Grants for Humanities and Social Sciences - Request for Proposals

I. Overview

Enabled by the generosity of Johns Hopkins Trustee and Sheridan Libraries National Advisory Council member Christopher Hoehn-Saric and the Smart Family Foundation, the Center for Educational Resources (CER) announces a grants program to support pedagogical innovation in humanities and social sciences disciplines (H/SS) at Johns Hopkins University. The focus will be on courses for Homewood undergraduate students.

Humanities and social sciences disciplines have long been recognized for their role in providing a foundation for understanding global culture, exploring human experience past and present, investigating ethical questions, and thinking critically and creatively. These studies require writing and discussion skills that foster students’ abilities to pose questions, research effectively, synthesize information, and defend their statements. These skills are critical for success in the 21st century professions, which today also call for the practical application of digital literacy skills – commonly defined as having the ability to locate, organize, understand, evaluate, and analyze information using digital technology. As numerous scholars and business leaders have observed,1 education delivered in the traditional silos that have separated the humanities/social sciences (H/SS), and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines may not be serving young graduates well. Today’s graduates must be comfortable working across these disciplines.

With these considerations in mind, the CER seeks proposals from humanities and social science faculty for projects that broaden student access to 21st century careers. Proposals should either:

- facilitate the acquisition and practical application of digital literacy skills within H/SS course work or
- develop interdisciplinary courses that integrate H/SS and STEM content.

A range of proposals are invited. Examples of humanities-related projects funded by CER grant initiatives may be found below on page 4. These are referred to in parentheses below. For example, projects may:

- Develop new course structures that include a digital lab (Remembering Vietnam, The Documentary Tradition).

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Grants for Humanities/Social Sciences

• Offer new cross disciplinary curricula (Introduction to Game Design - Integrating the Humanities and Computer Science).
• Create new resources for existing courses (Mapping Museums).
• Integrate existing technologies into courses (Drawing Ancient Inscriptions).

Projects should build on and reinforce known best practices in education, including active learning, the encouragement of high level student-faculty interaction, and student collaboration. Proposals should demonstrate awareness of the variety of student learning styles.

CER staff are available to provide feedback on proposals before submission and offer assistance in identifying qualified students to work on projects. Questions may be directed to Macie Hall at macie.hall@jhu.edu or 410-516-6165.

Eligibility

Proposals may be submitted by individual faculty, groups of faculty, single departments or multiple departments. Interdisciplinary proposals are encouraged. Targeted (established) courses must be listed or cross-listed in the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences catalog.

Proposal Submission Deadline

The deadline for proposals has been extended to Wednesday, May 23, 2012 by 5:00 PM.

II. Funding and Project Period

The CER is committing approximately $100,000 to this grant program. Proposals may request funding up to $30,000, but smaller requests ($10,000 or less) are also encouraged. It is anticipated that a variety of amounts will be awarded. The total project period for an application submitted in response to this request for proposals should not exceed two years.

Eligible Expenses Include

• Student (undergraduate, graduate, post-doc) salaries to provide research assistance, identify appropriate software resources, digitize materials, etc. Funds may NOT be used for faculty compensation.
• Cost of professional digital photography, scanning of materials, video and audio production
• Software
• Hardware and equipment purchases when justified as integral to the project
The CER will provide in-kind support, including project management, instructional design, technology (hardware-software) and pedagogical consultation, and assessment assistance.

III. Application and Submission Information

Timeline

Thursday, March 15, 2012: Circulate RFP to eligible departments and faculty
Wednesday, May 23, 2012: Proposals due by 5:00 PM EST
June 2012: Funding announcements made

Project development may begin once funding announcements are made; project completion expected by May 2014 or earlier.

Content and form of application

Proposals should be prepared single-spaced with 1-inch margins (minimum font size 11 point), and should conform to the following format:
1) Name, department, email address, phone number, short bio-sketch for each participant (limit ½ page per participant).
2) Title and Abstract (limit ½ page).
3) Project Description (limit 2 pages). The project description should include the following: statement of the problem and goals of the project; significance and potential impact; context for the project in relation to current best practices or other current teaching innovations; summary of preliminary or pilot work underway (if any); plan for implementation; anticipated outcomes; plan for sustainability beyond the timeframe of the project.
4) Project Plan and Timeline (limit 1/2 page).
5) Evaluation and Assessment Plan (limit 1 page).
6) Budget (limit 1 page, including justification). This should list the cost of activities and supplies required by the project, and any matching funds, in-kind contributions or other resources that will be devoted to it.

Submission Procedure

Proposals should be submitted in PDF format as email attachments to Macie Hall at macie.hall@jhu.edu. Deadline for submission: 5:00 PM, Wednesday, May 27, 2012. An acknowledgement of your submission will be sent within 24 hours.

