2021

# Course Development and Enhancement

FUNDS REQUESTED: $3500

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My proposal for summer support is to create/revamp two courses, each growing out of past research projects on Albert Barnes and Lincoln. These are *PHL 306 Aesthetics* and *PHL 217 Critical Reasoning*.

*PHL 306 Aesthetics* covers major philosophical issues in aesthetics and incorporates Dr. Barnes's prominent position on the "scientific, aesthetic method" in a section on Interpretation and Evaluation of Art. Concerning the latter, in *The Art of Renoir,* Barnes said, "A study of art based upon such a method promises results of the same verifiable objectivity as those of science" (Mazia, 1935). Barnes' strict analogy of scientific inquiry and aesthetic inquiry has been viewed as problematic because it presents a stultifying model of the interpretation of art. As David Granger says, Barnes' approach of insisting on "verifiable objectivity" to aesthetic inquiry varies considerably with the method of John Dewey, which views interpretations of art objects as ongoing and experimental. In contrast to Barnes' model of fixed and final interpretations, an alternative prevalent view advocates a model of "robust interpretative pluralism" (Granger, Spring 2018). The section on Interpretation and Evaluation will incorporate debates and Barnes' stories as part of the course. The course will also include aesthetics in a multicultural context, such as Japanese, Chinese, and African approaches, and dealing with racism and sexism in art. While covering traditional philosophy of art topics, its uniqueness will include Barnes stories, stories related to Barnes and Lincoln, and a multicultural or global emphasis.

Since PHL 306 Aesthetics was dropped from the Lincoln catalog several years ago, we will submit a new and significantly revised syllabus for review and approval. I will update the course with current emphases, such as having an assessment plan and rubrics. Also, it will be integrated with Canvas to use the tools in Canvas and Screencast-O-Matic to enhance learning. I will include a model for the assessment of the course. Finally, I will find ways to incorporate our colleagues in the humanities in planning and the education staff at the Barnes Foundation. At least, this will include sharing ideas with them and asking for their input.

The second course is *PHL 217 Critical Reasoning.* This course has an enrollment of approximately 70 students per year. It is required for some majors and plays a central role in furthering ILO 5 on Critical Thinking. I previously undertook a faculty development project of applying John Dewey's theory of inquiry to a digital context. In researching this issue, I will review journal articles discussing generation Z and learning and social media. I have identified several books dealing with the weaponization of social media and have found a new textbook that uses the backdrop of media to teach critical thinking. Also, I will survey the students in the current *PHL 217 Critical Reasoning* section to determine what recommendations they have for changing the course.

The new textbook deals with the media environment while still teaching traditional critical thinking techniques, procedures, skills, and principles (Lewis Vaughn, *Applying Critical Thinking to Modern Media*). Now topics on media are covered in the text as well. These include bots, chatbots, fake news, media bias, post-truth trends, filter bubbles, and the like. Also, the text covers and explains the effect of social media on the brain, something that I discovered was an issue when researching Dewey's concept of inquiry in a digital context. It also gives a basic introduction to scientific methods and principles for judging scientific theories, distinguishing experts from non-experts, and provides approaches to assessing advertising. It has a significant section on conspiracy theories.

Like *PHL 306 Aesthetics*, this course will include rubrics and an assessment plan. It will incorporate and use our new technologies such as Canvas and Screencast-O-Matic. Since students will

be required to obtain a copy of the text, the cost will be as low as possible. The text itself comes with various tools to enhance learning, with which I will become familiar. Also, since this course uses many examples as exercises, I will gather a reserve for class or tests.

Finally, I plan to produce research results in the form of an essay regarding "Interpretation in Art and Science." However, the focus here is on what I can accomplish and be measured over the summer, which is to read material directly relevant to the courses, and to produce syllabi, auxiliary course materials, and an assessment plan.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

1. The project will involve reading and studying additional background materials.
2. The project will result in a syllabus in the University standard form for each course.
3. The project will result in an assessment plan and rubrics for each course.
4. The project will involve integrating course material with available learning technologies such as Canvas and Screencast-O-Matic for each course.

TIMEFRAME OF THE PROJECT:

1. The project will begin May 24 and will be completed by August 31, 2021.

ENHANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING AT LINCOLN:

I will offer *PHL 217 Critical Reasoning* in the Fall with the new textbook, and, with the approval of the faculty, I will offer *PHL 306 Aesthetics* in the spring 2022 term. The overall purpose of reviewing and reinventing these courses is to enhance teaching and learning. I will seek student feedback where possible and use that to improve where they identify issues.

MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT:

Measuring the project's success will include submitting material and a report to demonstrate meeting the objectives listed. Also, the assessment of the course based on the plan produced and the data gathered will indicate the level of student learning.

SHARING THE PROJECT'S OUTCOME:

I will share the project's outcome in a presentation arranged through CETL and report it to my academic department.

BUDGET:

Salary support for Dana R. Flint ……$3500