

15 January 2007

To: Deb Parziale, Activity Coordinator
From: Darren Bardell, Assistant Professor, History
RE: Project Proposal—\$500 Title III Grant, Strengthening Institutions Program, Faculty Innovations
Grant Category: Learning Technology-Assisted Learning

Hybrid Teaching: Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love U.S. History

1. Project Description

The purpose of this project is to utilize technology to improve my teaching and student learning. Using Ohlone's Web CT technology, I will develop a "Web Enhanced" or "Hybrid" shell for my U.S. History course. Using a course Web CT site will facilitate technology assisted learning in three ways. First, it will host two virtual "class-discussion" forums for students to collaborate in their learning: a "LiveChat" room (where students can form study groups to prepare for exams or just gather informally to just talk about the course), and a "Posted Discussion Area" (where students can respond to my specific discussion questions and also respond to each others comments). Second, it will deliver 10 chapter quizzes. I will write these multiple choice quizzes to test student knowledge of course content. They will be taken and graded online and returned to students immediately after they are submitted. The graded quiz will include detailed feedback so students can see where (in their textbook and my lectures) they can find the correct answer to wrong answers. Students will then have the opportunity to take the quiz a second time to improve their grade (the computer will average their two scores). Third, a course Web CT site will provide access and links to visual, aural, and textual primary source documents. Here, students will take a "hands-on" approach to historical scholarship as they will have the opportunity to critically examine evidence for themselves. One of the goals I set for all of my students is that they learn to form their own historical interpretations based on a wide variety of historical evidence. Their midterm and final exams will both foster and gauge their developing aptitude with this important learning outcome.

2. Project Outcomes (Student Centered):

I will integrate this technology assisted, Web CT program into my double-section History 117A course that meets M/W/F at 9:15 a.m. in room 3201. There are already 120 students enrolled in this section and I will probably add the entire waitlist. The nature of the course content, the layout of the lecture hall, and the sheer numbers of students enrolled in this course create several significant challenges that I hope to overcome through the use of technology. It is simply not logistically possible to conduct small-group learning activities in room 3201, or spend a lot of valuable lecture time analyzing primary source material, or for that matter, administering chapter quizzes. So, my project outcomes are specifically designed to overcoming these obstacles. The LiveChat rooms and Posted Discussion areas will allow student to collaborate in small groups. The online quizzes will free up class-time for other learning activities, and the multi-media will allow students to engage the course material in a more active posture. Furthermore, I hope this use of technology will help me realize my broader course Student Learning Outcomes. They are:

1. knowledge of U.S. History (the who, what, where, and when of historical scholarship);
2. understanding of the significance of this content in relationship to broader course themes (the

“why” question); 3. ownership of individual interpretations of historical events—students’ voices resonating with original, thoughtful, and creative ideas supported by relevant data and expressed clearly using formal and informal writing style. To accomplish this, I will construct Web CT activities to develop the following student aptitudes: enhanced problem solving skills through the use primary sources as well as both written and non-written historical documents; sharpened interpersonal communication skills by allowing students to collaborate in both formal and informal virtual discussion forums.

Most students come into my history courses with a very vague or worse wrong understanding of what historical scholarship is, and what societal benefits might be derived from its application. To them, history is simply a confusing array of names, dates, events, and people that they had to read about and memorize in order to pass their high school history classes. It is my primary goal to change this misconception. I want students to know that history is not static but alive, and that the past is still open for critical analysis and interpretation. I will of course teach the key facts (people, trends, and events) of U.S. History, but I will stress that the causes, effects, and long term significance of these historical facts is forever open to individual interpretation and sometimes significant revision. I call this understanding the “how and why” questions: how did history unfold the way it did, and why is the past relevant today. I believe the best way to accomplish this is for students to personally engage with the debates within contemporary historical scholarship. So, both the LiveChat/Posted Discussion forums, and the Primary Source/Critical Analysis exercises are designed to develop the following student centered learning outcomes:

- understanding what historians do and the kinds of questions they ask;
- recognition of the difference between primary and secondary sources;
- differentiation between fact and interpretation and comprehension of their interrelationships;
- appreciation of the varieties of historical perspectives;

3. Assessment Strategies.

- Student Questionnaire: Students will fill out a student questionnaire at the beginning and the end of the semester;
- Online Chapter Quizzes, Classroom Discussions: I will chart student improvement with both mastery of course content as well as their critical analysis skills;
- Exam Comparison (midterm with final): The online quizzes simply build a foundation of historical knowledge (the who, what, where, and when of U.S. History) that students are expected to use to substantiate generalizations and support their own historical interpretations. The midterm and final are designed to assess students’ critical thinking skills.

4. Project Implementation Timeline:

Spring Semester, 2007. In February I will conduct my questionnaires and begin my initial assessment of student aptitudes. In March I will begin the online “discussion forums” and post the chapter quizzes. These forums and chapter quizzes will run throughout the term. In April and May, students will engage in several study groups in preparation for their midterm and final

exams. I will write a short summary of my completed project, update my course outline, and submit a “time and effort” report at the end of May.

5. Faculty Responsible for Development and Implementation

Darren Bardell

6. Technology and Software Requirements; Distribution (If needed; additional funds *may* be available for department technology needs)

LaCie Rugged All-Terrain Hard Drive 160GB (FireWire 800, FireWire 400 & Hi-Speed USB 2.0): **Cost—\$250.00.**

I need the storage of this external hard drive for the still and video images used in my H117A course. Web CT does not have enough storage capacity to keep all of these documents so I will archive them on this external hard drive and upload/download these large files only when they are needed in the course.

Sincerely,

Darren L. Bardell

Assistant Professor, History