IV. Criteria for Project Selection

Proposals will be reviewed by a committee consisting of KSAS faculty and CER staff. Projects will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
1) **Enhances undergraduate instruction**: The proposal describes ideas for creating new courses or redesigning existing courses through the creation of new educational resources or the establishment of interdisciplinary topics and pedagogical approaches.

2) **Enhances students' critical thinking skill**: The proposal documents learning objectives that demonstrate how students will be challenged to perform critical analysis of key concepts. The proposal suggests assignments that employ active learning strategies to measure students’ ability to meet these objectives.

3) **Develops either**:
   a. **Opportunities for the acquisition and practical application of digital literacy skills**
   b. **Co-curricular content that integrates humanities/social sciences and STEM disciplines’ content**

4) **Integrates content from multiple disciplines**: The proposal enhances and facilitates collaboration among Homewood students and/or faculty across departments, disciplines, or divisions.

5) **Has a viable assessment strategy**: The proposal suggests concrete ways to evaluate and report its impact on teaching and learning in the course it supports.

6) **Reflects an ongoing commitment**: The proposal is grounded by persistent core values of the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences and the department or program represented. Specifically, the course or resources developed will be offered/used! recurrently.

7) **Develops an approach that can be generalized or scaled**: The project serves as a prototype that can be modified, enhanced, or extended to other venues, divisions, departments, or courses.

8) **Is cost conscious**: The proposal demonstrates a good fit between purpose and plan. It embraces a selective use of information technologies and other resources while keeping implementation costs to a minimum. The proposal must also describe how the course and resources developed will be sustained beyond grant support.

**V. Examples from CER Supported Projects and Examples from Other Universities**

**Examples from previous CER grant programs involving humanities-related course innovations:**

1) **Remembering Vietnam** - A traditional humanities class offered with a co-requisite multimedia lab section. (Ron Walters, Professor, History; a CER funded History/Film and Media course: [http://digitalmedia.jhu.edu/projects/remembering-vietnam/](http://digitalmedia.jhu.edu/projects/remembering-vietnam/) Funding - $5,000. CER provided instructional design expertise.

2) **Drawing Ancient Inscriptions** - Practical application of digital tools to traditional humanities studies. Students use Adobe Illustrator in this epigraphy class to create script charts of ancient manuscripts for analysis. (Kyle McCarter, Professor, Near Eastern Studies: [http://www.cer.jhu.edu/ii/InnovInstruct-Ped_DrawingInscriptions.pdf](http://www.cer.jhu.edu/ii/InnovInstruct-Ped_DrawingInscriptions.pdf)) No funding requested. Professor McCarter re-designed his course and collaborated with CER to provide technology consultations and an instructor (CER staff member) for student workshops on the software and method used. Although no funding was required, this is a good...
example of the how the acquisition and practical application of digital literacy skills can be integrated into a humanities course.

3) **Mapping Museums** - Synthesis of information across fields, spatial conceptualization, development of visual literacy, and use of hierarchical concept mapping. Students curate virtual exhibits for their final projects. (Elizabeth Rodini, Director, Museums and Society: [http://www.cer.jhu.edu/ii/InnovInstruct-Ped_eRodini.pdf](http://www.cer.jhu.edu/ii/InnovInstruct-Ped_eRodini.pdf)) Funding - $10,000. CER provided project management, instructional design support, technical support with the interactive Map Tool, and an instructor for workshops for the students taking the class to learn how to use the Map Tool.

4) **Introduction to Game Design - Integrating the Humanities and Computer Science.** An interdisciplinary and inter-institutional gaming course in which computer science students teamed with MICA art students and KSAS humanities majors to create video games. (Peter Froehlich, Senior Lecturer, Computer Science: [http://wp.nmc.org/proceedings2009/papers/gaming-initiative/](http://wp.nmc.org/proceedings2009/papers/gaming-initiative/)). Funding - $22,000. CER provided project management, instructional design consultation, and assessment assistance.

5) **The Documentary Tradition** - Co-taught by a photographer and a historian, this course explored the documentary tradition in photography. Students learned to analyze the works of documentary photographers and to practice the art of documentary photography, learning the technical aspects of cameras and Photoshop software. (Phyllis Berger, Art Workshop Instructor, Homewood Art Workshops and Stuart W. Leslie, Professor, History of Science: [http://www.cer.jhu.edu/pdf/AVDFinalReport.pdf](http://www.cer.jhu.edu/pdf/AVDFinalReport.pdf)) Funding - $7000. CER provided project management, instructional design support, and educational technology research, consultation, and implementation.

**Examples of initiatives developed at other universities:**

A sample of digital humanities/social sciences projects developed at other universities are listed below. Many are very large initiatives that are outside the scope of this RFP. However, they may be helpful in suggesting ideas for faculty to develop as “proofs of concept,” that could serve as foundations for large grant applications in the future.


George Mason University Center for History and New Media: [http://chnm.gmu.edu/](http://chnm.gmu.edu/)