproduction, and meaning creation in geography, film studies, cultural, and social studies (Lukinbeal 2004). The three PIs on this project are at the forefront of this research. With this grant we hope to show that within this emerging subfield there is room for substantial innovation in pedagogical practices.

This project will employ a critical pedagogic approach (Kellner 2000; Shor 1996, 1992, 1987, 1983; Shor and Freire 1987; Freire 1993) that engages learner centered education in the following ways:

1. Critical pedagogy relates to our goal of raising students' consciousness about the role media plays in creating and perpetuating inequalities and other social conditions in contemporary society. "Critical pedagogy considers how education can provide individuals with the tools to better themselves and strengthen democracy, to create a more egalitarian and just society, and thus to deploy education in a process of progressive social change" (Kellner 2000). Critical pedagogy is fundamentally aligned with learner-centered education in that it seeks to reconfigure the relationship between teachers and students. Teachers should not be positioned as the "active agent" and students as "passive vessels," but rather, the classroom is a site of dialogue and a location where new knowledge is created through interaction. The dialogical method, which is central to critical pedagogy, abandons the lecture-listener format in favor of an open communication format where everyone teaches and everyone learns. The dialogical method values student-to-student interaction as much as student-teacher interaction. We will employ this method not only within our courses, but also amongst the teachers, TAs and external consultant, and using existing IT resources on our respective campuses. This project is critical to the professional development of the faculty, graduate student TAs as well as the development of skills for undergraduates. Faculty will be learning new digital media skills through working with TAs and with an external consultant. According to Sullivan (1987, 63), "a fundamental assumption of a critical pedagogy is that it is a broad educational venture which self-consciously challenges and seeks to transform the dominant values of our culture." Likewise, Leistyna and Woodrum (1996) assert that "critical pedagogy is primarily concerned with the kinds of educational theories and practices that encourage both students and teachers to develop an understanding of the interconnecting relationship among ideology, power, and culture... [that] challenges us to recognize, engage, and critique (so as to transform) any existing undemocratic social practices and institutional structures that produce and sustain inequalities and oppressive social identities and relations" (Leistyna & Woodrum, 1996, 2-3). Our goal in employing critical pedagogic practice is to make learner-centered education serve a direct and tangible purpose in class and in the curriculum development process.
2. Through a series of hands-on labs, students will learn how to create, edit, and produce digital video and/or digital imagery. These labs will be incorporated into a "time on task" semester-long project. Rather than simply teaching "how to" use digital technology, we seek to teach students to use technology to learn geographic theories and concepts, to solve problems, and to make creative arguments. One could simply take a video editing course to learn software and hardware. We go beyond this traditional approach by seeking to show how technology can inform both theory and empirical work on cultural and economic globalization, transnational migration, spatial relations of production and consumption, environmental justice, and the cultural politics of the built environment. All of these are key concepts in contemporary geographic research. Our project is unique within the discipline of geography both for its reliance on these bodies of theory and in its use of digital video and digital photography technology. While courses do exist on the geographies of "film" "music" and "media", our program goes further by interweaving theoretical material with active, learner-centered practice.
3. The project is a research activity that will study the effects of LCE principles and practices. Our program will evaluate the effectiveness of our unique approach to LCE and present findings at regional and national conferences. We have requested guidance from ASU as to whether or not this will require human subjects clearance, and their response is pending.

Our project is in the funding category: "Development or Modification of Programs, Courses, or Course Modules using LCE Techniques." We propose to modify and develop active learner curricula focused on critically evaluating media, film and television from a geographic perspective (Jones, Dixon and Sui 2005; Lukinbeal 2004; Rose 2001; Creswell and Dixon 2002; Lukinbeal 2002; Gold and Gold 2002; Alderman, and Popke 2002; Smith 2002; Jones, Nast and Roberts 1997; Aitken, 1994; Gold et al., 1993; Eichen, 1989; Jenkins and Youngs, 1983; Jenkins, 1983; Harris, 1964; Cons 1959). We are requesting

funding to support a collaborative project that will link the three universities through a series of events, activities and an integrated set of courses that will take place in the 2005-2006 school year.

Our proposed project which addresses critical pedagogical and societal needs cannot take place without support from the Arizona Board of Regents. Coordinating the workshops, training, curriculum development, conference and evaluation in all three universities will take both time and money. Although our entire project takes place within one academic calendar year, we hope to continue this program beyond that time-frame. Our primary needs relate to the development and modification of courses, so that we can better prepare our students to be both critical consumers and users of visual information in a world increasingly dependent upon visual media.

II.3. TECHNICAL NEEDS.

We will use digital media software and hardware equipment. Each university will draw on their own resources: hardware, software and staff/training opportunities. Some of the hardware and software that will be used include digital video cameras, PC, MAC and/or PDAs, and digital editing software such as Adobe Première, Final Cut Pro or Avid Cinema. Digital video hardware and software will be used at ASU and UofA. NAU will focus on digital photography software and raster editing software such as Adobe Photoshop, as well as a presentation program such as PowerPoint. At all three universities, students may also draw upon Geographic Information Systems and/or Global Positioning Systems. Students will also engage with information literacy and library skills through the use of indexes such as Geobase, the Web of Science, Humanities Full Text, and Art Full Text.

