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Project Title: *Reading the Rhetorical in the Classical Age*

The Description of the Project: Technological Support for Interdisciplinary Course Development

The course we are developing, “*Reading the Rhetorical in the Classical Age*,” will supplement traditional teaching methods and materials with new computer technologies to examine rhetoric as the original *techne* by comparing the demonstrable influence of classical rhetoric on various modes of civic presentation in antiquity. We have already received financial support from an NEH grant awarded to Furman to improve the teaching of the Humanities at Furman by creating new interdisciplinary courses and, whenever possible, by supporting these new courses with new and existing instructional technologies. The course is scheduled to be offered for the first time in the spring of 2002.

We have not yet received any financial support to develop the technological infrastructure for the course, which will be essential to realizing the second goal of the grant. With this application we seek technological support to develop instructional materials which will aid us in examining the ways in which classical rhetoric can be used to read the form and meaning of the literature, art, architecture, and public and private spaces of ancient Greece and Rome. These materials will help us to present the representational and ideological character of classical culture by demonstrating the ways in which various cultural texts, monuments, and artifacts constitute a group of intertwining rhetorics (discourses) that establish the political, social, religious, and gender ideals of each period and move the citizenry of each period to identify with these ideals.

The course will begin with an historical overview of the three periods around which it will be structured: fifth-century BCE Athens, the late Roman Republic, and the early Roman Empire. After surveying the most important historical, political, and social events that characterize each period we will then examine the ways in which these events were publicly represented. We will introduce students to the formal rules of classical rhetoric taught in the schools and practiced by the orators. We will investigate how these rules and principles, that is, the tropes, *topoi* (argumentative strategies and topics), and motifs, shaped and informed oratorical and literary texts to structure public modes of communication in such a way that these discourses both reflect and reveal the specific political, social, and cultural values of each period. We will use these rhetorical principles to assess the formal properties and the ideological content of a variety of culturally-specific primary texts and discourses. We will apply these rhetorical principles and motifs to a variety of public activities and architectural and sculptural programs in order to determine the rhetorical discourses that shape the personal comprehension and social experience of these aspects of public life.

The course will be team-taught by the two faculty participants. Colleagues from the Departments of Art, Classics, Communication Studies, English, History, and Political Science also will be invited to give guest lectures on their particular areas of expertise, consistent with the main themes of the course. After the course is taught twice by the faculty participants, as required under the terms of the NEH grant, other members of the Classics and Communication Studies Departments will be encouraged to teach it in rotation, both at Furman and abroad. The original faculty participants will distribute the lectures, slides, and computer files to their colleagues to establish some consistency in the course, although it is expected that different instructors will vary the course according to their expertise and areas of interest. In addition, we hope that our colleagues at Furman

University and ACS affiliated universities will find that the materials created with the help of this grant will benefit their courses and research in classical rhetoric, history, art, and civilization. This material also will be made available both through the web site we would like to create and a library we will establish in the Classics Department at Furman University. To receive materials from our library, colleagues at associated universities can simply call or e-mail us or our respective departments.

Funding Needs for the Project: Preparing Technologically-Based Instructional and Research Materials

Before building our web site, we will work to design a plan that abstracts, as much as possible, the data we hope to present from the site's interface. While we do plan to work mainly in straightforward HTML, we will try to build a repository of images and texts that will be useful to our course, and courses like ours elsewhere, that is manageable, extensible, and accessible apart from the HTML pages created for our immediate needs. We will publish information that will allow others to link to any documents for which it would be legal.

The ACS funding will allow both of us to concentrate our efforts on building the web site for the course. In addition, we would like to employ a student assistant in the summer of 2001 who will work under our direction in the following ways.

1. The student assistant will help the faculty fellows develop a course web site that will store the course's syllabus and additional course material such as hand-outs and links to other relevant sites. The web site will comprise links to primary texts and images from such sites as the on-line Perseus, Stoa, Demos, and Diotima Projects as well as other sites that reconstruct major architectural programs and public spaces of ancient Greece and Rome that will allow students to simulate the experience of visiting and even living among these monuments and spaces.
2. The student will help create links to lists of essential terms and images and/or texts that illustrate the main theories and methods the course will use to examine classical texts, culture, and art, such as classical literary and rhetorical theory, classical historiography, semiotics, and cultural studies.
3. The student will assist us in developing a hypertext timeline of the major historical and cultural developments of each period (with links to original texts and digital pictures of works of art and architecture). Whenever possible or necessary, the fellows will buy the rights to place texts and images on the course's web site. The student will assist in this process.
4. The student will assist the faculty fellows in creating classroom presentations that employ computer technologies to display various documents and images in class. When possible, these classroom presentations also will be linked to the course's web site.

The faculty fellows and student assistant will provide the initial framework for this web site. Students enrolled in the course will add to the materials we have placed on the web site with materials they will develop in assigned course projects. Such projects might ask students to develop the hypertext timeline, to search for and construct additional links of primary and secondary sources, to add their own analysis and commentary to these sources, or to add their own pictures of classical art. The feasibility of such projects will depend on a variety of factors, including available time, software, our student's technical abilities, and the support of our university informational services. Technological support such as this ACS program provides is therefore essential to the success of the course.

Evaluating the Program's Accomplishments

To evaluate the effectiveness of these technologically developed or enhanced teaching materials, the two fellows will administer evaluations that specifically ask students to assess the instructional merits of the course web site and technological presentations and assignments. We also will invite colleagues from Furman University who are familiar with these instructional technologies to observe our class and submit their evaluations to the ACS Technology Center. If this project is funded by the ACS we will request that the ACS Technology Center send us the names of possible consultants from other universities to advise us on our program and act as outside evaluators of our work.