

**ACS Interdisciplinary Mini-Grants
Final Reporting Guidelines**

For Mini-Grants Awarded April 2006, October 2006 and February 2007

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Institution: Rollins College

Title of Project: INT 360A: Culture Wars: Current Debates in Ethics, Aesthetics, and Politics

Date(s) of Project: May 2006 – May 2007

Amount Awarded: \$4,300

1. Original Goals and objectives

excerpted from original **SUMMARY OF PROJECT & PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

...Our goal with our proposed “INT 360A: Culture Wars: Ethics, Aesthetics, and Politics” pilot course is twofold. First, we seek to revise, implement, and develop an interdisciplinary course experience that interweaves three fields, and that will stand as one model. Second, to create more interdisciplinary opportunities for both students and faculty, we aim to institutionalize two permanent curricular “spaces” in which faculty could offer such courses. To accomplish this, an historian will bring a third disciplinary perspective to a course successfully team-taught by an art historian and a philosopher. The three faculty will spend Summer, Fall, and Winter 2006 revising the course: it will run as an interdisciplinary INT pilot in Spring '07 for all undergraduates, and will run as a First-Year Honors course in Fall '07. Positioning the course in both the INT and Honors degree program, we seek to encourage faculty to try new interdisciplinary projects in either rubric.

One obvious benefit is that the project would productively channel the critical mass of pro-interdisciplinary energy now prevalent. Faculty are already beginning to cluster into collaborative two- or three-person teams around possible course ideas. Specifically, Rollins students stand to gain a good deal from the project. They report building cross-disciplinary collaborative relationships in such courses, both with peers and with the faculty; they describe having a better grasp of their home discipline once they see it in comparison and dialogue with others. And, they say they come to be more focused on the topic at hand as multifaceted, requiring multiple disciplinary perspectives to be well understood. We hope to institutionalize this sort of integrative, intellectually charged forum and help it become a cornerstone of a Rollins education, enabling more students to graduate with skills to synthesize the dizzying range of perspectives in their communities and the world at large.

We seek to take a successful Art History and Philosophy interdisciplinary experience and integrate the third discipline of History into the course. “Culture Wars: Ethics, Aesthetics, and Politics” (INT 360A) addresses controversies and debates surrounding visual representation having to do with politics, sexuality, religion, race, and/or gender as well as questions of institutional control over visual representation. We take a broad view of visual representation and will deal with traditional art forms as well as popular culture. We will approach these issues from the vantage points of history and politics, aesthetics, and ethics; indeed, our primary aim is to investigate culture wars by linking

our three disciplines. Specific cases, include Leni Riefenstahl's Nazi film, Triumph of the Will and ongoing debates concerning ethics and aesthetics; the destruction of religious objects such as the Bamiyan Buddhas of Afghanistan, reaction against allegedly blasphemous imagery like the recent cartoons of Muhammad published in Denmark, and political control of sexualized imagery such as Robert Mapplethorpe's homoerotic photographs. Issues of institutional control include instances of censorship and debates concerning the ethics of the British Museum's refusal to return the Elgin Marbles to Greece. Building on the case studies mentioned above, the course mixes exploration of these concrete cases with theoretical inquiry, requiring students to learn different perspectives on public representation of "hot" topics such as sexuality, race, religion, and gender. At stake in these culture wars are the ethics and politics of visual representation: What role does representation play in how these issues play out? Should some things not be represented? What political ends are served in making visual or in repression of the visual? What role might the aesthetic play in public response to issues of sexuality, gender, and religion? How does historical context matter to how things signify, and to how we interpret? We want students to be aware of these forces on a global level, to think critically about them, and as students, to learn the roles that academic disciplines can play in the analysis of culture wars.

Through such case studies, students will compare, contrast, and integrate methodologies of Art History, Philosophy, and History. Students will participate in scholarly debates with the three faculty, who will model cross-disciplinary debate for the class. Students will be expected to engage their peers across disciplines and to reflect on both the strengths and limits of their own disciplinary perspective. By analyzing many "culture wars" and the competing values at stake over the term, we hope to create in the latter section of the course something like a laboratory environment in which students identify, choose, and analyze cases the faculty have selected as well as some the students have identified. We hope to foster student scholarship and will encourage them to build interdisciplinary projects that would not be possible within standard disciplinary boundaries.

Our project has specific goals and objectives for Rollins faculty, too. We seek to model for colleagues how one such interdisciplinary venture might work, and to encourage them to follow through on the "eureka" moments we faculty have when we can envision our research and teaching areas productively overlapping that of colleagues. We would like to spend Fall 2006 and Spring 2007 encouraging cross-disciplinary dialogue and pedagogical and research projects among faculty. For Rollins overall, we would like to revive the languishing INT designation for interdisciplinary courses. We believe it can be a useful mechanism for interdisciplinary, collaborative course ideas already rising organically from faculty. Another objective of the project is to tap into current structural revision of the Honors program. The program already aims to become more selective, innovative, and interdisciplinary in its course offerings; we seek to make it an ongoing locus for interdisciplinary courses to emerge from collaborating faculty. All of these steps toward greater interdisciplinarity will contribute to the goals of Rollins QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan) by introducing more students to diverse perspectives and equipping them to better synthesize them.