II.4. WORK PLAN/TIMELINE:

Date	PI Duties	Number of Hours		
		ASU	UOFA	NAU
Aug-05	Initial Planning Meeting (teleconference). PIs design courses.	8	5	5
Fall 2005	PIs design interactive lab sessions and course material with TAs and external consultant and/or additional training.	60	60	160
Oct-05	Progress meeting, PIs at APCG meeting, ASU.	5	5	5
Jan-06	Workshop at ASU to 'dry-run' interactive lab exercises and begin planning the student conference in April 2006.	30	30	30
Spring 2006	Course-time: class time, office hours, prep. (12 hrs/week x 16 weeks). (NAU PI has additional lab time.)	192	192	240
Spring 2006	Organize Student Conference	3	3	60
Mar-06	Meeting, AAG meeting, Chicago. To discuss how courses are progressing, and finalize plans for the student conference in late-April in Flagstaff. Draft and submit progress report to ABOR.	26	12	12
Late-April-06	Student conference, NAU. Three-day conference to conduct peer/group evaluations of course output.	24	24	60
Jun-06	PIs prepare individual summary reports to Project Director.	12	12	12
Jun-06	PIs supervise TAs to assemble work and arrange exhibits.	12	12	12
Summer 2006	Project Director will analyze evaluations, write report for ABOR, and work on future course structure and dissemination of LCE.	120	0	0
Sept-2006	APCG Regional meeting. PIs will present research on pedagogic strategy.	18	18	18
Oct-2006	Submit final report to ABOR	6	0	0
	Totals	516	373	614

Date	TA Duties	Number of Hours		
		ASU	UOFA	NAU
Fall 2005	Training and interactive lab design.	290	290	290
Jan-06	Workshop at ASU	30	30	30
Spring 2006	Course-time: class time, office hours, prep. (15 hrs/wk x 16 wks).	240	240	240
Spring 2006	Organize student conference	40	40	40
Late Apr-06	Student conference, NAU. Three-day conference to conduct peer/group evaluations of course output.	40	40	40
Jun-06	TAs assemble work for exhibition	80	80	80
Jun-06	Assist with evaluation analysis and preparation of final report.	160	0	0
Jun-06	Assist with preparation of website for project dissemination.	0	0	40
	Totals	880	720	760

II.5. KEY PERSONNEL

- **John Paul Jones III, Professor of Geography and Head of Department, University of Arizona.**
Role: UofA Principal Investigator
- **Christina Kennedy, Professor of Geography, Northern Arizona State University.**
Role: NAU Principal Investigator
- **Chris Lukinbeal, Assistant Professor of Geography, Arizona State University**
Role: Project Director and ASU Principal Investigator
- **Ari Palos, Videographer and Film Editor, Dos Vatos Productions:**
Role: External Consultant

II.6. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The project is a pilot for the formulation of an integrated series of courses. Initially, it will serve 70-80 students. However, we have designed our evaluation process mindful of the future portability and scalability. We will conduct evaluations throughout the courses on the individual components of the project, the results of which will be synthesized at the end. The evaluations will address the following research questions: Is the critical pedagogy approach better suited to a particular type of geography class? Are some students more receptive to this pedagogic approach than others, and if so, can we identify systematic reasons for this? The first part of the evaluation will be to establish a baseline of students' critical thinking skills. We will obtain a background of students' prior media training, as well as their experience in both geography and critical thinking by way of an essay, a questionnaire, and an in-class exercise. The essay will seek to uncover students' socio-economic background, their exposure to media (movies, TV, magazines, newspapers, internet, advertisements), and the extent of their place-based experiences. The questionnaire will focus on measures such as their GPA, formal geography education, gender, ethnicity, major/minor, and age-group. The in-class exercise is designed to evaluate their critical thinking capabilities before the course and involve giving a commentary on a series of images based around the following questions: What is this video/image of? What does it tell you? What is its purpose? How is it communicating its message? At the end of the course there will be a series of evaluations of the end products produced by the various groups by PIs, TAs, as well as in-group and across group peer reviews, the latter two of which will take place at the student conference. There will also be an exit essay in which students will be asked for their commentary on the same videos and images that they evaluated at the beginning of the class. The commentaries will be evaluated for growth in the students' ability to analyze imagery using high level theoretical tools, and these findings will be compared with the same results obtained at the beginning of the course. A key resource in designing the critical thinking exercises will be ASU's Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (<http://clte.asu.edu/>), and the outcomes of two ABOR-funded programs on Learner-Centered Education (Tri-university Collaboration on Learner-Centered Practice: Creating Learning Communities among Faculty and Students, 2002 and 2004).

Once the pedagogic approach is modified in accordance with the results of the exit evaluations, the courses that have been developed in this LCE format will continue to be offered on at least an annual basis in each of the three departments. The final report to ABOR will include a section of recommendations about the effectiveness of this pedagogic approach to particular types of classes and target student audience. On the basis of this analysis, the approach will be disseminated across departments, as well as the broader academic community across the three campuses. The exhibitions of student work will also be made available online, via a website that will be developed by the NAU PI, both as a means to recruit students into future courses and as a resource for high school teachers seeking to integrate higher level concepts into their social studies curricula. The website will form an important part of the outreach to the community. ASU will work with the Geographic Alliance that co-ordinates geographic education for all of Arizona, while UofA will work through its "adopt-a-school" program that targets minority and underperforming high schools. The PIs will also make formal presentations of the project at professional meetings, and seek to publish the results in peer-reviewed journals.

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RECEIVED
 OCT 13 2004
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Multi-Campus/University Projects
 (check other campuses or universities participating) List other participating agencies.

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 ASU East UA South
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 LCE Research S Improved Assessment of Learning Outcomes _____

Authorizations
Project Director

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Department Chair / Unit Director / College Dean / Provost: (may not be PD)

Name: Lee Dexter Title: (Acting) Chair of Geog., Pl. and Rec. (GPR)

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Official Authorized to Enter into Contractual Obligations

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Project Director

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Department Chair / Unit Director / College Dean / Provost (may not be PD)

Name: _____ Title: _____

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Signature _____

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