

## **Proposal for Writing Intensive Faculty Development Award**

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### **1. Overview**

I have taught two writing intensive classes at the University of Missouri: The Constitution and Civil Liberties and The Constitution and Civil Rights. In the spring of 2014, I will teach a new class titled The American Constitution, and I hope to have the course designated as a writing intensive course. I am requesting funding to hire a half-time research assistant (with half of the funding being contributed by the Department of Political Science) to help prepare the course.

I want a major component of the course to involve reading excerpts from debates in Congress and in state legislatures related to the amendments to the United States Constitution that have been formally proposed (33) and ratified (27). These debates are recorded in state legislative journals, the *Congressional Record*, and the records of state ratifying conventions. However, it will take a significant commitment of time and effort to locate, copy, catalogue, and edit these documents. The research assistant will provide the necessary help to make this project feasible.

As part of my own teaching philosophy, I try to put students in contact with primary source materials as much as possible. I then create writing assignments that require students to engage directly with and offer original interpretations of primary sources. I believe this method of teaching enriches both the classroom experience and the writing assignments. In the case of the class I am developing, the primary sources will be the actual debates in Congress (relating to the proposal of new constitutional amendments) and state legislatures or state ratifying conventions (relating to the ratification of the proposed amendments). In contrast, many similar courses simply start with the Constitution and its amendments (27 to date), and students are left without a sense of the contentious political issues involved in drafting, proposing, and ratifying new constitutional amendments.

The project will benefit students principally in two ways. First, it will provide a rich source of class material that would otherwise be inaccessible. Second, it will allow students the opportunity to learn through writing. The writing assignments are designed to stimulate original thought and analysis, and the pedagogy of the course is designed so that students learn through the writing process. The project will also benefit the Campus Writing Program by helping to develop a writing intensive course that will be offered on a regular basis in the future. At the completion of the project, I will propose to publish the collected documents as an edited book to make the resources available to other scholars, teachers, and students. Jonathan Cisco worked as a research assistant for a similar project, which was subsequently published as *American Soul: The Contested Legacy of the Declaration of Independence* by Rowman & Littlefield press. My hope is that the course and the published volume could serve as a model for other courses both inside and outside of the university.

### **2. Budget**

A half-time research assistant costs the Department of Political Science \$12,000 per year. I am requesting \$6,000 from the Campus Writing Program to contribute to this cost (with the other \$6,000 contributed by the Department).

### **3. Timeline**

The research assistant will work on this project in the spring 2013 and fall 2013 semesters. The course will be taught for the first time in the spring of 2014.

### **4. Curriculum Vitae - Attached**