2. If goals/objectives changed during the course of the project, please state the revised goals & objectives.

Our project has not experienced any changes in our goals/objectives. We have been working diligently on each of the aims stated above, and have achieved good progress on them. We have actually added to our goals in two ways. The first: since we are teaching in a room that is highly technologically equipped, we have required students to sign up for a course in website construction so they can build

group final projects on chosen culture wars themes. Secondly, as a way of disseminating information about our project and the benefits of interdisciplinary teaching and education, we are also in the process of developing an article for the Rollins alumni magazine based on the course and on the three levels of faculty involved—senior, mid-career, and junior faculty.

3. In what ways were the goals/objectives met? Please give examples.

Spring 2006

- Dean of Faculty approves Libby/Levis/Musgrave “Culture Wars” for INT designation
- Faculty colloquium on ways of better integrating interdisciplinary teaching into college curriculum and within Honors program

Summer-Fall 2006

- Course development, research materials, technology training in high-tech classroom
- Dr. Libby and Dr. Musgrave present “Culture Wars” interdisciplinary papers at the First International Conference on the Arts in Society in, Edinburgh, Scotland (papers attached)

Spring 2007

- Implementation of INT 360A, Levis/Libby/Musgrave “Culture Wars” course
- Publication in *Rollins Alumni Record* of “Rooms With a View,” article featuring our interdisciplinary course in the technology classroom (attached in Appendix)

Summer 2007

- Revised course into an offering as Honors first-year intake course, HON 201

Fall 2007

- Implementation of “Culture Wars” as Honors first-year course
- Course Evaluation at end of term
- Plan presentation of interdisciplinary course results for Faculty Day of Scholarship

Spring 2008

- Conduct January presentation for Faculty Day of Scholarship, sharing “Culture Wars” model

4. Describe the evaluation/assessment process used. Summarize the results of this process? Include any instruments used to evaluate/assess your project.

We were able to evaluate the 2006 INT interdisciplinary course over the summer, and revise it into the HON 201 course taught Fall 2007. We thereby were able to finesse weak spots, hone our assignments, and especially hone the segments of the course aiming to facilitate interdisciplinary skills—students bringing different disciplinary methodologies to bear on each other, and on complex, real-world problems. So we evaluated the first class, revised it, taught the second improved course, then are currently evaluating it—by means of student assessment, our comparisons in teaching it this time, and faculty feedback in a Faculty Day of Scholarship forum.

5. If you were to redesign your project, what would you do differently and why? (What are the “lessons learned?”)

We might bring in another faculty member to represent another disciplinary lens/perspective, and to add to the students’ experiences learning how to synthesize multiple points of view in application on real-world problems.

6. What are the next steps (follow-up) in your project?

To disseminate our results in another conference setting, and to offer the Culture Wars interdisciplinary course again, perhaps with another faculty member representing another discipline.

7. A complete financial statement, showing original budget (the breakdown of the amount awarded) and expenditures.

Original budget

\$2000 - stipend for faculty and student assistant course development Fall 2006 (\$500 ea)
\$500 -materials (books, films, etc.) specific to course
\$500 -library development of interdisciplinary resources
\$1300 - conference participation
total: \$4300

expenditures

	\$4,300
July 10 stipends for 3 faculty: \$500 x 3 =	-1,500
July 31, May 5 2007 student collaborator stipend	- 162.00
July 19 & Aug. 17 DVD’s, course development	- 125.06
Nov. 13 books, course development	-42.95
April 16 2007 office supplies	- 47.70
July 5 2007 books+ DVDs, course development	- 110.34
2007-08 DVD’s, course development	-87.73
DVD’s, course development	-220.00
conference travel allocated, 2 faculty	- 2,000.00

Remaining: \$4.22

8. Where did you publish and/ or at which meetings did you present your work? How did you disseminate information at your institution and within ACS? See above timeline & steps

9. Please include a statement that you give ACS permission to post your original proposal and a summary of your work on the ACS Interdisciplinary website
<http://www.colleges.org/newmodels/interdisciplinary/index.html>.

We hereby give ACS permission to post our original proposal and a summary of our work on the ACS Interdisciplinary website.

APPENDIX: SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

1. Course Syllabus
2. Dr. Libby paper given at conference and published: “Culture/Wars”
3. Dr. Musgrave paper given at conference and published: Teaching Value Theory via Culture Wars”
4. Course Evaluation

Send your report to:
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