

## **Application for CTE's Departmental Teaching Development Grant**

### **Grant Applicants.**

The instructors of HST 103 and HST 104: Steven Baden, Richard Ironfield, Anne Kirschmann, Cristina Mehrrens, Robert Pontbriand, Paula Rioux, Matthew Sneider, Tim Walker, and Brian Williams.

### **Description of Project.**

We are applying for a CTE Departmental Teaching Development Grant to help fund the activities of a committee aimed at providing resources for and provoking discussion about the teaching of HST 103 and 104.

These two courses trace the history of the world's major civilizations from the origin of the species through the present. They are intended to introduce students to the political, social, economic, and cultural history of the earth's great civilizations while at the same time teaching the skills of research, analysis, and exposition necessary for success in the major. The two courses serve as gateways to the history major and also fulfill university humanities requirements. Many of our students chose to become history majors because of positive experiences in the world civilizations sequence.

These courses have very high enrollments and we offer numerous sections each semester. In the coming spring semester, for example, HST 104 will have a total of six sections. The faculty members and lecturers who teach these sections have complete freedom to design their own courses and choose their own materials. Our department prefers this decentralized approach to the adoption of a canned or standardized course because it enables each instructor to put his or her unique stamp on the material.

Decentralization, however, has its downside: a lack of communication which makes it difficult to share resources and ideas about how best to "reach" our students. This year we will form a World Civilizations Committee which will serve as a point of contact between instructors of HST 103 and 104. The activities of the committee will include:

- Developing a common set of visual, audio, and film resources for the use of all instructors of the two courses. This resource library would include maps, images, compact disks, films, and documentaries.
- Creating a repository of current and past textbooks and primary source readers to be located with the above.
- Creating a file containing syllabi, lectures, course materials, tests, and quizzes to be located with the above.
- Developing a website for HST 103 and HST 104 which would contain an index to the above material and links to pedagogically useful websites, article databases, and document collections.
- Facilitating periodic discussion among instructors of the two courses about materials, approaches to teaching, and techniques of assessing student learning.
- Facilitating lecture exchanges which take advantage of instructors' areas of specialization.
- Sending members of the committee to conferences dealing with the theory and practice of teaching world history.

**Budget.**

The CTE grant would help our new committee most dramatically in creating the physical libraries of course materials and in developing the website for HST 103 and HST 104. We would use a part of the money to purchase resources which will then be used by all instructors. We hope that the creation of this common stock of resources will be the seed for close and fruitful collaboration between instructors. Accordingly, another part of the grant proceeds will be used to fund meetings aimed at learning from our various experiences in teaching the two courses.

**Dissemination.**

Selected members of our committee will disseminate the results of our activity in the form of a presentation to the university community. We will emphasize the tangible results of our work, in particular the expected enrichment of the teaching experience and the expected improvement in student performance.

We are also considering the organization of a faculty forum—with guests from other departments and/or other institutions—to discuss approaches to the teaching of world civilizations surveys.